

Subject:	Brighton and Hove City Council Volunteering Policy and Toolkit		
Date of Meeting:	July 11th 2016		
Report of:	Acting Director of Public Health		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek committee approval to a new single corporate Volunteer Policy for the council and an associated toolkit to support its implementation. This Policy and toolkit sets out the council's commitment to developing and expanding the role of *volunteers within and across council services*.
- 1.2 The Brighton & Hove City Council Volunteering Policy supports the city's 'Power of Volunteering' Pledge by setting out the local authority's clear commitment to volunteering with council. It will also provide a valuable and consistent approach to the management of volunteers.
- 1.3 The Volunteering Policy and toolkit will support and promote volunteering across all directorates and contributes to the Corporate Plan principle: "*A city that people take pride in, where citizens, communities and businesses can get involved and take action to address things that matter to them.*"
- 1.4 This work is part of the council's Community Collaboration Programme. This is a wider modernisation programme aimed at developing a coordinated approach to working with residents and communities, enabling co-production, collaboration and making services more efficient by reducing dependency and demand.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the Volunteering Policy and toolkit as the corporate policy document, which sets out a formal and consistent organisational approach to volunteering across all council services
- 2.2 To endorse the expansion of volunteers within our services to create additional social value and deliver services that are more inclusive, collaborative and accountable to their communities and service users.

3 CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The development of a corporate Volunteering Policy in set in the context of the wider Community Collaboration Programme. This programme is part of the council's modernisation approach and is developing a clear direction and coordinated approach to working with residents and communities, enabling co-production, collaboration and making services more efficient by reducing dependency and demand.
- 3.2 It is developing internal and external culture change to support a 'can do' approach to collaborative working. This aims to ensure we are using our own resources alongside the resources of communities and citizens to create collective solutions to the delivery of services. The Community Collaboration programme has seven 'work streams'
- 3.3 The seven work streams are:
- 1 Creating a corporate Volunteering Policy and toolkit for all council services that supports the principles of the City Volunteering Strategy. Working with Customer First in Digital Age (CFDA) to develop an online Volunteering Platform to recruit, manage and support volunteers
 - 2 The redevelopment of the Community Engagement Framework to create a Collaboration Framework
 - 3 Developing a co-ordinated approach to community engagement and volunteering across all services to enable more communities and residents to be involved in council services and decision making
 - 4 Ensuring all council staff have the skills and behaviour to work collaboratively with communities/ residents and are encouraged to do so
 - 5 Working with the Communications Team to promote messages about shared responsibility for the city with residents, businesses and visitors.
 - 6 Developing council processes and systems that are designed to support collaboration with communities and residents, and do not unnecessarily hinder or prevent community activity
 - 7 Exploring area governance structures with participatory budgets
- 3.4 This programme is cross-council and city wide, and contributes towards a shared responsibility and changing relationship between citizen and state, allowing and supporting the move to a more connected and collaborative model of service delivery.
- 3.5 **Corporate Volunteering Policy**
- 3.6 The Volunteer Strategy for the City 'The Power of Volunteering' was launched this year and signed up to by all of the public service providers and the community and voluntary sector. It recognises the important contribution that volunteering makes to our city, acknowledging that volunteers contribute to building stronger, more resilient communities through a vast range of activities.
- 3.7 The new Brighton & Hove City Council Volunteering Policy supports the 'Power of Volunteering' by setting out a commitment for volunteering with Brighton &

Hove City Council. It will also provide a valuable and consistent approach to managing and supporting volunteering.

- 3.8 The policy will support and promote volunteering across all directorates and contribute to the Corporate Plan principle: *“A city that people take pride in, where citizens, communities and businesses can get involved and take action to address things that matter to them.”*
- 3.9 Brighton & Hove City Council currently has around 1800 volunteers who are supporting and working alongside staff in a wide range of roles. Whether it’s maintaining and improving our natural environment, or helping in our libraries, our volunteers are making a significant difference to the lives of people living in the city
- 3.10 By expanding volunteering within our services we have an opportunity to promote wellbeing and social value, support prevention, and redesign services to be more inclusive, collaborative and accountable to their communities and service users.
- 3.11 Having volunteers within our services also helps to address some of the current challenges that are not just financial, but also demographic, cultural and technological.
- 3.12 Supporting and developing the role of volunteers and community activities within Neighbourhood Hubs will be a critical part of their success.
- 3.13 It is very important that **all** staff understand both the good practice and legal implications of volunteer involvement. In order to ensure that volunteering remains a positive experience for all, we will be working with the Volunteer Centre to provide a staff development programme to ensure good practice is both understood and followed.
- 3.14 As part of this work the Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team will continue to work with Customer First in Digital Age (CFDA) to develop an online Volunteering Platform to recruit, manage and support volunteers.
- 3.15 The Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team will also be gathering information across all directorates to explore and support services to look at volunteering opportunities within their current services and through any service redesign process.
- 3.16 The Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team will be developing some further business engagement to look at corporate social responsibility and engaging large businesses to partake in corporate volunteering across appropriate council services.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Do nothing

- 4.1 Continue with a service led volunteering approach. Whilst this currently supports a wide range of volunteering opportunities and roles across services it varies in approach and standards. Volunteers have different experiences across services and find it difficult to navigate volunteering opportunities across different directorates and services
- 4.2 Services do not have a consistent or corporately supported approach to working with volunteers, some of our current practice is too close to employment contracts, and there is no strategic approach to developing volunteer roles across services and through service redesign.
- 4.3 There is a clear need to develop a digital channel-shift, supported by the Customer First in a Digital Age programme, to promote, recruit and support volunteering within council services.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Volunteer Policy, toolkit and booklet has been developed through workshops and input from over 40 council staff who work directly with volunteers from a range of services. Alongside expert advice and guidance from the Volunteer Centre.
- 5.2 One to one meetings have occurred with Unison and GMB. HR, risk management, insurance, health and safety and legal services have all had input into the policy and toolkit.
- 5.3 In addition we have reviewed all current service volunteering documents to ensure we are learning from current and good practice

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A strategic approach to developing and expanding volunteering within council services will be key to achieving the step change in relationship between the council and people of the city. It will also be an important factor in managing demand through additional volunteer activities and may help in supporting the budget challenge faced by the city council
- 6.2 Expanding volunteering within our services gives us the opportunity to promote wellbeing and social value, support prevention, and redesign services to be more inclusive, collaborative and accountable to their communities and service users. This will also improve the relevance and reputation of the council
- 6.3 This is a key element of the wider programme to build more collaborative partnerships with residents both in neighbourhoods and as a whole council.

7 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 All services will be required to pay for any volunteer expenses incurred in their services. If volunteering increases significantly these costs could rise, but will need to be managed within existing resources
- 7.2 Currently there is no designated detail code so it is not possible to have a baseline for our existing volunteer expenses. It may be helpful in the future to have a single cost code to ensure we can track these costs across service areas.
- 7.3 Training for volunteers will need to be looked at corporately to ensure these costs are coordinated and measured against the value of volunteers within services.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley

Date: 14/06/16

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 The policy and the toolkit are designed to reflect the current law as it relates to volunteers. It describes the relationship between the Council and those people who choose to volunteer their time and skills on an unpaid basis, without entering into a legally binding contract. The primary risk in engaging volunteers is the potential for the relationship to be classed as that of an employee or worker, rather than a volunteer, both of which attract additional responsibilities for the Council as part of a legally binding contract. The policy explicitly refers to the Volunteering England information regarding expenses payments, which is one of the main reasons for such a change in classification, alongside reducing obligations on the part of the volunteer (i.e. giving them the ability to refuse tasks.) These legal risks have been properly considered both within the report and the policy and toolkit, and the corporate approach proposed, along with accompanying standard documents, should ensure that this potential risk to the Council is low.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 14/06/16

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 The new city wide strategic document is called 'The Power of Volunteering – A vision for Brighton and Hove'. It runs from 2016-2021. This has been signed up to by Brighton and Hove City Council along with all other public service providers and the community and voluntary sector. It provides a comprehensive vision of the current picture and future aspirations for volunteering. It contains five commitments made by the city, the second commitment, is focused on equalities:-

- **increase the number of people committing to volunteer from all communities**

7.6 The principle of this commitment has been embedded into the council Volunteering Policy and toolkit, with a specific section for Equality and Diversity.

7.7 This section outlines our commitment around the equalities agenda and to equal opportunities for volunteer roles. At section 4 of the toolkit there is a model statement to equality and diversity in volunteering.

Sustainability Implications:

7.8 None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

7.9 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

7.10 In order to achieve the expansion in volunteering that is necessary, it is vital we are not tentative about involving and empowering volunteers to work alongside services. This will need strong leadership and practical and cultural shifts in how we design and manage services.

7.11 The timescales to develop the digital platform is critical to ensure we have a functioning system to recruit volunteers and record and manage data and information. If this not done in a timely way there is a possibility that managing checks and data could overwhelm HR and staff managing volunteers, especially in relation to DBS checks.

Public Health Implications:

7.12 There is a wealth of evidence that shows the positive impact of volunteering on both physical and mental health and wellbeing.

7.13 *Doing Good is Good for You: 2013 Health and Volunteering Study* reveals that 76 percent of adults who volunteer report that volunteering has made them feel physically healthier, and 78 percent report that volunteering lowers their levels of stress, leading to feeling better than adults who do not volunteer. The study also illustrates that employers benefit from employees who volunteer in terms of better employee health and in professional-skills development that employees use in the workplace.

7.14 The study reveals four key benefits of volunteering that make a positive impact on people's health:

- Health: volunteers say that they feel better - physically, mentally and emotionally;
- Stress: volunteering helps people manage and lower their stress levels;
- Purpose: volunteers feel a deeper connection to communities and to others;
- Engagement: volunteers are more informed health care consumers, and more engaged and involved in managing their health.

7.15 Corporate / Citywide Implications

7.16 All stated within the main text

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Volunteering Policy
2. Volunteering Toolkit (*please note the toolkit will remain a live document and will be updated as required with any changes to legalisation/ good practice and through the development of volunteer roles*)

