

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting10th September 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Volunteering Strategy (Strategy Appendix to follow)

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented a Volunteering Strategy Framework for the Borough. It detailed the research and findings to produce the strategy and details plans for implementation. A copy of the Volunteering Strategy had been circulated to Members.

Following a number of questions from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE), members of the public and officers across the local authority in relation to arrangements around volunteering some research was undertaken to determine the issues and need.

The research found that:-

- Currently there isn't a single route or co-ordinated approach in relation to the opportunities available for anybody who wants to start volunteering. An internet search using 'volunteering in Stockton-on-Tees' returns over 70,000 results and no obvious pathway through them all. The first non-sponsored result directs people to the Stockton Borough Council website which only provides details of how to find out about volunteering opportunities in the Council.
- It's not always clear who is offering volunteering opportunities or who to approach
- There is no single, common or legal definition of Volunteering
- It's not easy to identify whether the opportunities on offer are suitable for the individual wanting to volunteer.
- organisations who are approached by willing volunteers who don't currently have any opportunities are often turning people away without being able to identify and signpost them to other services or organisations.
- Whilst most organisations have things in place to continue to support and develop volunteers this is varied. Some have a great deal of skill and expertise in volunteer recruitment, management, development and support and others don't have the resources to do it on a large scale

- there isn't an obvious place for people to contact if they are simply thinking about volunteering and wondering if it is right for them and what sort of volunteer opportunity would they be best suited to
- Estimates brought together from local and national surveys suggest across the Borough there are 58,000 people who have undertaken some voluntary activity with around 23,000 people who are regular volunteers and 10,000 core volunteers of which only 3,000 are known to the VCSE
- One hour of a volunteers time equates to £11.09
- We also know that volunteering adds an immense amount of social value to our area and we believe it has a huge impact on both those who volunteer and those who they volunteer for but we haven't got any comprehensive or systematic way of capturing that and promoting it. Whilst the commissioned research identified models of practice elsewhere, many included resource intensive traditional models of face-to-face brokerage services which were unsustainable without a clear long term funding strategy or business development model in place. The strategy was therefore based on an initial delivery plan formulated around a more sustainable framework model. The framework picked up all of the elements identified in the research with actions culminating in a month long programme of activity during June each year, as a local extension of the national Volunteers Week (first week in June). Should the need for face-to-face brokerage continue an element of the delivery plan for the Steering Group could include the development and delivery of a funding strategy or establishment of separate VCSE enterprise, backed by a sustainable business model.

Oversight of delivery of the plan would be led by a Volunteering Steering Group managed by Catalyst as the VCSE infrastructure organisation for the borough. The Steering Group would be supported by a wider group of stakeholders and contributors operating as 'task and finish' groups as needed around the elements of the framework. The Council would have a place on the Steering Group.

It was also proposed that a small element of the Market Development Fund be 'ring-fenced' as match funding to implement the model.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The content and approach be endorsed.
3. An update be given to Cabinet in April 2016.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To obtain support through Cabinet for the endorsement of the Borough's Volunteering Strategy.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 - Volunteering Strategy as he was a member of Catalyst.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

18th September 2015

Proper Officer
14 September 2015