

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting19th May 2016

1. Title of Item/Report

Volunteering Strategy

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on implementation of the Volunteering Strategy Framework for the Borough which was endorsed by Cabinet on 10th September, 2015.

Oversight of delivery of the framework was led by a Volunteering Steering group managed by Catalyst as the VCSE infrastructure organisation for the Borough. Other members of the group included:

- a. Stockton Borough Council
- b. Tees Valley Rural Community Council (TVRCC),
- c. Volunteering Matters
- d. Teesside University
- e. Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association, (SRCGA)

Specific areas of work were delegated to Task and Finish groups with membership drawn from the VCSE and public sector. A Hub Task and Finish Group was charged with looking at whether Stockton Borough might want or need a volunteer centre and what a brokerage offer might look like. As anticipated this group agreed that resourcing traditional face to face brokerage (such as a volunteer bureau) were somewhat dated and would be unsustainable. Instead they had developed a Hub Vision, which would provide a variety of coordinated opportunities and ways for prospective volunteers to engage in volunteering.

At the heart of the model was a pilot website provided by Catalyst which would link to volunteering opportunities in other organisations and provide resources for volunteers and organisations (including example policies, templates for organisations to adapt etc) www.stocktonvolunteers.co.uk. The website and associated material would have its own brand identity, which had been designed and agreed, to make it immediately recognisable.

The website would be piloted and populated by organisations from the 19th May 2016 and would go live at the start of Volunteering Month on 1st June 2016.

In addition to the website face-to-face Access points would be made available in partner organisations, to help people gain access to support to find volunteering opportunities, not necessarily a dedicated space but based on more informal hot-desking arrangements. VCSE organisations had agreed to a general commitment to the model and the signposting of people interested in volunteering to the access points/website etc.

There would also be pop up volunteering available which would target one off volunteering opportunities at specific interest groups e.g. Community litter picks or planting etc.

A Volunteering Partnership Network had been established which met quarterly, around specific themes, aimed at organisations that use volunteers as part of their core business. It provided an opportunity to share best practice and discuss common issues. It had around 50 members who were experienced in managing and using volunteers.

Partners would use media, in all its forms including social media, to encourage and celebrate volunteering through good news stories and raising awareness of volunteering opportunities and how to get involved and a Communication plan had been developed.

Whilst the media drive around volunteers would be year round it culminates in an annual borough wide volunteer celebration month in June which tied in with the national volunteer week campaign on the 1 – 7 June 2016. Details of the celebrations taking place in June were provided.

Further work was planned, by Catalyst and partners, around quality mark assurance for organisations that involve volunteers. This quality standard would allow volunteers a level of assurance that the organisation values and supports its volunteers.

The pilot website would be under review, by Catalyst and partners, over the coming year to assess activity, including number of visits, advertised volunteering opportunities and take up of opportunities by volunteers. It was proposed to work with Catalyst to bring a further report back to Cabinet after 12 months on progress and the effectiveness of the Volunteering Framework approach.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Progress on the delivery of the Volunteering Strategy be noted and plans for the new Volunteers website and Volunteers Month celebrations in June be supported.

2. A further update report be received from Catalyst in 12 months' time to review progress on delivery of the Volunteering Strategy Framework.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To update Cabinet on the implementation of the Volunteering Strategy for the Borough which was endorsed by Cabinet on 10th September 2015.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Jim Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 – Volunteering Strategy Update as he was the Chair of Eastern Ravens Trust.

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 – Volunteering Strategy Update as he was a Board director at Catalyst.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

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

Midnight, 27th May 2016

Proper Officer
23 May 2016