

REPORT FROM: CORPORATE DIRECTOR

TO: SPECIAL BUDGET POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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VOLUNTEERING UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the Employee Volunteering and Skill Sharing Policy and the use of volunteers across the Council's Service Areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Employee Volunteering and Skill Sharing Policy is re-launched.
- (3) That the volunteering undertaken in our neighbourhoods is acknowledged and celebrated.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To increase the contribution to two of the Council's Strategic Objectives:

- Help to create and sustain resilient communities.
- Maintaining a sustainable, resilient and efficient organisation.

ISSUE

Pendle Council recognises the value of volunteering, given its significant contribution to two of its Strategic Objectives:

Help to create and sustain resilient communities

Maintaining a sustainable, resilient and efficient organisation.

Volunteering can be an enriching and fulfilling experience. It can aid new and existing skills and help improve wellbeing.

The Council recognises the significant and valuable role of volunteers in the community; it helps develop individual and community resilience, enables residents to solve their own problems and improves the quality of neighbourhoods.

1. Employee Volunteering and Skill Sharing Policy

Encouraging volunteering can be beneficial for staff learning and development, contributing to a thriving and efficient organisation. We believe that offering the opportunity for employees to volunteer will help staff enhance and develop their skills and abilities, potentially improving their performance at an individual and team level whilst also improving wellbeing and strengthening communities. For this purpose we have the Employee Volunteering and Skill Sharing Policy, launched in 2017.

The policy gives employees (either groups or individuals) the opportunity for up to two days per year of volunteering for a local group/ charity. Any volunteering above and beyond this during work time must be taken through the council's flexi scheme.

Current volunteering opportunities are promoted through Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale CVS Volunteer Hub, the link of which is available on the staff intranet.

There is a section in the PMR for employees to discuss with their manager any requests for volunteering in line with the Council's volunteering policy. However, the 2018 PMR process revealed that only one member of staff asked for an opportunity to undertake some volunteering.

A report from the flexi-time scheme (back to 1/1/17) revealed that only two employees had used the volunteering correction when making adjustments:

- 1 employee, one time for 1 hour in March 18 for BFCitC
- 1 employee, 3 times for governor duties between Oct 17 and May 18

It is suggested that the Employee Volunteering and Skill Sharing Policy is relaunched by the staff Continuous Improvement Group so employees are reminded of the council's offer and encouraged to share their skills with the wider Pendle community.

2. Use of volunteers across Service Areas

The Corporate Guidance and Checklist for Volunteers was developed in 2016, further to Investors in People report (2015) which suggested a review of how the organisation manages and supports its volunteers. But, although we are still accessing volunteers to complement service delivery, capacity within the organisation to recruit and manage volunteers has significantly reduced since this time.

In November 2018 Service Managers were asked to confirm if their Service Area was currently using or had used volunteers for any specific projects over the last twelve month period. It appears that we now coordinate fewer volunteering placements than we did two years ago.

Environmental Services

A joint training programme with DWP resulted in 10 people taking up temporary work placements in 2018 within the Cleansing section. On successful completion of the 'trial', those remaining volunteers were interviewed with two then offered temporary positions. One commenced duties in October whilst the second took up his role in November. It's likely that this will be repeated in 2019.

Housing, Health and Economic Development

- Pendle Walking Festival – voluntary walk leaders (who also survey and report faults). In 2018 there were 57 walks so with 2 per walk, there were 114 volunteer days, staffed by 29 volunteer leaders.
- Enterprise Adviser Network – people from local businesses who go into schools
- Women’s Refuge – general volunteer support to the women and children (limited due to lack of staff resources to oversee them)

Neighbourhood Services

Members should note that since the demise of the Park Keeper Service we no longer have the capacity to organise and co-ordinate the volunteer maintenance days which used to occur regularly. There was one specific activity delivered in 2018/19- a tree planting day in Walverden Park.

- Our role with Friends of Groups for both parks and LNR has now changed- we facilitate activity by supporting funding bids, for example, rather than planning and delivering actual volunteering days.
- We facilitate Emergency Planning roles in the community such as Earby Flood Wardens
- Crown Green Bowling maintenance in Alkincoates Park is undertaken by volunteers as is the running of the café at Victoria Park pavilion.
- Steven Burke Cycling Hub- working with Cycle Development Pendle Partnership (CDPP) for them to manage the facility.

Localities and Policy

- Great British Spring Clean and the Great Plastic Pick Up 2018. We support a number of voluntary/community groups with community litter picks through the loan of equipment and arranging collection of bags/fly tipping. We provide regular support to Pick Up for Pendle, Barnoldswick Glitterati and we are seeing more schools undertaking litter picks.
- Resident Groups such as Walverden & Clover Hill, Whitefield and Waterside and resident led activities such as Bradley Big Local

3. ‘Internal’ volunteers that support Officers in the event of an Emergency

In total, 20 staff members volunteered to assist the Council in delivering its response to an emergency. The roles covered by the volunteers include providing administration support, attending rest centres to assist Lancashire County Council in the care of those unable to return home and more directly for the District Council completing inspection for duty officers who may be unable to get to locations within the Borough due to road closures or time restrictions.

We will be wishing to retain this list of volunteers and take the opportunity this report brings to thank them for their continued support.

4. Performance Monitoring

Performance Indicator NS1 – ***‘Volunteer time contributed in hours to enhancing our neighbourhoods’*** is not a true reflection of the volunteering which goes on in our communities. We do ask various groups to provide us with information but we get very little response, other than from Pick Up For Pendle, some Friends of Park groups and Colne in Bloom. So what we do

capture via this PI is just a snap shot of activity. Likewise, there are many volunteering activities happening across Pendle that complement service delivery but are planned and delivered independent of the council.

In 2017/18, we recorded over 7,700 hours undertaken by volunteers just from the activities we monitor. This is the minimum as the true number of hours will be much higher. In financial terms, based on the current National Living Wage of £7.83 per hour, this equates to a minimum of £60,291 which is a significant contribution to service enhancement.

Some events are acknowledged and celebrated with Mayoral receptions held at Nelson Town Hall to thank volunteers involved with:

- (1) Pendle's success in In Bloom/Best Kept Village Competitions. The Mayor hosts a Community Pride Reception;
- (2) Pendle Walking Festival leaders and backstops; and
- (3) Friends of the Parks.

The Mayor also attends a number of community/voluntary group events throughout the year.

Other than these formal events, it seems we do little to thank volunteers who give their time to improve their neighbourhood. We can also be more proactive in acknowledging and promoting the range of volunteer activities that are happening across Pendle. A regular 'thank you' and volunteering features via social media and the local press could help this and show our ongoing appreciation for these unsung heroes.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Supports delivery of the Employee Volunteering and Skill Sharing Policy

Financial: None arising directly from this report

Legal: None arising directly from this report

Risk Management: None arising directly from this report

Health and Safety: None arising directly from this report

Sustainability: None arising directly from this report

Community Safety: None arising directly from this report

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from this report

APPENDICES

Volunteering & Skill Sharing Policy

http://pendle-intranet/downloads/Volunteering_and_Skill_Sharing_Policy_2017_1_.pdf

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Management Team January 2019

Report to Management Team February 2017

Report to Management Team November 2016