

## EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2023  
5.00 PM

Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall

### AGENDA

Page No

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point Members must declare whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, or other interest, in any of the items on the agenda, unless it is already entered in the register of members' interests or is a "pending notification" that has been disclosed to the Solicitor to the Council.

3. **Introduction of New Volunteering Policy Across Peterborough City Council** 3 - 12



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Committee Members:

Councillors: M Jamil (Vice Chairman), W Fitzgerald, Wiggin, Allen, Jones (Chair), Coles and B Rush

Substitutes: Councillors: Seager, Thulbourn and Ray

Further information about this meeting can be obtained from Daniel Kalley on telephone 01733 296334 or by email – [daniel.kalley@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.kalley@peterborough.gov.uk)

<b>EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No. 3</b>
<b>7 SEPTEMBER 2023</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Report of: Volunteering Policy	Mandy Pullen, Assistant Director HR & Development	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Andy Coles, Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services	
Contact Officer:	Debbie Hiller, Organisational Development Manager	Tel. 07847 491828

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW VOLUNTEERING POLICY ACROSS PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**

RECOMMENDATIONS	
<b>FROM: Mandy Pullen, Assistant Director HR &amp; Development</b>	Deadline date: 7 September 2023
<p>1. It is recommended that the Employment Committee approve the Peterborough City Council Volunteering Policy as outlined in Appendix 1.</p>	

**1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

1.1 This report is submitted to Employment Committee due to the impact on paid leave of employees.

**2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

2.1 The proposed policy, as in the Appendix of this document, has been shared with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and approved by them to be submitted to the Employment Committee for recommendation that the policy is approved.

2.2 This report is for Employment Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No 2.3.2.2 To determine employee procedures, including dismissal procedures.

**3. TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
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**4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

**4.1 Methodology**

During Quarter 1 2023, a suggestion was presented to CLT that opportunities for all employees to volunteer to support organisations in the Peterborough area, and be paid for this time off, would be a suitable addition to the new Benefits package launched in July 2023. It would also enable council employees to further contribute to the deliverables of the Corporate Strategy under the Sustainable Future City Council theme – how we work, how we serve, how we enable. The Volunteering Policy, should this be adopted, could be a major contributor to the Council's aim of being an employer of choice in attracting new employees and retaining existing employees. It would also be beneficial in helping and supporting local charitable and other organisations and could be a way for the council to give back to its communities.

## 4.2 **Consultation and approval**

The Volunteering Policy was drafted during Q1 2023 and shared with Legal and Insurance teams for advice. During the consultation period, a benchmarking exercise also took place via the Organisational Development network to consider our proposal against other councils particularly regarding how many paid leave days they offered for volunteering and the process they use. The draft policy was then further considered and presented to CLT on 15<sup>th</sup> August. This was then further shared with the unions who appear to be on board in principle. Further conversations will take place to ensure they the process is fully understood.

## 5. **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

5.1 The recommendation links to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Sustainable Future City Council

- How we Work
- How we Serve
- How we Enable

*Further information on the Council's Priorities can be found here - [Link to Corporate Strategy and Priorities Webpage](#)*

## 6. **CONSULTATION**

6.1 This recommendation has been considered by:

- Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023

## 7. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

- 7.1
- This policy would form part of the suite of benefits to new and existing employees.
  - As such, should be another way of attracting new and retaining existing employees.
  - In the policy, it is made clear how risk assessments should be carried out, how public liability insurance should be checked and the responsibilities of each of the volunteer, their manager and the organisation.
  - Although all employees are entitled to request up to 2 days paid volunteer leave, the volunteer activity must support a voluntary, community or charitable organisation that is recognised by the council and supports the council's vision and purpose.
  - Requesters should submit a rationale and present an outline of their proposed volunteering, including the benefits to both the council and the volunteer. They would also be expected to give at least 28 days' notice for any volunteering request and their manager makes the final decision.
  - The financial impact of paid volunteer leave will be monitored and measured against non-financial benefits such as engagement. This will be done through staff surveys.
  - The intention is to communicate the policy, subject to full approved, in a Peterborough Conversations webinar to all staff, presented by Matt Gladstone.

## 8. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1
- Peterborough City Council, like many other councils, finds it difficult to recruit and retain staff in some services. Other councils have been offering paid volunteer leave for some years. There is an expectation amongst future and current employees that a generous benefits package is offered to all staff as their differentiator as an employer.
  - With the introduction of the council's corporate values in July 2023, offering volunteering opportunities to all staff while receiving full pay has the potential to increase the support given to our residents, through volunteering for voluntary, community or charitable organisations who support the more vulnerable residents.

## **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 Alternatives considered are:

- a) Do nothing
- b) Offer volunteer leave that is unpaid. This option was rejected as it's unlikely that employees would see this as a benefit.
- c) Offer volunteer leave that has to be matched with the same amount of annual leave. Some councils do offer this but take up is very low. This option was rejected for this reason.
- d) Go back to re-visit the number of days paid volunteer leave to one day only. This option was considered although this would likely cause loss of engagement that stakeholders' contributions were not considered to be valuable.

## **10. IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

10.1 Launching the Volunteering policy would result in some take up but, as this has not been offered before, it is difficult to estimate the financial implication. However, taking a grade 8 SCP 20 as an example, if the employee were to take their maximum two days paid volunteer leave, their equivalent salary costs for 2 days would be £218.24 gross. However, the non-financial benefit of offering volunteering leave would be measured in terms of attraction, retention, reputation and publicity that would not be directly measured in money but in engagement. This would be done through engagement surveys.

### **Legal Implications**

10.2 Risk assessments would be carried out and recorded to ensure the safety of the volunteer and all stakeholders. A record of a copy of the public liability insurance document would ensure any claims are covered by insurance.

### **Equalities Implications**

10.3 None

## **11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 There are none.

## **12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix 1 - Volunteer Leave Policy  
Appendix 2 – Volunteer Leave Form

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## **VOLUNTEER LEAVE POLICY**



### **Introduction**

We actively encourage and support employees who wish to do voluntary work.

We recognise the positive difference that volunteers can make to our local communities. We also recognise how an employee volunteering scheme can provide a number of benefits to staff including:

- Increased staff engagement, satisfaction with their employer and enhanced retention
- Skills and team development opportunities
- Improved understanding of the voluntary and community sector and the needs of the communities PCC serves
- A sense of 'giving back' to their community

Good quality volunteering opportunities can also provide the local voluntary and community sector with:

- Additional resources to deliver their services and carry out fundraising
- Support and recognition from local employers
- Organisational development through professional volunteers sharing their skills and knowledge in leadership, governance and problem solving

This policy sets out our commitment to supporting employees who want to volunteer during working hours.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees employed by us. It does not apply to staff on a fixed-term contract of less than one year, workers, contractors, volunteers or interns working for the organisation.

### **Types of volunteering that we support**

We understand that volunteering opportunities are diverse. We support any activity that positively impacts the community, helps vulnerable people in our society and/or helps to improve the environment. We want you to be involved in something that you genuinely care about.

## APPENDIX 1

Organisations that you can volunteer for are likely to be registered charities, not-for-profit organisations, educational institutions (such as schools and colleges) or hospitals.

All volunteering activities should support a voluntary, community or charitable organisation that is recognised by the Council and supports the Council's Corporate Strategy and Key Priorities

### **Volunteer leave**

All employees are entitled to a maximum of two days paid volunteer leave per year, or a pro rata equivalent if you work part-time.

Volunteer leave may be taken as full days, half days, or blocks of at least one hour.

Any unused volunteer leave may not be carried over from one year to the next.

### **Volunteering opportunities**

While you can use your volunteer leave for voluntary activities of your choice, volunteer options within the Peterborough area can be found on [the PCVS website](#), an organisation that run a variety of services aimed at improving health and wellbeing, building the capacity of individuals and groups to help some of the most excluded members of society, and providing the skills and support needed for many charities and community groups, big and small, to thrive.

Some examples of valuable volunteering activities include working with the homeless, supporting residents with mental health issues, reading buddies in schools to help build literacy, and mentoring of looked-after children.

[The Do-It website](#), a national organisation which shows individual local opportunities may also be useful to find volunteering opportunities for employees that do not live in the Peterborough area.

### **Requesting volunteer leave**

If you wish to get involved in any volunteering opportunities, you should submit your request in writing to your line manager by completing the Volunteering Application Form. Your request must state the volunteering programme that you are interested in and each day and number of hours that you are requesting as volunteer leave.

You must give at least three weeks' notice when booking volunteer leave.

All volunteer leave must be approved in advance by your line manager and be recorded on the Absence Management System by the employee or manager as 'Volunteer Leave'.

Every effort will be made to meet your request for volunteer leave. However, there may be circumstances where your line manager may turn down your request due to operational needs, where there is insufficient capacity within the team to accommodate high levels of leave or they consider that a conflict of interest may arise.

If your line manager considers that your absence could cause difficulties for the organisation, they will ask you to take your volunteer leave at a different time or on a different programme.



## APPENDIX 1

### **Insurance**

If the charity/community group with whom the member of staff is volunteering holds insurance that covers volunteers, PCC's insurers would expect the charity's insurers to cover the volunteering. However, if the charity does not hold suitable insurance, the Council's insurance would cover any liabilities of the Council, so long as a risk assessment has been undertaken.

When volunteering for a charity, the charity is responsible for providing the appropriate public liability insurance, safety briefings and risk assessments specific to your activity. The PCC employee organising the volunteer day is responsible for ensuring this is in place.

### **Safeguarding**

If the volunteering activity requires any contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, and a DBS is essential, it is the responsibility of the organisation receiving the volunteer to ensure that the appropriate and correct DBS checks are in place, before any volunteering activity takes place.

### **Expenses**

The volunteer leave policy allows PCC to provide employee time; however, expenses cannot be claimed for volunteer leave unless the activity is already being delivered as part of a PCC business initiative.

### **Standard of behaviour**

During any period of volunteer leave, you are representing the council and you must behave in an appropriate, mature and responsible manner. You must not behave in a way that could cause reputational damage to the council or do or say anything that risks breaching confidential business information.

### **Suggestions for new volunteering opportunities**

We encourage you to make suggestions for developing new partnerships with organisations, or other volunteering opportunities that could be initiated under this policy. You can do this by making suggestions to your line manager or HR Business Partner.

### **Data protection**

When dealing with volunteer leave, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with the council's [Corporate Privacy Notice](#). In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

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## VOLUNTEERING APPLICATION FORM



This form should be completed by the employee in the first instance when making a request for time off under the Volunteering Policy. When you have completed section 1, please pass this form to your line manager so that they can consider your request. When your line manager has considered the request and completed the manager section of the form, your line manager should then email the completed form to [HRSupport@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:HRSupport@peterborough.gov.uk) and [askhr@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:askhr@peterborough.gov.uk).

Any authorised volunteering days or hours must be recorded on the Absence Management System by the manager.

### Section 1: to be completed by the employee

Name:	
Payroll number:	
Department:	
Team:	
Date requesting volunteering leave:	
Dates of volunteering:	
Number of hours or days requested (all employees are entitled to a maximum of two days paid volunteer leave per year, or a pro rata equivalent if you work part-time):	
Name, charity number (if applicable) and address of Voluntary Organisation you wish to volunteer with:	
Please give details of the person who will be supervising you in the voluntary organisation:	Name: Contact number:
Details of the volunteering programme:	
How will this volunteering activity benefit the organisation you want to volunteer with?	
How will you benefit from the volunteering activity? How	

APPENDIX 2

will it meet your development needs?	
How will the council benefit from your volunteering activity?	
I wish to apply for time off work to carry out voluntary activities with the above organisation. Signed:  Date:	

**Section 2:** to be completed by the manager

Authorisation given:	Yes / No*
If no, reasons for refusing authorisation:	
Manager name:	
I confirm I have retained a copy of the liability insurance and a risk assessment undertaken by the volunteering setting.  Signature of manager:  Date:	
Date volunteering leave inputted onto absence management system:	

\*Delete as required

**Section 3:** to be completed by HR Support

Date form received:	
Date form filed on I@W:	