



CABINET

14 DECEMBER 2016

Subject Heading:

Volunteer Strategy 2016 - 21

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Melvin Wallace

SLT Lead:

Sarah Homer, Interim Chief Operating Officer

Report Author and contact details:

Jerry Haley, Senior Community Safety and Development Officer
jerry.haley@havering.gov.uk
01708 434370

Policy context:

The Havering Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan 2016 to 2021 provide a five year framework for developing volunteering across the voluntary, public and private sectors in Havering. The strategy and the specific actions within it link with all three key areas of the Corporate Plan, but most specifically to the target outcome to “Encourage residents to play an active part in their communities through volunteering.” The Strategy and Action Plan are also closely linked to the Voluntary Sector Strategy and Action Plan that were signed off by the Cabinet in June 2015.

Financial summary:

There are no direct financial implications of this decision.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

When should this matter be reviewed?

November 2017

Reviewing OSC:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	x
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	x
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	x

SUMMARY

The Council's Corporate Plan includes a target outcome to "Encourage residents to play an active part in their communities through volunteering". The proposed Volunteer Strategy and its accompanying action plan set out how the Council will achieve this and how we will ensure that our communities and volunteers are appropriately supported.

In the strategy, attached at **Appendix 1**, the Council recognises the benefits, value and positive impact of volunteering. The strategy sets out a long-term vision to develop volunteering in Havering and ensure that communities are resilient and supported by an effective and sustainable voluntary and community sector.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with the local voluntary and community sector. Various Council departments have had input into the strategy through the cross-departmental Voluntary Sector Steering Group. The actions in the accompanying action plan also reflect plans and objectives set out in individual service plans and strategies as well as new strands of work.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet **agrees** the Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan attached at **Appendix 1**.

REPORT DETAIL

Havering has a large and vibrant voluntary and community sector and a proud history of volunteering. Havering's voluntary organisations range from larger, nationally coordinated organisations through to small neighbourhood-level groups of residents seeking to achieve particular objectives or deliver individual community projects.

A Volunteer Centre has been set up, with the Council's support, to develop volunteers and volunteering within the borough. Various recent council initiatives to develop our use of volunteers have strengthened our commitment to volunteering,

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such as increasing the use of volunteers to run activities within the library service. However, these are just the beginning of a larger drive within Havering to support volunteers and the organisations developing them. With effective co-ordination, the potential impact of volunteering in Havering can grow alongside the need for volunteers. Using this strategy we can bring together communities and people from diverse backgrounds to volunteer their time and skills. This can both strengthen community cohesion and make Havering a more vibrant, cultural and energetic place to live.

The volunteering vision for Havering represented in this strategy is to ensure that our communities and volunteers are resilient and supported by an effective and sustainable voluntary and community sector. Through the actions detailed within the strategy, the Council seeks to deliver the following outcomes:

- Havering is a place where the full range of economic, social, environmental and personal benefits that volunteering brings is recognised by residents, organisations and businesses;
- Volunteering is encouraged so that, in time, volunteers will be reflective of the many and diverse communities in Havering;
- Volunteering is supported, rewarding and everyone feels that they can make a difference;
- Volunteering brings people together, makes a positive impact on social cohesion and makes a significant contribution to all aspects of life;
- Havering is a place where volunteering is exciting, vibrant and diverse, and
- Volunteering opportunities align with initiatives to manage increasing demands on services, so that residents and communities continue to experience high quality support.

Sitting beneath this, the action plan appended to the strategy has five objectives:

- Build a stronger, more resilient community that encourages greater participation in local community life;
- Promote resilience, health and well-being to both individuals and organisations;
- Increase volunteering through appropriate matching of volunteers and opportunities, considering individuals' and organisations' diverse needs;
- Supporting businesses in delivering corporate social responsibility programmes that include employee volunteering, and
- Creating the right environment which ensures that volunteering schemes are mutually beneficial to both volunteers and employing organisations.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to make a difference to the people around them or to make new friends. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. For host organisations (including the Council), volunteering offers an opportunity to introduce perspectives outside of the day to day running of the organisation; to draw in additional skills and knowledge, and potentially to retain or expand services that are valued by the community but may otherwise need to be reduced or withdrawn altogether in the current economic climate. The development and delivery of a Volunteer Strategy is therefore essential to the furtherance of the “place shaping” agenda and to assist the Council in managing demand in times of diminishing resources.

Other options considered:

The only other option is not to implement a Volunteer Strategy. For the reasons explained above, this is not a viable option if the objective set out in the Corporate Plan to “Encourage residents to play an active part in their communities through volunteering” is to be achieved.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from this strategy.

Legal implications and risks:

The proposed strategy does not indicate that volunteers will be undertaking any roles which the Council has a duty to provide, nor that any volunteers will be employed by the Council in any way. Accordingly there are no apparent legal implications in approving the strategy. If there are specific projects where these issues will need to be reconsidered then legal advice will be available.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising directly, although the strategy provides the potential to improve the diversity and capacity of the voluntary workforce.

Equalities implications and risks:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed which is attached at **Appendix 2**.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Corporate Plan 2016/17 is available on the Council's website at https://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Category/Vision.aspx?utm_source=Home_Page&utm_medium=Footer_Image&utm_campaign=Visionhttps://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Category/Vision.aspx?utm_source=Home_Page&utm_medium=Footer_Image&utm_campaign=Vision

The Council's Voluntary Sector Strategy is available on the Council's website at <https://www3.havering.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/Voluntary-Sector-Strategy.aspx>