

Cabinet Meeting

23 March 2016

Report title	Scrutiny Review of The City of Wolverhampton Council Volunteering Offer	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member to give management response	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Review Chair	Cllr Ian Claymore (Lab)	
Review Members	Labour Cllr Payal Bedi Cllr Alan Bolshaw Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal Cllr Lynne Moran Cllr Judith Rowley	Conservative Cllr Mark Evans
Lead Scrutiny Review Officer	Deb Breedon Tel. Office: 01902 551250 <u>E-mail: Deborah.breedon@wolverhampton.gov.uk</u>	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Team	16.02.2016
	Executive Team	29.02.2016
	Cabinet	23.03.2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

1. The Cabinet is recommended to receive the report of the review group (appendix 1) and consider the following recommendations:

Volunteering policy

1. That the Heads of Service (HoS) Group develop the draft volunteering policy and the offer, taking into account the comments and recommendations arising from the review of the City of Wolverhampton Volunteering offer.
2. That the HoS group ascertain, through consultation, the current volunteers perception of the draft volunteering offer.
3. That definition of volunteering and work experience is included in the council volunteering policy and guidelines.
4. That where applicable any person volunteering within the Council will have the required DBS checks as specified by the receiving service area.
5. That the HoS group develop a process for volunteers entering the workplace and volunteer role descriptions.
6. That 'Investing in Volunteers' (IiV) standards be included in the policy appendices, and HoS to explore accreditation for the Council.
7. That there is a 12 month review of the final policy.

Skills and pathways

8. That all volunteers are referred to the Volunteer Service at Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) in the first instance to determine the best pathway for the individual.
9. That the volunteer pathway should include the following:
 - a) A volunteer role description for each service area detailing how the role will support existing service delivery.
 - b) The agreement with a volunteer will detail mandatory and job specific training and support for the role.
 - c) Initiating a DBS check where applicable for all volunteers in Council services.
 - d) Ensuring robust equality monitoring processes are in place identifying and following up gaps in current practice and other relevant policies. In exploring this officers have identified and raised the need to review the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement with H.R.
 - e) All volunteers are registered on the Agresso system and records of DBS, training and equality are monitored.
 - f) All service groups should monitor volunteers to check progress and development needs in line with the volunteer offer.
10. That a sensible review period is built into each volunteering role for the protection of the service, the benefit of the volunteer and to ensure the role has not changed substantially over a set period of time.
11. That volunteers are provided access to the Council Learning Hub to develop skills for mandatory and role specific training.
12. That the HoS group and Volunteer Service develop a package of training for managers, volunteers and volunteer supervisors to be delivered via the Council learning hub.

Additionality

13. That the volunteer role description should be service specific and include the following:
 - a) The volunteering hours required (determined by the task).
 - b) The days and duration of the volunteering opportunity (determined by the task).
 - c) The training available – what skills they need, the support role and skill development.
 - d) How the role will support existing service delivery.
 - e) An agreed and appropriate review period for the protection of the service and the volunteer.
 - f) DBS checks to be arranged if applicable.
 - g) Volunteering code of conduct.
 - h) Advertising opportunities to access volunteering with WVSC and partner organisations.
14. That specific text should be included in the policy taken from the TUC guidance to ensure that volunteering provides additionality to rather than replacement of existing staffing resources.
15. That as part of the development of the wider partnership Volunteering Strategy, a discussion with the Inclusion Board and Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) to explore arrangements for DBS checks should take place. Where feasible a process for ensuring that DBS checks are in place should be incorporated as part of the contractual arrangements for the agency providing volunteering services.
16. That there is a review of the volunteering policy once the Combined Authority is functioning to ensure synergy with the wider region.

Resource

17.
 - a) That an investigation or assessment of the types of costs associated with volunteering is undertaken by HoS as part of the policy refinement and incorporated within the guidance to service areas.
 - b) That the HoS group identifies resource implications of training, DBS checks and supervising volunteers for each service area.
 - c) That the HoS group explore and identify funding opportunities with funders, partners and businesses, internally and externally.
2. Approve the executive response to the review recommendations (appendix 2).
 3. Refer the Cabinet response to Scrutiny Board for it to track and monitor the implementation of the agreed recommendations.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The report presents the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of the City of Wolverhampton Council Volunteering Offer (appendix 1). Cabinet is requested to receive the report and agree the executive response.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Volunteering was identified as a potential topic for scrutiny review at the annual work programme planning event in June 2015 and agreed as a scrutiny review item for 2015-16 by Scrutiny Board.
- 2.2 The review was needed to consider the City of Wolverhampton Council volunteer offer and the volunteer's journey in terms of the routes to employment in Wolverhampton that will inform the wider City Volunteering Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet in September 2016.
- 2.3 Volunteering in Council services helps to deliver the following corporate priorities:
- People and communities achieve their full potential - Enabling Communities to support themselves.
 - People develop the skills to get and keep work - Improving our critical skills and employability approach by supporting and providing volunteering opportunities.
- 2.4 Key question(s) that this review sought to answer:
- What is the current Council volunteer offer?
 - How do people access volunteering – how transparent is it?
 - What is the current volunteer journey within the City? Are there supported pathways and how do we currently monitor and track volunteers in the City?
 - What is the current Council coordinated volunteer offer in the City to help people into employment?
 - What best practice is available to inform the development of the volunteer offer and volunteer pathways in Wolverhampton?
 - What improvements can be made to current practice to improve the volunteer offer in the City?
 - What are the resource implications?
 - How does this sit with the thrust for value for money (VFM) and added social value?
- 2.5 The scrutiny review group met on five occasions to consider evidence from a wide range of sources. A variety of methods were used which included desk top research, written and verbal reports, site visits with volunteers and providers, witness attendance and presentations at meetings and round table discussions.
- 2.6 The review group considered the following:
- Current policy and mechanisms for training and support for volunteering.

- Perspectives of the current offer from public surveys involving employees who manage or support volunteers in the Council, the Citizens Panel and of working aged people attending the Wolverhampton Jobs Fair.
- Good practice in the City and Nationally.
- Visits were carried out to voluntary sector organisations to meet providers and talk with volunteers.
- Witness evidence from Department of Works and Pensions, voluntary projects co-ordinators, partner and voluntary sector organisations, the Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council Volunteer Service and Unison.

2.7 During evidence gathering the review group received and examined a substantial evidence base. Witnesses provided perspectives about a range of mechanisms, resources and good practice in volunteering and contributed to a healthy debate about the barriers and advantages of robust and sustainable mechanisms for volunteers in the City.

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 The costs of volunteers is currently met by service areas, this will continue to be the case with each service area determining the costs that they can meet and allocating this from within their service budgets.

3.2 The review report identifies the need for an investigation of the types of costs associated with volunteering to be undertaken as part of the Heads of Service Group policy refinement. Associated costs will vary considerably depending on the type and duration of volunteering opportunity and the related training, but this will have to be considered by each service group.

3.3 Many service groups already provide a good volunteering offer from within their existing resources.
[ES/07012016/Y]

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 Volunteers will be required to agree to terms and conditions of a volunteer placement in line with TUC and liV guidance.

4.2 Where required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be carried out.
[TS/12012016/V]

5.0 Equalities implications

5.1 The Volunteer Policy is part of the Volunteer Strategy currently being developed. The Equality Analysis is on-going as evidence, discussions and recommendations are still taking place. The outcome of this will inform the final strategy and be presented to Cabinet in September 2016.

6.0 Environmental implications

6.1 There are no environmental implications

7.0 Human resources implications

7.1 There will be no direct human resources implications. Mentoring, supervision and training opportunities will be made available to volunteers in service groups in accordance with the Councils volunteering policy.

8.0 Corporate landlord implications

8.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

9.1 Background papers for the review group meetings as follows: [here](#)

16 September 2015

21 October 2015

28 October 2015

18 November 2015

9 December 2015

4 February 2016

SEB report 19 January 2016