



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEERING POLICY REFRESH

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the committee on the need to review our current Volunteer Policy and to seek approval of the refreshed Moray Council Volunteering Policy which has been redrafted in direct engagement with council volunteers, community councils and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (41) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the formulation and review of Council wide policy, strategies, priorities and objectives

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To adopt the refreshed Volunteer Strategy to reaffirm Moray Council support for direct volunteering with council services and within communities.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are currently a number of different documents relating to Volunteering on the council website which can cause confusion. [The Moray Council Volunteering Policy](#) has references to The Scottish Executive and has been in place since 2007. The [Volunteering Policy \(Staff Guidance\)](#) is the most up to date document being updated in September 2019 and approved in March 2020 by the HSCM Strategic Leadership group and Adult Care Practice Governance Board. It was due for review in March 2022.
- 3.2 There is an opportunity to update and simplify the current position, hence the refreshed Policy at **APPENDIX 1** which has evolved from the Staff Guidance document. The updated version better reflects the different types of volunteering that the council supports and is informed by the experiences of recent years where community volunteers and groups played such an important role in mobilising during the pandemic and adverse weather events.

- 3.3 The [Scottish Government review](#) of Storm Arwen made a number of recommendations one of which is “*Fuller integration of the voluntary and community sector into emergency planning and response*”. Reference is therefore made explicitly to Emergency Planning within the refresh in recognition of work being delivered with community councils and others to develop local resilience plans.
- 3.4 The Policy outlines
- How Moray Council services will encourage, support and celebrate the work of volunteers.
 - How the council will link in with Community Resilience groups and other stakeholders to co-ordinate support to communities in emergency situations.
- 3.5 A version of the policy was reported to Corporate committee on 5 January 2023 (para 9 of the minute refers) and the Committee requested that further engagement take place with Community Councils and Council volunteers in shaping the policy. The wording of the strategy has also been reviewed to take account of feedback from committee.
- 3.6 The draft strategy was circulated to Community Council chairs with a link to a short online survey around the refreshed policy. Nine community councils responded and were generally supportive of the policy although two respondents did feel that there needed to be more emphasis placed on the role that Community Councils play in Resilience Planning. This has been reflected with specific references to Community Councils added to the Policy.
- 3.7 A further discussion took place in person with the Joint Community Councils of Moray who were supportive of the policy. Community Councils are actively engaged in Resilience Planning as well as numerous other activities at the community level and recognised the potential to celebrate the work of community councillors during Volunteers Week.
- 3.8 Direct council volunteers contributed to the redrafting process by taking part in an online survey (56 respondents) and a follow up focus group discussion which was attended by 11 volunteers. The key messages were that:
- Volunteers recognise the value and importance of induction and training.
 - Volunteers want ongoing communication and regular catch-ups with the service staff and to meet other volunteers to share experiences.
 - Volunteers recognise the need to undergo Protection of Vulnerable Group (PVG) checks as required.
 - Most volunteers do so to make a meaningful contribution and to make a difference in their community. 43% also volunteered to meet new people.
 - Volunteers would like to know how they are making a difference and are glad to see the intention to celebrate the impact of volunteering in Moray.

- 3.9 A new cross service Volunteering Forum will be formed for all services who support and work with volunteers in order to share good practice and improve overall co-ordination in areas such as volunteer induction and training.
- 3.10 The Policy has also had earlier input from council services, tsi MORAY and Moray Health and Social Care Partnership colleagues. It has been discussed and amended after feedback from the Personnel Forum and CMT.
- 3.11 Colleagues in Health and Social Care have confirmed that the Policy is consistent with their refreshed NHS Grampian Volunteering Policy and that they will report back to the Integration Joint Board on the new council policy once approved.
- 3.12 The Policy makes reference to the [Volunteer Essential Information Handbook](#) which will require a new Foreword and which will be updated once the Policy is approved.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan /Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)

The refreshed policy will support volunteering in Moray and is consistent with the Corporate Plan Vision which explains how the council works with 'public, private, community and voluntary organisations to create the right environment for people to do well and reach their potential...'

The LOIP refers to the key role of the CLD Plan in supporting the development of 'resilient and self-reliant, empowered communities'. The CLD Plan has a dedicated Active Citizens and Communities strand which seeks to encourage and value volunteering, support community action groups and to help community groups develop Community Resilience Plans, all of which are consistent with the new policy.

(b) Policy and Legal

None.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

There will be a new cross service forum to bring together services who use volunteers to share good practice and general support to volunteers.

(f) Property

There are no Property Implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is at **APPENDIX 2**.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Implications

The changes to our climate caused by man-made climate change means that storms and extreme weather will become increasingly the norm. Volunteers working with resilience planning and community responses to the changed climate will be essential to assist communities in the more frequent emergency situations they will face.

(i) Consultations

The Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, the Head of HR, ICT & OD, the HR Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Principal Climate Change Strategy Officer, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is recommended that Committee support the refreshed strategy and reaffirm the council's commitment to supporting volunteering.

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Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-9425411-226
SPMAN-9425411-227
SPMAN-9425411-243