

 Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2011		Agenda Item 8
Title	Development of a Volunteering Policy	
For further information about this report please contact	Bill Hunt Deputy Chief Executive (01926) 456014 bill.hunt@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Service Area	Chief Executive's Office	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number		
Background Papers	Volunteering Audit returns	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director		Bill Hunt
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Legal		
Finance		
Portfolio Holders		
Consultation Undertaken		
Dialogue held with WCC and CAVA Cross service WDC working group established		
Final Decision?	No	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
Further report to be brought to a subsequent Committee meeting with proposals for a draft volunteering policy to allow members to determine what, if any recommendations they wish to make to Executive.		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This Committee has indicated that it would wish to see a volunteering policy developed and adopted by the Council. This report summarises progress to date, provides details of the current use of volunteers across the Council and suggests the next steps for policy development.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Committee note this report
- 2.2 That members indicate if there are any specific issues that they wish to see addressed by any future policy.
- 2.3 That a Task and Finish Group is established to oversee the development of a policy.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 A cross service working group of WDC officers has been examining how the Council currently uses volunteers and how it might develop an integrated policy covering:
- Direct use of volunteers in delivering services
 - Indirect use of volunteers in activities that contribute to the delivery of the Council's Vision e.g. assistance to 'friends' groups maintaining or improving Council owned land
 - Volunteering by WDC staff
 - Promotion of volunteering within the community to develop social capital.
- 3.2 Staff from the jointly funded WCC/WDC Community Partnership Team have been involved in this working group as has the WCC Relationships Manager who is developing a similar integrated policy for the County Council.
- 3.3 The Group has undertaken an audit of the current use of volunteers across the Council, which has established that volunteers are currently used in the following service areas:
- Environmental Services
 - Cultural Services
 - Development Services
 - Community Partnership Team
 - Elections
 - Housing & Property Services
- 3.4 Details of the use of volunteers is included at Appendix One. The returns demonstrate inconsistencies in the approach taken to paying volunteer's expenses or providing equipment, materials and insurance. The Appendix also shows that some service areas, for example Housing & Property Services and Neighbourhood Services are actively exploring or considering an expansion in the use of volunteers.
- 3.5 Appendix Two sets out some of the potential issues that could arise from the use of volunteers. This is not included to indicate that an expansion in the use of volunteers should be discouraged but highlights the need for detailed and

careful consideration of all the issues around their use which has contributed to the delay in bringing this report to Committee.

- 3.6 The County Council is also considering similar issues around volunteering. Whilst they provide considerably more information about volunteering than this Council, they have identified similar issues around consistency of approach and the addressing of legal issues and are seeking to develop an integrated policy. The Relationships Manager has shared information on their draft policy and it is recommended that best practice from this is utilised in the future development of a WDC policy. The current information on volunteering provided by the County Council can be viewed on their website at:
<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/Corporate/Pages.nsf/Links/5A82EBD1BE5D23CE8025758C004101F8>
- 3.7 Volunteering by WDC staff has been subject to past work by the HR team, who produced the documents at Appendix Three. This work did not proceed past the draft stage and has not, to date, been presented to Employment Committee as it was subsumed into the wider examination of terms and conditions being taken forward through the Fit for the Future programme. A choice exists as to whether it is now separated out and progressed instead through the development of an integrated Volunteering Policy.
- 3.8 At present work on this issue is being developed by the officer working group at the behest of the Scrutiny Committee. The issue does not feature on the Executive's workplan or the Forward Plan. It is recommended that a Task and Finish Group is established by this Committee which will allow the work to be 'mainstreamed' and for a formal report from the Committee to be presented to Executive together with a draft policy that can be recommended for adoption.

4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Work could be discontinued but this option has been discounted given the desire to see it progressed previously expressed by the Committee and its inclusion in the current Workplan .
- 4.2 The Committee could choose not to establish a Task and Finish Group. However, officers consider that the establishment of such a group would provide a recognised pathway to enable a draft policy to be presented to a wider audience.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There are no budgetary implications for the development of a policy which can be done through existing resources.
- 5.2 However, a future policy would need to consider a co-ordinated and consistent approach to such issues as the provision of insurance cover for activities undertaken by volunteers, responsibility for the provision of CRB checks of volunteers if appropriate, provision of work clothes and materials if necessary, all of which will have a cost. Depending on the recommendations as to how such issues are addressed in any future policy there could be budgetary implications that would need further consideration and would have to feature in any recommendations to Executive.

6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 Any further work on this issue would contribute to the development of a policy and strategic approach to volunteering which would assist the Council in its key strategic objective of delivery its Vision:
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