

<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**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<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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