

SUBJECT: Volunteering Policy

MEETING: Council

DATE: 14 December 2017

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide a robust Volunteering Policy position, to be accepted by Council and therefore applicable to all service/business areas including schools.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Volunteering Policy be adopted by Council and circulated to all service/business areas and commended to governing bodies for adoption as soon as possible.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Monmouthshire County Council recognises the important and valuable contribution made by volunteers who give freely of their time to enhance the services provided by the paid workforce, with the ultimate aim of improving services for residents.

This policy describes the role of volunteers in service delivery and sets out the terms governing their engagement and ongoing relationship with the Council.

The Council acknowledges the significant role that volunteers play in supporting service delivery and promoting community wellbeing. It offers a wide variety of volunteering opportunities across numerous services for people with particular skills experience or interests.

This policy applies to all volunteers engaged in supporting the delivery of council services. This includes services delivered by agents of the Council, including contractors and schools.

This policy does not apply to volunteers who are active within communities and not managed by council services, work experience, apprenticeships and student placements or council employees volunteering for other groups and organisations.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The other option to implementing a new clear policy position would be to rely on individual departments managing volunteers in their own way with no clear direction. This has been evidenced by internal audit and WAO as approach with many weaknesses. Whilst we have provided a comprehensive volunteering toolkit, the nature of a toolkit implies that compliance is

optional. A consistent and proportionate Volunteering Policy position is the preferred option based on the evidence and data we hold.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

An evaluation assessment is provided at the end of this document.

6. REASONS:

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and an essential component of democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

At a very high level, we understand our governance and safeguarding arrangements for our volunteering workforce needs to be:

- Enabling of our direction of aspiration.
- Proportionate and balanced against the risk we face.
- Simple to administer.
- Enabling so we can keep our volunteers and our organisation safe whilst supporting those individuals who hold statutory accountabilities in this area (the safeguarding aspects).

Whilst much of the guidance and areas the policy covers are contained within the existing toolkit, a toolkit implies compliance is optional. We therefore propose to set out relevant information into a new volunteering policy position statement for the Council.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct resource implications but there are potential indirect resource implications for those needing to adopt the policy and in ensuring that the necessary governance and safeguarding arrangements are in place.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The Equality Impact Assessment is attached.

9. CONSULTEES:

MCC Volunteer Network

Policy needs to be strengthened to adequately deal with partnership working.

Needs to be a link between the volunteering policy and the volunteer role profiles.

It is comprehensive, in plain English and clearly sets out who is responsible for what.

Audit

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

All recognised trade unions.

Head-teachers

WASCG 16th August

The committee welcomed the policy document and its structure for making it easier for volunteers and colleagues to understand.

It was noted that the policy gives MCC a clear framework which is user friendly, and which sets out the roles of volunteers, coordinator and managers.

People Board 25th August

The draft policy was presented. It was noted that guidance is already provided in the volunteer toolkit but the draft policy consolidates this and formalises processes for persons both on and off payroll. It picks up on some of the accountability weaknesses previously identified.

The draft policy is short, proportionate and deals effectively with the complexities of relationships throughout our own and other organisations, and with our partners.

It was emphasised that the policy will apply to everyone, including volunteers in schools, and noted that school governing bodies are urged to adopt the finalised policy in due course. Currently, the draft policy is out for consultation and comments are welcomed from e.g. Headteachers.

SLT

CM commented that the policy enables staff to plan when bringing volunteers into the workplace.

Strong Communities Select 28th September 2017 –

The Policy was thought to be robust and thorough and hoped that it would cover every eventuality.

The committee supported the Policy and recommended that it be accepted and circulated to all service/business areas and commended to governing bodies for adoption as soon as possible.

JAG 16th October

The Committee agreed with the recommendation that the Volunteering Policy be accepted and circulated to all service/business areas and commended to Governing bodies for adoption as soon as possible.

Cabinet 22nd November

Decision - That the Volunteering Policy be accepted and circulated to all service business areas and commended to governing bodies for adoption as soon as possible.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Audit Review Volunteering June 2017

11. AUTHOR:

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12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Evaluation Criteria – Cabinet, Individual Cabinet Member Decisions & Council

Title of Report:	Volunteering Policy
Date decision was made:	14th December 2017
Report Author:	Sally Thomas

What will happen as a result of this decision being approved by Cabinet or Council?

The desired outcome of the Volunteering Policy being adopted is a clear policy position communicated to all areas of our organisation inclusive of Governing Bodies for implementation. The implementation will be outlined in a Volunteering Policy action plan owned by People Services. Training, support and guidance will be offered to colleagues and volunteers during the implementation period.

The decision should offer volunteers across the county an opportunity to engage consistently with our organisation. Volunteer coordinators and managers will be aware of their responsibilities when engaging with volunteers in Monmouthshire. The policy brings a proportionate approach to volunteering which helps to create the conditions for volunteering to flourish.

What benchmarks and/or criteria will you use to determine whether the decision has been successfully implemented?

- Consistent volunteer safe recruitment evidence is captured and represented in our Volunteer Kinetic digital management platform.
- Volunteers and colleagues demonstrate a greater understanding of their responsibility.
- Volunteers and colleagues evidence an improvement in the level of support received.
- Leaders have a greater level of confidence in the volunteering policy position.
- Volunteering policy position provides greater scope for partnership working.

What is the estimate cost of implementing this decision or, if the decision is designed to save money, what is the proposed saving that the decision will achieve?

There are no direct cost implications however, indirect costs may be picked up by individual volunteer supporting departments. For example volunteer mileage expenses or the cost of a volunteers badge could be incurred.

Any other comments

Should the policy be adopted by Council we will develop an action plan for implementing the policy framework.

