



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Inner North East Area Committee

Date: 7th December 2009



Subject: Year of the Volunteer

<p>Electoral Wards Affected: Chapel Allerton Moortown Roundhay</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

It has been proposed by the Joint Leader of the Council, Central and Corporate Portfolio Holder to make 2010 - A Year of Volunteering in Leeds. This report explains the range of benefits that volunteering can provide to individuals and the wider community, and the role of this Area Committee. Volunteering also supports the Leeds Strategic Plan improvement priority of "an increased number of local people engaged in activities to meet community needs and improve the quality of life for local residents". Creating transferable skills for individuals for future employment opportunities and developing community cohesion are two examples of the positive contributions that volunteering could make to help mitigate some of the negative impacts of the economic recession.

The report provides an outline citywide programme of activities that have already been proposed through consultation with Executive Members, Directorates, Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations and some key partners. It also identifies the programme of activities from this area committee.

Arrangements for steering, co-ordinating and resourcing the Year of Volunteering are also identified

Members are asked to:

- (i) Endorse and support the proposal, mission and aims for 2010 being the Year of Volunteering in Leeds.
- (ii) Support the development of 2010 Year of Volunteering through the programme of Area Committee events identified in paragraphs 16 - 23 of this report

- (iii) Approve the Area Committee participation in the programme as identified in this report.
- (iv) Investigate sponsoring and encouraging additional activities with other partners, the VCFS sector and others

Purpose of This Report

1. The purpose of this report is to explain the proposal to make 2010 - A Year of Volunteering in Leeds and to outline progress in relation to developing a programme of activities and arrangements for running and resourcing this programme. It puts forward a programme of activities for this Area Committee and seeks member approval for this.

Background Information

2. **Volunteering is important** because it provides a range of benefits to individuals and also to the wider community. It helps unlock the talent and creativity of individuals to lead activities, groups and communities and to build skills, confidence and independence that may also be transferable into a work environment. Volunteering is also a way to help people to develop a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and community.
3. Volunteering activity plays a key role in developing community cohesion both locally and more broadly across the city through wider engagement and participation e.g. student and corporate volunteers. Volunteering brings many added benefits to organisations and services to citizens. For example, Council services have many hundreds of volunteers involved in a wide range of activities such as school governors, working with young people as mentors in schools and in the youth service, working on environmental projects with Parks and Countryside; archiving in the Museums and Galleries, helping out at Leeds International Film Festival and other major public events, providing a Books at Home service through Libraries and supporting people to lead independent lives through Adult Social Care. Area Committees already support many volunteer organisations through wellbeing funding.
4. **Defining volunteering.** The UK does not have one nationally recognised definition of volunteering. From a governmental perspective, the National Indicator Handbook defines regular volunteering as:

“... taking part in formal volunteering at least once a month. Formal volunteering is defined as giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations which support social, environmental, cultural or sporting objectives”.
5. From a voluntary and community sector perspective, the National Compact Volunteering Code of Practice 2005 defines it as:

“ ...an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives”.
6. The above definition has more recently been adapted for the Council Volunteering Survey as:

“ ...a non-compulsory activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which is of benefit to the environment, society, groups or other individuals (excluding relatives)”.

7. Our current commitment to volunteering lies within the Leeds Strategic Plan the improvement priority:

“ An increased number of local people engaged in activities to meet community needs and improve the quality of life for local residents”
8. Participation in volunteering is seen as one of the main ways of measuring whether we are meeting this improvement priority. The recent 2008 Place Survey results showed 19.9% of the people sampled in Leeds were currently volunteering. Our target is by 20010/11 to increase this proportion to 24%.
9. The Active Citizenship Sub-group of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector High Level Partnership Group, chaired by a member of the VCFS, is stimulating activity and closely following progress in achieving this particular improvement priority.

Main Issues

10. **A Year of Volunteering** is an opportunity to provide a focus and branding to a programme of activities that will help us effectively celebrate and promote volunteering in Leeds. The joint Leader of the Council, Cllr Brett, has made the proposal for 2010 to be such a year in Leeds. Engaging more people in volunteering in the city at this particular time is anticipated to have a positive role in offering an additional and constructive outlet for all age-groups and communities, many of whom are experiencing negative impacts as a result of the impact of the global recession. It is also seen as an opportunity to attract new resources into the city.
11. **Four aims** have been proposed for a year of volunteering:
 - To celebrate and promote volunteering
 - To increase community engagement through volunteering
 - To create more volunteers and volunteering opportunities
 - To deliver a quality volunteering experience

A ‘mission’ that could lead, energise and summarise the ambition could be to engage every citizen of Leeds in a volunteering opportunity during 2010.
12. **To steer the development of the 2010 Year of Volunteering** a programme is being developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders through two key groups:
 - A strategic steering group has been established. This is chaired by Cllr. Brett and has cross party representation through Cllr. Blackburn, Cllr. Feldman, Cllr. Yeadon and Cllr. Gettings. Partner organisations are also making nominations and these include NHS (Leeds), Police, Universities and the Environment Agency. The group will maintain an overview of the planned activity and work to champion the programme within their respective organisations and remove any barriers to implementation.
 - An operational group led by Voluntary Action – Leeds. The membership of this group is formed by the ten people who have taken on responsibility for promoting and co-ordinating activities in each of the monthly themes during the year. These include representatives from voluntary sector organisations, city council

directorates and partner agencies. Area Management will be represented as the lead on the March 2009 "Volunteering in the Neighbourhood".

13. At neighbourhood level, Chairs of all the Area Committees have agreed to support the development of the 2010 Year of Volunteering through local programmes with a focus on neighbourhood volunteering that links to the city wide programme.
14. **Programme co-ordination** will be provided through two part time posts that reflect the joint leadership by the Council and the VCFS. Regular progress on the implementation of the Year of Volunteering will also be reported to the Corporate Leadership Team, Leeds Initiative Leeds Strategy Group and VCFS Strategy Group.
15. **A programme of activities** is being developed through the above groups and channels, Council officers and Voluntary Action-Leeds working together. To date this includes:
 - A city wide programme of events with ten of the months in 2010 focusing on a particular type of volunteering or client group within the community. The programme has been developed to link with existing and planned activity. (See Appendix 1 for current progress)
 - Local programmes developed by Area Committees with a focus on neighbourhood volunteering with links to the city wide programme
 - A design competition for children and young people. Schools and individuals will be recognised and the winning pictures featured in the city wide programme of events and publicity for the year.
 - A series of high profile events, including a launch event in January 2010, an event in National Volunteers Week in June 2010 and a final celebration and awards event in December 2010.
 - A Volunteer Awards programme run throughout the year e.g. Area based awards run through Area Committees; Police; Environmental; Young peoples awards etc culminating in the final celebration and awards event at the end of the year to recognise the winners and name the Volunteer of the Year.
 - Expanding a City Centre Volunteer Centre. The unit would act as a focal point and provide brokerage linking potential volunteers with opportunities.
 - Taking the Volunteer Centre out into the community. Working with the Mobile Library Service to take out the Volunteer Centre service to targeted communities.
 - Launching a revised Compact for Leeds with a toolkit that will support organisations using volunteers to deliver a good volunteering experience and provide a Volunteers Managers Training Programme
 - Launch of Leeds Volunteering KiteMark
 - Promoting Community Activity through expanding funding opportunities and ideas and how to' packs.

The Area Committee programme

16. An large amount of volunteer opportunities exist in the Inner North East area. Examples of opportunities for volunteering include, becoming a school governor, joining an 'In Bloom' or 'Friends of' group, helping to run a community centre, running a luncheon club, drama group, sports club, social event, youth club, scout or guide group and organising fundraising events.

17. A proposed programme of work to support and promote the Year of the Volunteer in the Inner North East area is attached at appendix 2 for members consideration. A large number of people do already volunteer and in doing so make a valuable contribution to the success and wellbeing of the communities in the Inner North East area. However, more volunteers are always needed, and the Year of the Volunteer presents an ideal opportunity help all the local groups in the area recruit more volunteers.
18. The Area Committee Well Being fund already supports a lot of volunteer activity throughout the area. Councillors also support local projects using MICE monies and the Ward Based Initiative Fund.
19. The Year of the Volunteer will be an opportunity to raise the profile of the existing volunteers and recognise the valuable contribution made by all those individuals who give up their time freely for the benefit of their community. The Volunteer Thank You Event, which has been running since 2004, is a successful annual event which recognises the contribution of volunteers.
20. The community engagements planned for Spring will include information about the type of opportunities available. Local groups from the voluntary, community and faith sectors will be invited to get involved and market their activities to show what volunteering opportunities they can offer.
21. Promotional material at community engagement events will be used to show what has already been achieved through the projects and organisations that have received well being funding. Local organisations such as Moortown Community Group, CANPLAN and Friends of Gipton Wood are excellent examples of what volunteering can achieve and these groups can be role models for volunteers in Inner North East.
22. Discussions will also be held with the Moor Allerton Partnership (MAP), Beckhill Implementation Group (BIG) and Impact to look at how to promote the Year of the Volunteer and help local organisations get more volunteers involved in their organisations. The activities of local voluntary organisations can also be promoted through the community charter.
23. Additional activities to support and broaden volunteering opportunities will be identified and progressed over the coming months to further compliment activities.

Implications For Council Policy And Governance

24. This report supports Council policy as outlined in the priorities of the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11, and as expressed in the Council's commitment to the Compact for Leeds and the Harmonious Communities section of the Area Committee Area Delivery Plan.
25. Governance and reporting arrangements are broadly outlined in the report in paragraph 12.

Legal and Resource Implications

26. There will be funding provided by the Council to support some of the costs of programme co-ordination and delivery and to support work to secure sponsorship.

In addition, a sponsorship package will need to be developed to encourage businesses and public and voluntary sector organisations to sponsor the programme and major events in the year. Steve Crocker, the current area manager for West and North West Leeds will be leading the City Council input into the programme in 2010, including part of the time put in on a volunteer basis. He will work closely with Natasha Mort and Richard Jackson from Voluntary Action Leeds to deliver the programme for the City.

27. In terms of the activities, all organisations in the city currently utilising volunteers, including the Council, are being encouraged to think of ways of applying for and generating funding that will fund a celebration or expansion of current activities. In addition, funding sources in terms of European and national grant funding and corporate sponsorship are also being explored.
28. The Area Committees, Council Directorates, VCFS organisations and all participating partners are being encouraged to explore ways to minimise additional costs for promoting and running the programme by incorporating and expanding appropriate work programmes.

Conclusions

29. 2010 Year of Volunteering is an opportunity to celebrate and promote volunteering in Leeds. It has the potential to engage every citizen, neighbourhood and community in making a contribution to the city whilst also building skills, confidence and independence at an individual level. Creating transferable skills for individuals for future employment opportunities and developing community cohesion are two examples of the positive contributions that volunteering could make to help mitigate some of the negative impacts of the economic recession.
30. A successful Year of Volunteering will require active leadership and contributions by all key stakeholders in the city, and that is what the area committee is now being asked to consider.

Recommendations

31. Members are asked to:
 - a) Endorse and support the proposal, mission and aims for 2010 being the Year of Volunteering in Leeds.
 - b) Support the development of 2010 Year of Volunteering through the programme of Area Committee events identified in paragraphs 16 - 23 of this report.
 - c) Approve the Area Committee participation in the programme as identified in this report.
 - d) Investigate sponsoring and encouraging additional activities with other partners, the VCFS sector and others.

Background Papers

Executive Board Report, October 16th, Year of Volunteering in Leeds

Appendix 1

OUTLINE CALENDAR

2010 Leeds Year of Volunteering

Month	Theme	Promotional and Celebration Events
January	2010 Leeds Year of Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the year of volunteering; • Launch of the Leeds Compact Volunteering Standards and Toolkit and the Volunteer Management Training Programme; • Formal opening of the Volunteer Centre; • Launch of the Volunteer Centre community outreach initiative.
February	Volunteering for Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeds University Student Volunteering Week to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - programme of student volunteering activities - event at Riley Smith Hall Showcasing Student Volunteering Activity – open to all citizens with potential for invited audience event.
March	Volunteering in every neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the Area Based Volunteering Celebration programme 2010 that will take place throughout the year (see note 1 below).
April	Volunteering across the Generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeds Intergenerational Festival (Adult Services) incorporating a focus on the role of volunteers in supporting intergenerational activity; • Corporate Social Responsibility Awards Event; • University of Leeds Volunteering Awards.
May	Volunteering for Literacy and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books at Home Volunteer Celebration Event. • Possible: Civic Reception for Governors in Leeds Schools (4000) – supported by Governors Support Service; • Possible: School support and Mentors promotion and celebration event;
June	Valuing Volunteering in Leeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Volunteering Week Programme of celebration and promotional activities, including: Volunteering Opportunities Market Place; • Corporate Volunteering Celebration Event; • Youth Volunteering Events (Children's Services); • Launch of the Leeds Volunteering Kitemark; • LCC Volunteer Managers Network Celebration Event; • Youth Offending Service Celebration Event.

July	Volunteering for Leisure Sport, Arts, Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Creative – Young People and Arts Accreditation Event; • Sport Volunteering; • Visit to Leeds between July & Oct. re application for Football World Cup;
August	Volunteering and Environment, Parks and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and City Pride Awards event;
September	Volunteering for a Safer Leeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible: Re-launch of Neighbourhood Watch schemes; • Possible: Celebrating Community Crime Fighters; • Leeds University /Union Student Volunteer Recruitment Programme.
October	Volunteering for ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Peoples Volunteering Promotion and Celebration Programme of Activities- organised by the Older People's Forum; • Volunteering with and for Children and Young People – a programme of promotion and celebration activities coordinated by Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) and Vinvolve (the national youth volunteering project); • Big V Bus – 2 day Student and Young Citizens Volunteering Taster Event and Film made by Young People about the value of Volunteering; • West Yorkshire Youth Justice Awards Event – including Awards for Volunteers involved in Youth Justice initiatives, including Leeds based services; • Celebrating the role of volunteering in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Leeds;
November	Children and Young People's Volunteering Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact Volunteering Kitemark Awards; • Children and Young People's Volunteering; Month – coordination of programme of events by IYSS/ Vinvolve etc; • Leeds University Volunteering and Community Week;
December	Celebrating Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Volunteer Celebration and Awards Ceremony; • Youth Offending Service Volunteer Thank you Dinner and Dance at Royal Armouries

Note 1.

Throughout the Year there will be a wide range of ongoing volunteering activity and targeted and time limited volunteering projects taking place. The time limited/ targeted projects will be captured on the Year of Volunteering website calendar. The on-going volunteering opportunities are accessible through the V base volunteering database.

Note 2.

Local programmes developed by Area Committees could include:

- a market place style event showcasing volunteering opportunities;
- a volunteer award and thank you event that would feed into city-wide awards
- an Area Team volunteering project;
- any Town or District centre events;
- badging of existing activity e.g. local arts festivals, literature festivals with a volunteer theme;
- Area Committee member involvement in the year.

Appendix 2

**Inner North East Area Committee
Year of the Volunteer Programme**

Project	Description	Timescale
<p>Promote Year of the Volunteer</p>	<p>Provide information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BIG and IMPaCT; ▪ Tasking meetings; ▪ Residents Groups; ▪ Community Centres; ▪ Friends of, in bloom and other community groups ▪ Partner agencies and organisations; ▪ Local businesses across the area; ▪ Community websites such as About My Area <p>Promote the Year of the Volunteer website, and ensure activity from this area is promoted on the website.</p>	<p>Nov 2009 onwards</p>
<p>Well being fund</p>	<p>The area committee provides support to a lot of volunteer activity in the area through the well being fund.</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the year</p>
<p>Environmental Volunteering</p>	<p>Use the small and large grants funds to support friends of and in bloom groups. £6,265 has already been committed to Moortown Community Group to run in bloom activities; Support Oakwood in Bloom development and recruitment of volunteers. Promote volunteering opportunities alongside other activities taking place. For example litter picking or bulb planting during Operation Champions.</p>	<p>July – December 2010</p>
<p>Marketplace style Volunteers Event</p>	<p>Hold a network/market style event to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide an opportunity for volunteer run organisations to showcase their work; ▪ To promote opportunities for volunteering; ▪ Provide information on grants for voluntary activity; ▪ Provide an opportunity for voluntary organisations in the area to network; 	<p>March 2010</p>
<p>Supporting Existing volunteer activity</p>	<p>Promote activity through branding with the Year of the Volunteer logo. Support voluntary organisations to continue providing local services and activities. Encourage and support voluntary organisations in organising their own activities for the Year of the Volunteer.</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the year</p>
<p>Volunteer Thank You event</p>	<p>Hold a 'Volunteer Thank You' event for all those involved in volunteering across the area with awards and nominations to citywide volunteer thank you event.</p>	<p>October/ November 2010</p>