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| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                 | <b>Colleague Volunteering Pilot</b>       |
| <b>MEETING:</b>                 | <b>INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION</b> |
| <b>DATE:</b>                    | <b>September 2018</b>                     |
| <b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b> | <b>All</b>                                |
| <b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>          | <b>County Councillor P Murphy</b>         |

**1. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish a Colleague Volunteering Pilot for 30 staff across directorates.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To approve an initial trial in October 2018 with 30 employees on a structured programme inclusive of outcomes measurement. We will deliver the programme with key partners such as Volunteering for Wellbeing and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations. Giving our colleagues the opportunity to take part in a one day volunteering experience, the pilot will be fully evaluated to understand its impact for example on wellbeing.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

Mental Ill Health is still the highest single reason for sickness at MCC with 25% of all days lost. The largest reason for absence in all age groups with the exception of 16 – 24 year olds. Consistently in meetings across the organisation and specifically in the staff forum 'Mon Minds', Health and Wellbeing is brought up as a major challenge facing our organisation and colleagues. Evidence from research organisations, partners and our own learning demonstrates that volunteering has a positive well-being impact for individuals and is a potential solution for our employees and the organisation.

With the current financial climate it is important that we know our specific volunteering activities make a difference to employees well-being, that there is a positive bi-product for the community and it makes financial sense.

Volunteering has been proven to have a positive impact on society, addressing the balance of give and take within a community. Volunteering promotes a contributor mind-set whereby everyone has something to give, we want to champion active citizenship.

**4. REASONS:**

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

- Enabling of our direction of aspiration.
- Proportionate and balanced against the risk we face.
- Simple to administer.

- Enabling so we can keep our colleague volunteers and our organisation safe whilst supporting those individuals who hold statutory accountabilities in this area (the safeguarding aspects).

A Volunteering Policy was introduced in 2017, the Colleague Volunteering programme would be based on the same safeguarding principles and robust infrastructure.

We have the opportunity to align the colleague volunteering programme to current Council or PSB priorities.

**EmployeeVolunteering.co.uk a national organisation has evidence that suggests: -**

- 97% of volunteers said our activities help develop a strong team
- 95% felt that volunteering had a positive influence on them
- 76% said it had a positive influence on how they feel about their employer
- 87% felt that volunteering improved their understanding of issues affecting their community
- 98% rated enjoyment as excellent or good - volunteering has to be fun!

**Outcomes for our colleagues could include:**

- A sense of achievement at a personal and team level
- A greater understanding of the challenges facing local communities
- Increased team working and better working relationships with colleagues
- Increased levels of community engagement and trust with our organisation
- Additional skills and qualifications gained

From initial research with five local authorities in the UK an average of 30% of employees, engage with a volunteering programme offered by their place of work.

Our Colleague Volunteering Programme could be the starting point for individuals, some colleagues who may wish to pursue volunteering and develop their own longer term relationships with volunteering programmes in our county. Volunteering offers continued wellbeing benefits for our colleagues, furthering our agenda on Active Citizenship and the programme of ‘Monmouthshire – A County that Serves’. Essentially, we are then ‘walking the walk’.

The programme will be delivered as a partnership between Community and Partnership Development Lead – Owen Wilce, Volunteering Digital System Lead - Richard Poynter and People Services. Using the tools we have available such as our Digital Volunteer management system Volunteer Kinetic <https://volunteer.monmouthshire.gov.uk/> We will ensure volunteers are matched, ensuring their role will be inspiring and motivating.

By focussing a team of volunteers around a specific challenge, we can quickly make a measurable difference seen by the community and our colleagues. We could also provide evidence of the difference made to the individual’s wellbeing, financial impact and the social return on investment. This keeps the volunteering programme manageable, accountable and demonstrating impact.

**Basic Examples: -**

- a) If we took a team of colleagues and dramatically improved an area of land in a community known for antisocial behaviour and created a community space. The team benefit from a sense of achievement and increased wellbeing. Are more connected to their community and aware of the impact of the decisions we make on a daily basis. Complaints at the Community Hub including calls initially cost an average of £8 to receive and one area could receive as many as 40 calls over a six-month period. We improve community connectivity, potentially reduce sickness and reduce cost to the authority.
- b) If we focussed a team of 20 people with varying skills for a day on a struggling but valuable community centre. We could improve the building aesthetically, help with their financial management, offer advice and guidance on using social media to engage with more people. Demonstrating to the community we care, uplifting a section of the community and allowing the community centre to improve their offer and support more people. Wellbeing benefits to staff and reputational improvements for MCC.

**5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

The only potential resource implications would be the cost of covering front line members of staff whilst they are completing their volunteering opportunity. This should be quickly balanced by the increased wellbeing of staff taking part and a potential reduction in sickness, increasing motivation leading to increased productivity. The value this programme will add to individuals, our organisation and the wider community should completely outweigh the financial implications.

**6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

The Equality Impact Assessment is attached.

**7. CONSULTEES:**

Head of People Services  
SLT  
Mon Minds  
Cabinet  
Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Volunteering Policy 2017.

**9. AUTHOR:**

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