

Committee(s)	Dated:
Establishment Committee	05/09/2019
Subject: Special Leave for Employee Volunteering	Public
Report of: David Farnsworth, Chief Grants Officer and Director of City Bridge Trust	For Decision
Report author: Julia Makin / Alice Hall, Corporate Volunteering Manager (job share), Town Clerk's	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to broaden the scope of the current City of London Corporation's existing Employee Volunteering Programme (EVP), which will result in the updating of the relevant section in the Special Leave and Time Off Policy.

The proposed new scope reflects the desire to enable more employees to take up their 14 hours of volunteering leave in ways that better meet the outcomes of the Corporate Plan (2018-23), the Philanthropy Strategy (2018-23), the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23) and City Bridge Trust's (CBT) Bridging Divides Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the expanded scope of the Employee Volunteering Programme which provides 14 hours paid leave per employee per year to enable staff to find their own volunteering opportunities within appropriate parameters.
- Subject to 1 above, delegate authority to the Town Clerk (Chief Grants Officer and Director of Human Resources) to define and agree the revised parameters on the expanded offer for inclusion in the Special Leave and Time Off Policy, which will be communicated to staff to increase awareness take up of volunteering.

Main Report

Background

1. There is a rich variety of volunteering activity generated through the City Corporation. This includes:
 - the supply of employee volunteers for external opportunities (through the EVP);

- support for residents and learners who wish to volunteer (largely via the Department of Community and Children's Services); and
 - support for external volunteers who wish to support the Corporation's work or that of its related charities (e.g. in Open Spaces).
2. In an attempt to ensure a more consistent and efficient approach to harnessing the City Corporation's volunteering practices and expertise, as well as supporting the City Corporation's broader aspirations encompassed in its Philanthropy, Social Mobility and Bridging Divides Strategies, a Corporate Volunteering Strategy was agreed in September 2018.
 3. Following approval of the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23) by Policy and Resources Committee, a new Corporate Volunteering Manager was appointed to implement the recommendations of the strategy and drive a more consistent and coherent approach to volunteering generated or harnessed by the City Corporation. The Corporate Volunteering Manager joined the City Corporation in May 2019 and has been working with HR representatives on a Volunteer Working Group, to deliver actions related to the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23).
 4. This paper focuses on the Employee Volunteering component of the Corporation's Volunteering 'offer'. Since 2003, as a result of approval of Establishment Committee, the City Corporation has offered employees up to 14 hours paid leave to undertake volunteering, subject to approval by their line manager.
 5. From 2005, the Employee Volunteering Programme (EVP) was housed in and run by the Economic Development Office (EDO). The scope of the EVP was shaped in order to meet the department's objectives at the time, which were to support economic regeneration in the City's neighbouring boroughs.
 6. Currently approved volunteering activities are those that:
 - take place either in one of the City of London Corporation's neighbouring boroughs, or in the nearest area of deprivation to the person's normal place of work
 - benefit local residents (this might be directly, e.g. by helping a child with reading, or indirectly, e.g. by giving professional advice to a community group to enable it to serve its clients more effectively.)
 7. Feedback from employees gathered during consultation on the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23) included a desire to be able to take up opportunities closer to home; related to personal development and linked to causes of personal concern.
 8. The Corporate Volunteering Manager was tasked, with broadening the EVP to reflect the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23) and the feedback from the earlier consultation about the strategy.

Current Position

9. The vision set out in the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23) is for the organisation to have 'a positive volunteering culture, with clear and consistent practices, which support volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish in the Square Mile, London and beyond'. This vision will be fulfilled by the achievement of the following three outcomes:
 - Volunteers benefit from meaningful volunteering opportunities.
 - Volunteers are valued.
 - Organisations and their stakeholders benefit from more and better volunteering.
10. A Test of Relevance has been carried out for the Corporate Volunteering Strategy (2018-23) which identified that no adverse impacts are envisaged by taking this approach.
11. Outcomes 1 and 3 point towards a broadening of the current remit of the EVP, to provide more opportunities and therefore enable more employees to take part in ways that best support their development. Furthermore, the geographical remit set out in the strategy, which mirrors that of the Corporate Plan (2018-23), represents a shift away from the target borough approach of the previous EVP.
12. A special focus of the new EVP will be in connecting City Corporation employees with CBT grantee organisations who are looking to attract volunteers. The diversity of grantee organisations and opportunities available are broader than the current remit of the EVP would allow.

Proposals

13. In order to ensure the EVP maximises opportunities and impact for the City Corporation, we propose to widen the current scope of the EVP scheme as follows:
 - i. Encourage staff to volunteer across the Square Mile, London and beyond. This would replace the current geographic remit of the City's neighbouring boroughs and will support the City Corporation to demonstrate its value wherever there is need in line with the scope of the Corporate Plan 2018-23.
 - ii. Enable volunteering based on community and beneficiary need. This would replace the current skills focus and will mean that all staff have opportunities to give their time, regardless of professional skill level, whilst ensuring the City Corporation volunteering continues to address need.
 - iii. Opportunities are brokered, inter alia, for staff to:
 - Support City Bridge Trust grantees. This will enable CBT to deliver its 'total assets' approach, as underpinned by its Bridging Divides

and Philanthropy Strategies, and will enable the City Corporation to increase its positive impact with CBT grantees.

- Support City Corporation Academies
- iv. Staff are permitted to find their own volunteering opportunities within appropriate parameters, including but not limited to:
- City Corporation departments and City Corporation sponsored activity/priorities e.g. Open Spaces, Lord Mayor's Show, Fantastic Feats, etc.
 - Any other appropriate opportunities which are in London and responding to community need.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. An expanded scope of the current EVP and the Special Leave and Time Off Policy to better reflect the Corporate Volunteering Strategy, is likely to result in greater uptake of the paid leave by employees, enabling the City Corporation to better achieve the positive outcomes set out in the Philanthropy Strategy (2018-23), under its role-modelling pillar, where the City Corporation fully harnesses its own expertise, assets, networks; Social Mobility (2018-23), under outcome 4, where the City Corporation role models and enables social mobility in the way that we operate e.g. by creating meaningful volunteering opportunities that support staff development and progression; and through the Corporate Plan (2018-23), under outcome 5d, where we advocate and facilitate greater levels of giving time, skills, advice and money.

Implications

14. Using data from CityPeople, it is understood that only 39 employees recorded the Special Leave entitlement to volunteer in the last twelve months. It is likely that the real figure is larger but not being recorded. Greater take-up of the leave will result in increased cost to the organisation, but it will also enable the positive impact of this activity to communities to be recorded, valued and celebrated, as well as positively impacting on our strategic ambitions as detailed in paragraph 13 above as well as on staff engagement metrics.

Conclusion

15. In order to run an Employee Volunteering Programme that is strategically aligned with City Corporation and City Bridge Trust outcomes, the scope of the programme needs to be updated as recommended in the Special Leave and Time off Policy.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

- Establishment Committee - Use of Volunteers, 17 October 2017.
- Update on strategic approach to working with volunteers, 15 January 2018.
- Corporate Volunteering Strategy 2018-23, 6 September 2018.

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