



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 13 September 2022	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: **Volunteering Policy (September 2022)**

Report Author(s): **Mark Smith (Community Safety & Youth Officer)**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to seek this Committee's approval to adopt the revised Volunteering Policy 2022-25, and answer queries raised at the previous meeting of this Committee in relation to the draft policy.
Report Summary:	This revised Volunteering Policy builds upon the policy developed in 2019 and sets out how the Council's new Volunteering Programme, devised following the recommendations of an Internal Audit, will be administered and managed.
Recommendation(s):	That the Volunteering Policy 2022-25 (as set out at Appendix 1 to this report) be approved.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	<p>David Gill (Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Andrew Dingley (Community & Wellbeing Manager) 07884 475 369 andrew.dingley@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Smith (Community Safety & Youth Officer) (0116) 257 2675 mark.smith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Corporate Objectives:	<p>Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1)</p> <p>Growing the Borough Economically (CO2)</p> <p>Providing Excellent Services (CO3)</p>
Vision and Values:	<p>"A Stronger Borough Together" (Vision)</p> <p>Accountability (V1)</p> <p>Respect (V2)</p> <p>Teamwork (V3)</p> <p>Innovation (V4)</p> <p>Customer Focus (V5)</p>
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	<p>Reputation Damage (CR4)</p> <p>Increased Fraud (CR10)</p> <p>Cyber Threat / Security (CR11)</p> <p>Other corporate risk(s)</p>

Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	The implications are as set out in the policy.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	Click to select comment.
Chief Finance Officer:	Click to select comment.
Monitoring Officer:	Click to select comment.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	Report entitled 'Volunteering Policy (June 2022)' to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee on 28 June 2022
Appendices:	1. Volunteering Policy (September 2022)

1. Information

- 1.1 The Volunteering Policy 2022-25 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The draft document has been considered by the Senior Leadership Team of the Council and has subsequently been referred to this Committee for formal approval.
- 1.3 The Council already provides varied opportunities for volunteers in the Borough, and works with volunteering groups. The Council recognises the benefits of volunteering for individuals, organisations, and communities.
- 1.4 The Volunteering Policy has been amended from the previously adopted version to incorporate guidance on the development of the Council's Volunteering Programme, highlighting where volunteers can add value to the Council's services and workstreams, and how volunteers can be supported in personal development through training and upskilling.
- 1.5 The Volunteering Policy also seeks to continue the development of enhanced community cohesion and positive public spirit born through the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, as evidenced by the response to a request for volunteers to support the Council's Community Hub, by signposting volunteers to new activities and opportunities.
- 1.6 The Volunteering Policy also makes recommendations for how Council Officers can be afforded volunteering opportunities within the Borough, to the benefit of our communities.

2. Queries from Previous Meeting of this Committee

- 2.1 The Volunteering Policy was previously presented at June's meeting of this Committee where Members raised some queries regarding the Policy as presented.
- 2.2 A query was raised around the performance of the previous Volunteering Policy, adopted by the Council in 2019. Due to staffing changes in the Community & Wellbeing Team in recent years full knowledge of this is not available, although the previous Volunteering

Policy did form the basis of the Council's approach to the development of its Community Hub in response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

- 2.3 The Community Hub recruited 136 volunteers between March 2020 and December 2021 who undertook various tasks in support of vulnerable and shielding individuals in the Borough. The recruitment of these volunteers utilised registration forms used under the previous policy, and collected information from the volunteer via the same form presented within the draft Volunteering Policy's Appendix A to ensure suitability for the required role.
- 2.4 The 136 volunteers working on behalf of the Community Hub undertook 1,401 supportive tasks benefitting 689 individuals within the Borough across the Hub's lifetime.
- 2.5 A second query was raised around the requirement of DBS checks for volunteers recruited under the draft Volunteering Policy, and how they would be paid for.
- 2.6 The draft Volunteering Policy confirms that only specific volunteering opportunities will require an individual to undertake a DBS check, with these being identified on a case by case basis by the organisation 'hosting' the volunteering opportunity.
- 2.7 DBS checks are free of charge for volunteers, although there is a **£7.95** administration fee attached to this for the service. This charge is currently covered by the Council, with this arrangement expected to remain in place under the draft Volunteering Policy where the Council is operating as the central organisation within the volunteering process.
- 2.8 Members also sought clarification around the current engagement by the Council in the Neighbourhood Watch and Speedwatch schemes referenced within the draft Volunteering Policy.
- 2.9 At present the Community Safety Partnership, as the statutory body, provides funding to Leicestershire Police to support the development of Neighbourhood Watch and Speedwatch schemes within the Borough. This funding is provided annually as part of the Partnership's duty to deliver the Police and Crime Commissioner's Policing Plan at a local level.
- 2.10 The Police are the lead agency for the development of both the Neighbourhood Watch and Speedwatch initiatives, and provide information linked to both through the Community Safety Partnership's meetings.
- 2.11 The draft Volunteering Policy will enable the Council, and the Community Safety Partnership, to be more involved with both initiatives with a focus, highlighted through public feedback and crime and disorder data, placed on the development of a Speedwatch related project.
- 2.12 Members additionally sought clarification around training and safety procedures for volunteers. Training and safety briefings provided will be relevant to the volunteering opportunity, and reviewed on a case by case basis.
- 2.13 The standard position for training and safety briefings will be that the lead officer or organisation responsible for the volunteering opportunity will be required to provide appropriate levels of both for the specific task to the volunteer.
- 2.14 Safeguarding training for all volunteers will be delivered by Mark Smith, and will provide an equivalent to the 'bronze level' training provided to all Council staff. Any specific safeguarding processes in place with organisations utilising volunteers will remain the responsibility of the host organisation to provide training on.
- 2.15 There are no extra costs for the Council associated with the training of volunteers beyond

officer's time, and the provision of a venue for non-virtual training.

- 2.16 A final query was raised regarding whether volunteers would be classed as employees, and what safety legislation they would be covered by. The Gov.UK site on the rights of the volunteer confirms that volunteers, due to not having a contract of employment, do not have the same rights as an employee.
- 2.17 Volunteers should be provided with a volunteer agreement that explains the level of supervision and support they will receive, the training that will be provided, whether they will be covered under the host organisation's employer or public liability insurance, health and safety issues and concerns, and details of any expenses the organisation will cover.
- 2.18 The provision of a volunteer agreement is not compulsory, but is seen by the Council as being best practice. Host organisations will be expected to provide a volunteer agreement to any volunteer signposted to them under the draft Volunteering Policy.
- 2.19 The Council will be required to review its current public employer and public liability insurance policies to ensure that an appropriate level of cover is in place for volunteers working directly on behalf of, and within, the Council.