

14 March 2016

Community & Health Committee

Brentwood Borough Council Volunteering Strategy 2016-2019

Report of: *Lucy Gill, Culture, Community and Youth Development Officer*

Wards Affected: *All wards*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** The Volunteering Strategy demonstrates that Brentwood Borough Council is committed to recognising the integral role that volunteers play in our communities in promoting and contributing to community cohesion. The draft Volunteering Strategy 2016 outlines the Council's plans for supporting local volunteering. The action plan outlines how the Council will achieve these objectives.

2. Recommendation

That Members agree to:

- 2.1 Adopt the Brentwood Borough Council Volunteering Strategy 2016-2019 and its supporting action plan.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1** In 2010, Brentwood Borough Council adopted a Volunteer Engagement Policy and Procedures and an Employee Volunteering Policy in 2011.
- 3.2** These policies and procedures are currently being reviewed and will come to a future committee.
- 3.3** As Brentwood Borough Council continues to strengthen its relationship with and commitment to the voluntary and community sector, it is prudent to adopt a strategy to sit above both aforementioned policies and undertake a series of achievable actions to demonstrate this.
- 3.4** The strategy has been developed to ensure that Brentwood Borough Council:

1. Supports the positive promotion of volunteering across the Borough by raising the profile of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.
 2. Demonstrates best practice by supporting staff to undertake volunteering.
 3. Ensures that volunteers are an integral part of the Council's service delivery.
- 3.5 The above three aims form the basis of the Volunteering Strategy's complimentary action plan and will be met mostly by the adoption of the following documents/ schemes:
- The Brentwood Compact (see separate report)
 - Employee Volunteering Policy and Procedures
 - Volunteer Engagement and Recruitment Policy and Procedures

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Although Brentwood Borough Council does have an Employee Volunteering Policy and Procedures and Volunteer Engagement and Recruitment Policy and Procedures, it did not have a Volunteering Strategy to demonstrate our recognition of the importance of local volunteers to our community.
- 4.2 In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Strategy, a supporting action plan is in place to overarch our current policies for employee and volunteer engagement schemes, both of which are due for renewal.
- 4.3 The Volunteering Policy and Procedures and Volunteer Engagement and Recruitment Policy and Procedures will be submitted to a future committee for Member agreement.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Volunteering Strategy strengthens our commitment to the Council's vision for volunteering, which ensures that we prioritise engagement with volunteers in service delivery to involve the community in influencing decision-making.
- 5.2 The Strategy also prioritises supporting organisations to raise the profile of volunteering, whilst encouraging our own staff to undertake leave to carry out their own volunteering.
- 5.3 The Brentwood Compact commits Brentwood Borough Council, along with other statutory and Voluntary Community Sector organisations recognise the social and economic contribution that volunteers make and to recognise and support the importance of good practice and management of volunteers.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 This sits under the Community and Health strand to encourage thriving and engaged communities and to work with community and voluntary organisations to develop the priorities for community development.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 7.1 The Volunteering Strategy makes reference in its Action Plan to the forthcoming renewal of the Employee Volunteering Policy, which will propose the continuation of enabling staff to allocate up to 2 days to undertake volunteering. This is in line with Essex County Council's Employee Volunteering Scheme. There are resource implications for service managers to consider, such as staff cover for the 2 days paid leave.
- 7.2 The Volunteering Strategy also makes reference in its Action Plan to the forthcoming renewal of the Volunteer Engagement Policy and Recruitment Procedures, where Volunteers will be entitled to expenses. This will need to be met through existing budgets from departments recruiting the volunteers.

8.0 Legal Implications

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- 8.1 The Governments volunteering strategy led from the Cabinet Office, aims to build 'a society where everyone has the chance to contribute to their community and where those communities are self-confident and civically engaged.
- 8.2 The Employee Volunteering Policy and the Volunteer Engagement Policy and Procedures will be aligned to with the Council's HR Policies and Procedures.

9.0 Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Draft Volunteering Strategy 2016-2019

10.0 Background documents

Brentwood Compact

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