

**SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE A COUNTY THAT SERVES – DRAFT VOLUNTEERING
STRATEGY 2016-19**

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 8th June 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Countywide

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To introduce the Draft Volunteering Strategy 2016-19

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To approve the draft Monmouthshire A County That Serves - Volunteering Strategy, to allow engagement and feedback from employees, communities and Third Sector partners ahead of it being presented back to Cabinet for approval.

2.2 To endorse and promote the draft programme plan as a living document to be updated and refined as further evidence of need is established. The document needs to be adaptable to meet the ever changing needs of volunteers, as the world of volunteering is changing at a rapid pace we must ensure we can respond.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Monmouthshire ACTS is the draft version of our Volunteering Strategy, we feel it's a strong starting point, leading a different way of thinking about how 'we' – our staff teams and communities can support and enable volunteering and social action in Monmouthshire.

3.2 Our belief is that through the Volunteering Strategy and associated Delivery Plan we can 'professionalise' and improve our 'volunteering offer' which focusses on our four stage model of support for volunteers.

- Plan – Looking at how, where, when, and why we involve volunteers.

- Recruit – Providing clear, consistent guidance to ensure safe and supportive recruitment of volunteers.
- Manage – Providing volunteers with all of the tools, information, support and recognition they require.
- Develop – Challenging volunteers to learn new or build existing skills, motivating and enabling impact.

Understanding Monmouthshire's rich social capital and local activism we feel our approach will contribute to our core purpose as an organisation – to deliver sustainable and resilient communities – working together with our communities towards shared outcomes that matter to our county.

- 3.3 This strategy aims to bring together departments and projects involving volunteers from across the council, also the third sector and community together with a shared vision. It is worth noting that we already have 'pockets of brilliance' across Monmouthshire, with some volunteering activities and programmes achieving great outcomes already. Whilst other volunteering programmes are emerging, it is imperative to share best practice and learning to provide a clear consistent offer to our volunteers in Monmouthshire. This is where the Volunteering Network plays a vital role engaging and supporting our Volunteer coordinators.
- 3.4 Our people both staff and volunteers must be enabled with the right tools to operate at their best in what is a permanent state of transition and this is not an easy 'measurable' task. The aim is for this strategy to make a key contribution to embedding good volunteering standards and practices across the county, raising the level of support for volunteers is key. Our goal is to support talent development both within and outside of our organisation and to engage all the people with whom we can create value.
- 3.5 Monmouthshire ACTS gives the story of our ambitious evolution – formed as a direct result of the People and Organisational Development Strategy – it describes our journey through the various necessary stages of growth and development. Lessons learned from mapping, consultation and rapid prototyping gives us the confidence and evidence base to scale our volunteering model up across the county.
- 3.6 Monmouthshire ACTS outlines measures that will allow us to capture information and importantly measure impact. They are not all quantitative methods, we have found success qualitative methods which can convey emotion for example through recent video interviews. The positive impact was publicised and as such more volunteers have expressed an interest in engaging with us.
- 3.7 The strategy is importantly built upon a number of key themes and priorities. These describe the ethos of our work. The five key principles we promote are: -

Support - Excellent support, management and training for volunteers is essential for wellbeing and retention.

Choice - Volunteering is a free choice made by an individual to offer their time and support, there is no contractual agreement but the volunteer does have rights and responsibilities.

Equality - Volunteering should be open to all, welcoming and supporting diversity to promote equality.

Recognition – Volunteers offer their time without financial gain to contribute to personal, organisational, economic or community benefit but should receive appropriate and timely recognition.

Participation - Volunteering is a way in which individuals can participate and shape the activities of their community.

- 3.8 The strategy is intentionally draft at this stage. Approval and release of the draft strategy will result in a programme of communication and engagement being undertaken with staff and communities over coming weeks such as to seek feedback and ideas on all aspects of the strategy. A final strategy will be brought back to Cabinet for approval before the end of the calendar year.
- 3.9 A draft programme plan is provided at appendix 2 and provides an overview of targeted priorities and activity over the next 12 months.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 We are lucky to be supported by almost two thousand volunteers currently, our people both on and off our payroll are vital to the success of our council and county. We are facing unprecedented economic and public service delivery challenges with constraints. We feel that with increased engagement with our people we can allow us to meet these challenges as a county.
- 4.2 Against the backdrop of continued economic constraint, local government reform and a growing awareness of the areas in which to make sustained improvements – we must equip our people with the mind-sets and tools to meet the changing demands of our organisation and society.
- 4.3 Volunteering development directly impacts our ability to be innovative and forward thinking and we must create the conditions in which everyone is enabled to flourish.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

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- 5.1 There are no negative resource implications associated with this draft strategy at this stage, with all resource requirements in the interim being met from existing budgets. For any projects that cannot be subsequently met from existing budget individual business cases will be developed.
- 5.2 We have focussed on creating the conditions for volunteering to take place as efficiently and effectively as possible. Investing in our communities to build sustainability and resilience, allowing volunteers to be better equipped to support us to meet the ever changing needs of our community. This is a necessary and crucial stage in our journey that will enable us to be in the best position possible to face the challenges and opportunities that the future of Monmouthshire will gift us both in terms of development and scalability.
- 5.3 Volunteers supporting public service delivery adds value and increased outcomes to services. Volunteering enables services to sustain or enhance delivery of services and contributes to the vision of the Authority to build sustainable and resilient communities.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 There are no negative equality impacts identified in the equality impact assessment and the sustainability challenge identifies only positive impacts (Appendix 3).
- 6.2 The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every year and criteria for monitoring and review will include the monitoring of performance indicators through relevant service improvement plans.

7. CONSULTEES:

Peter Davies – Head of Commercial and People Development
Lisa Knight-Davies - Organisation Development Lead
Sally Thomas – Interim HR Lead
Jen Bradfield – Support Team Lead
People Board
Monmouthshire Volunteer Network
Joining up Volunteering in Monmouthshire

Senior Leadership Team
Volunteers and Volunteer Groups
Gwent Association of Volunteer Organisations
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Talent Lab Training
Cities of Service Coalition
Team London – Volunteering Department
Portsmouth Together – Volunteering department.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Draft Volunteering Strategy
Appendix 2 – Draft Action Plan
Appendix 3 – Future Generations Evaluation
Appendix 4 – Forms of volunteering

9. AUTHOR:

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