



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)

Executive Board

Date: October 16th 2009

Subject: 2010 – Year of Volunteering in Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has been proposed 2010 be designated the Year of Volunteering in Leeds. This report explains the range of benefits that volunteering can provide to individuals and the wider community and the links to the Leeds Strategic Plan service improvement priorities. 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 programme of activities that have already been proposed through consultation with Members, Council Directorates, VCFS organisations and key Partners. It also explains arrangements for governing and delivering the programme.

Recommendations ask Members of Executive Board to approve the proposal for 2010 to become a Year of Volunteering in Leeds and to play a leading role in sponsoring additional activities and events that will contribute to making the year a success for the city.

1.0. Purpose of This Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the background to the 2010 - A Year of Volunteering in Leeds and to outline progress in relation to developing a programme of activities and arrangements delivering this programme. Recommendations seek Executive Board approval to the proposal and their support in leading and sponsoring additional activities, events and contributions.

2.0. Background Information

2.1. Why is volunteering important?

Volunteering 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.

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, in Leeds, 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.

2.2. How is volunteering defined?

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”.

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”.

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)”.

2.3. What is our current commitment?

Leeds Strategic Plan has the following improvement priority:

“ An increased number of local people engaged in activities to meet community needs and improve the quality of life for local residents”

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 2010/11 to increase this proportion to 24%.

The Active Citizenship Sub-group of the VCFS High Level Partnership Group, chaired by a member of the VCFS sector, is stimulating activity and closely following progress in achieving this particular improvement priority.

3.0. A Year of Volunteering

3.1. 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.

3.2. Mission and Aims for the Year

Following consultation, 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

The ambition is to engage every citizen of Leeds in a volunteering opportunity during 2010.

4.0. Programme Management

4.1. The 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.

4.2. At neighbourhood level, Chairs of Area Committees have agreed to support the development of the 2010 Year of Volunteering through proposing Area Committees develop a local programme with a focus on neighbourhood volunteering that links to the city wide programme.

4.3. 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.

5.0. Outline Programme of Activities

5.1. Through the above groups and channels, Council officers and Voluntary Action-Leeds are working together to develop a programme of activities for the Year of Volunteering. 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.

6.0. European Year of Volunteering in 2011

- 6.1.** The European Commission has proposed that 2011 be designated the European Year of Volunteering and has proposed an overall budget of 8 million Euros be made available to support it. The Commission sees volunteering as an active expression of civic participation and strengthens common European values such as solidarity and social cohesion. It is anticipated that Leeds, following planned activities in 2010, will be in an excellent position to participate and access funding provided through the European Year of Volunteering

7.0. Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 7.1.** 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.
- 7.2.** Governance and reporting arrangements are broadly outlined in the report in paragraph 4.0.

8.0. Legal and Resource Implications

- 8.1.** A limited amount of funding and in-kind support will be provided by the Council to support some of the programme co-ordination and delivery costs. In addition, a sponsorship package is being developed to encourage businesses and public and voluntary sector organisations to sponsor the programme and major events in the year.
- 8.2.** Participating organisations are being encouraged to identify and secure funding to support the celebration and/or expansion of existing activity and national and European grant funding opportunities are being explored along with corporate sponsorship to enhance these budgets where possible.
- 8.3.** Council Directorates, VCFS organisations and all participating partners will also be

encouraged to explore ways to minimise additional costs for promoting and running the programme by incorporating and expanding appropriate work programmes.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1.** 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.

A successful Year of Volunteering will require active leadership and contributions by all key stakeholders in the city.

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1.** Members are asked to endorse the proposal to make 2010 Leeds Year of Volunteering.
- 10.2** Members are asked to sponsor and encourage additional activities and events that will contribute to making the year a success for the city.

References

- Communities and Local Government (2008) National Indicator for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions, CLG, London.
- Compact (2005) Compact Volunteering Code of Practice, Compact, London
- Commission of the European Communities (2009) Proposal for a Council Decision on the Council Year of Volunteering, COM (2009) 254final, Brussels.

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 IYSS/Vinvolve • 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.