

Open Report on behalf of Keith Ireland, Chief Executive

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	11 December 2018
Subject:	Volunteer Engagement Policy

Summary:

This report provides an update on Lincolnshire County Council's revised Volunteer Engagement Policy and its supporting documents. The policy facilitates a greater level of visibility and access to volunteering opportunities across the organisation, aids clarity and reduces disparity in volunteer recruitment, training and management procedures, and provides advice and support to both volunteers and managers of volunteers.

Actions Required:

Members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the report and endorse the Volunteer Engagement Policy.

1. Background

LCC currently hosts around 600 volunteers over 30 sites, without these volunteers many sites would not be able to deliver the quality of service required. They contribute a tremendous amount of skill, knowledge, ingenuity, commitment and drive to many services and projects.

The responsibility for driving forward the Council's strategic approach towards volunteering falls to the Community Engagement Team (CET) within the Economy and Environment Directorate. The CET chairs and facilitates the Volunteer Development and Support Group (VDSG) which involves officers from a wide range of service areas across the Council who manage volunteers. Meeting up to four times a year the group contributes to the review, development and promotion of corporately consistent procedures relating to volunteer recruitment, induction, training and volunteer management. This includes reviewing the Volunteer Engagement Policy which was due for December of this year.

2. Revised Volunteer Engagement Policy

Good management of volunteers helps maximise benefits to both the volunteer and staff. It also helps with recruitment, retention and cessation of volunteering opportunities. The VDSG members undertook the review of the policy and its supporting documents to ensure that a consistent approach is followed across the organisation when engaging volunteers, providing clarity for staff and volunteers.

The supporting documentation is listed below and is available on LCC's website and on George:

Volunteer Welcome Book - designed to give the volunteer an insight into the way the Council works and how this could affect them; it also supports them in carrying out their activities. The guide also provides information on expenses, training and supervision.

Supervisor's Handbook - provides comprehensive advice and information on the processes involved in the recruitment, selection and management of volunteers. The handbook is also backed up by a Paperwork Pack.

Paperwork Pack (includes Induction checklist) - provides a set of guidance documents and templates to help support volunteer recruitment, induction, training and day-to-day management.

Training is also available:

For Volunteers – a package covering four core topics - Information Governance; Safeguarding; Equality & Diversity; and Health & Safety.

For staff managing volunteers and those working alongside volunteers – a package covering three topics:

- Working Alongside Volunteers
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Supporting and Supervising Volunteers

The promotion of the policy and its supporting documents will be achieved through regular liaison with colleagues and managers of volunteers across the organisation, through the Volunteer Development and Support Group (VDSG), Internal Comms and the volunteering area of LCC's website.

The volunteering area of the website is the main point of access for all information around volunteering and volunteering opportunities across different service areas. At present, the following service areas promote volunteering opportunities on the webpage – Archaeological and Historical Projects, Countryside Access Volunteering, Heritage Volunteering, Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project, Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service, Liaise, Volunteering with Children's Services, Community Hub Libraries. The page also hosts volunteering opportunities with partner organisations.

'Related links' and 'Current opportunities' sections are permanent features that appear on the right-hand side of the webpage. For the latter, interested volunteers are asked to complete an 'Expression of Interest' form if they would like to be considered for a volunteering opportunity. Volunteer Centres across the county also promote LCC volunteer opportunities.

3. Conclusion

The Volunteer Engagement Policy has been reviewed by staff with volunteer management experience across the authority. Having a robust policy and supporting documents in place benefits the authority in many ways, including:

- enabling public demonstration of the commitment to volunteering and robust support to volunteers;
- ensuring staff who manage volunteers are able to do so effectively and with a corporately consistent approach;
- enhancing the volunteers' experience;
- encouraging more people to volunteer;
- minimising the potential risks arising from the involvement of volunteers.

4. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out??

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	LCC Volunteer Engagement Policy
Appendix B	LCC Volunteer Supervisors Handbook
Appendix C	LCC Volunteer Welcome Book

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Bev Finnegan, who can be contacted on 01522 550516 or Bev.finnegan@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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