

Report to the Leader of the Council

Subject: Volunteering policy (members of public, residents, businesses, third parties and groups)

Date: 27th March 2020

Author: Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Officer

Wards Affected:

All

Purpose

To seek approval of a Council Volunteering policy for members of the public, residents, businesses, third parties and groups that wish to volunteer for the Council, assisting with Council run activities, events, schemes or projects.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Recommendation(s)

That the Leader:

- 1) Approves the Volunteer Policy at Appendix 1 to be applied to all third party volunteers volunteering for Council controlled events or activities.**

1 Background

1.1

The Volunteering Policy, which includes the Volunteers Handbook, provides a framework for how the Council manages its volunteers and voluntary groups. It helps define the role of volunteers and sets out clear expectations of how the relationship between volunteers and the Council should work including how volunteers are expected to participate and what measures the Council will put in place to support and protect volunteers whilst volunteering for Council events, activities and schemes. The policy has been prepared to support the delivery of the priorities and objectives in

the Gedling Plan; to enable relationships to be built through our communities, to provide opportunities for social inclusion and skills development and to encourage healthy communities. The work of our volunteers is vital to support our communities, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic where so many of our vulnerable residents require additional support and assistance.

1.2 This policy is separate to the Volunteer Policy relating to staff which is contained in the Employee Handbook and relates only to external volunteers volunteering for Council led schemes or events.

1.3 The policy has been prepared by the Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Officer in consultation with a number of stakeholders including, Nottinghamshire wide Health and Safety Officers, the Corporate Health and Safety Group, voluntary groups such as the Council's Friends of Groups supporting our Parks teams and individuals. National guidance and publications on Volunteering have also been considered.

1.4 This policy supports the Council's Corporate Governance policy and its core principles by demonstrating a strong commitment to our ethical values and respecting the rule of law, ensuring openness, stakeholder engagement, sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits and managing risk.

1.5

The policy reflects the size and nature of the Council, and is proportionate and pragmatic in terms of the level of formality so as not to put potential volunteers off volunteering whilst being clear on the Council's expectations of volunteers and what the Council will deliver. The main areas covered in the Policy and Handbook are:

- the attracting and induction of volunteers, including equality and diversity considerations
- instructions and training
- Expenses expectations
- Supervision, support and safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Clothing and personal protective equipment
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Insurance
- Problem solving and complaint procedures for volunteers.
- Being an ambassador for the Council, not a spokesperson
- Accident and incident reporting
- Solving volunteer problems and handling complaints

- 1.6 In terms of what Volunteering opportunities are available, the policy does include reference to some specific activities relating to maintenance and support of the Council's Parks and open spaces, however, at the current time the policy has particular prevalence in respect of volunteer schemes operating to support the Council during the Covid-19 pandemic. Volunteers are essential at this time to enable the Council to provide support to vulnerable residents and the contribution from volunteers is hugely appreciated at this difficult time.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Leader approves the Volunteer Policy at Appendix 1 to this report to enable our staff and volunteers to have a clear understanding of how the relationship between the Council and volunteers is managed and what is expected of volunteers who are generously supporting Council activities and schemes.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the Leaders notes the work undertaken to develop this policy and supports the operational measures to deliver the volunteering scheme. In particular the Volunteer Induction Form at Appendix 2 to the policy demonstrates what information will be captured from our Volunteers and provides a clear audit trail, compliant with data protection legislation to ensure volunteers can be managed effectively.
- 2.3 It is proposed that this policy is kept under review by the Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Officer

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could operate without an approved Volunteer Policy, this would not provide staff and volunteers with the clarity required to safely and effectively run projects and schemes which is essential, particularly at the present time when volunteers are critical to the delivery of schemes to support residents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5 Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Handbook

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 Knowhow.ncvo.org.uk advice on volunteer recruitment process/

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your->

[team/volunteers/recruiting/copy_of_process#](#)

The [Time Well Spent](#) report is a result of a national survey on the volunteering experience.

The [Getting Involved](#) report gives an overview of the different ways that people get involved in society and looks at the nature of participation by drawing upon trends, facts and statistics.

The [Institute for Volunteering Research](#) is home to reports on volunteering and its impact.

The [UK Civil Society Almanac](#) provides statistics and information on volunteering.

The government's [Community Life survey](#) tracks trends in volunteering.

Read more about [volunteer management](#) and [practical advice for volunteering](#).

The [Volunteer Rights Inquiry](#) aimed to understand the nature and scope of the problems experienced by volunteers and to identify suitable remedies.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To provide Volunteers with a clear set of expectations and to provide clarity around the relationship between volunteers and the Council which is particularly essential at the present time.