



Cabinet
14 October 2019

Report from the Assistant Chief Executive

Brent Together- Draft Volunteering Strategy for 2019-2023

Wards Affected:	Al
Key Decision:	Yes
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	Three Appendices: Appendix 1 Draft Volunteering Strategy Appendix 2 Volunteering Strategy Options Appraisal Appendix 3 Brent Council Volunteers Census
Background Papers:	
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report presents the draft Brent Together Volunteering Strategy for 2019-2023 for approval. The strategy sets out our ambitions for a vibrant volunteering culture across the borough. It also details options for taking this workstream forward.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and agree the draft strategy in Appendix 1.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Brent Together Volunteering Strategy sets out a 4-year strategic approach for volunteering across the borough. It will also address the wider ambition of stronger communities. The timeframe of the strategy includes the duration of 2 ambitious volunteer-led programmes (London Borough of Culture and the Emerging Communities programme) and their immediate legacy.
- 3.2 Success of the strategy will be measured largely by the diversity of people actively engaged in volunteering across the borough and by the range and quality of opportunities available to them.
- 3.3 The strategy has the following overarching **aims**:
- That people from across Brent's communities, of different backgrounds, feel encouraged and motivated to volunteer their time;
 - That Brent offers the best possible volunteering opportunities in terms of both range and quality;
 - That volunteering in Brent is truly inclusive and brings our diverse communities closer together;
 - That the council leads the way as an example of good practice in volunteering.
- 3.4 These will be achieved through the following **priorities**:
- Providing high quality, accessible information on volunteering through a new online platform;
 - Increasing the range of volunteering opportunities through new programmes;
 - Emphasising inclusivity and diversity in all aspects of the strategy;
 - Promoting employee volunteering;
 - Strengthening the council's internal volunteering offer.

4.0 Future Options Considered

- 4.1 We have considered 3 models for delivery of the strategy:
- a) Purchase a Time Credits platform;
 - b) Develop a standard volunteering platform;
 - c) Contract an external organisation for brokerage.

4.1.1 Option A- Time Credits platform

This style of platform allows volunteers to access opportunities for which they are rewarded with time credits which can be spent on local activities. Tempo Time Credits supply the software and set-up support from £30,000. Large scale projects cost est. £100,000. While time credits offer a unique way to attract new volunteers, most local authorities (e.g. Westminster, Haringey) use the system alongside an established volunteering platform. It is therefore advised that we focus on developing a new volunteering platform before considering time credits. This option is not recommended.

4.1.2 Option B- Standard volunteering platform

A standard volunteering platform integrated within Brent Council's website and managed internally. A single online location for all volunteering opportunities in the borough, where organisations can publicise their opportunities and individuals can search for them. Cost of a platform ranges from £30, 000 for an 'off-the-shelf' purchase to £150,000 for a customised model developed in-house. Given the difference in price, an off-the-shelf purchase is the preferable option. Options for providers will be fully evaluated and the proposal will be included within the Transformation team's business case for new digital investment (see 'Financial Implications' below). This option is recommended and will be subject to further review after a year.

4.1.3 Option C- Contracted brokerage

Similar model to previous provision by Groundwork with an external agency providing volunteering recruitment and management services and taking lead on promotional activity. While external brokerage offers a comprehensive package, bringing this service in-house is likely to offer better value for money. Contracting an external organisation for brokerage would cost circa £50,000/year. This option is not recommended.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The proposed option B includes expenditure of circa £30, 000 to purchase a volunteering platform which will be included within Transformation's business case for new digital investment. Any other costs for delivering the strategy will be contained within Strategy and Partnership's existing budget.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Care will need to be taken to identify any potential volunteering opportunities for which it would be necessary to have additional vetting checks in place, for example, confirmation that the intended volunteers have been DBS checked prior to them being accepted to undertake the relevant task.
- 6.2 It will also be necessary to ensure that adequate risk assessments have been undertaken in respect of any volunteers being deployed, particularly those who would be operating in community based locations.
- 6.3 Finally we would want to ensure that there was adequate insurance provision in place in respect of volunteers in case of incident or accident when carrying out their duties.
- 6.4 In respect of 6.1 – 6.3 above, in that the strategy is intended to replace existing ad hoc arrangements already in place, the likelihood is that it will be a more effective means of ensuring that the highlighted issues have been fully addressed, thus reducing the potential risks arising of challenge.

7.0 Equality Implications

- 7.1 Equality Implications have been considered for each of the options for delivery of the strategy.

Option A- Time Credits platform

This option is likely to have a positive impact on persons with a protected characteristic as the model works in a targeted way with groups for whom barriers to volunteering are identified. While this option is not currently recommended, its positive impact on equalities will be acknowledged when considering future developments of the strategy.

Option B- Standard volunteering platform

This option is likely to have a positive impact on equalities as awareness of volunteering opportunities will be improved for all sections of the community, including those with a protected characteristic. Any negative impact of using an online system to promote volunteering opportunities will be mitigated through alternative methods of promotion (e.g. leaflets, in-person promotion at events). Further consideration of equality implications will inform development of the volunteering platform from the initial stages. This will be conducted through an on-going Equality Analysis.

Option C- Contracted brokerage

This option is likely to have a positive impact on persons with a protected characteristic as volunteering opportunities will be promoted equally to all sections of the community. However, it is also noted that there is no negative impact to ceasing the brokerage service previously provided by Groundwork, as this was a generalist service to all areas of the community which would be covered through provision of an alternative volunteering platform.

8.0 Any Other Implications (HR, Property etc - if necessary)

- 8.1 There are no other implications.

9.0 Proposed Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 9.1 The Lead Member has been consulted in the development of this draft the strategy.

Report sign off:

Peter Gadsdon
Assistant Chief Executive