

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Establishment Committee	17 October 2017
<b>Subject:</b> Use of Volunteers	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Human Resources	<b>For Information</b>
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### Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the involvement of volunteers across the City of London Corporation and the work that is in progress to ensure consistency in practice regarding the recruitment, induction and training of volunteers.

### Recommendation

The Establishment Committee is asked to note:

- the progress of work to date
- the work which will be taken forward by the Volunteering Working Group
- that a progress report will be provided in January 2018

### Main Report

#### Background

1. At the Establishment Committee on 19 June 2017, questions were raised in relation to: the extent and involvement of volunteers in the City Corporation's work; the protocols used across the organisation; and the duty of care discharged towards volunteers. The driver for this review was that the practice applied to the involvement of volunteers appeared to vary by department. A report to compare and contrast the approach to paid workers and volunteers and guidance on how to appoint them was requested.
2. The concerns raised at Establishment Committee were reviewed and it was found that work was already in progress with the aim to bring consistency to volunteering practice across the City Corporation and is outlined in this report.
3. Due to the significant differences in the recording of salaried staff and volunteers, it is not possible to compare and contrast the two groups with any great accuracy. Best practice in this area confirms that an employer should maintain appropriate boundaries between paid staff and volunteers, while endeavouring to ensure both are valued equally.

4. Another important factor is that volunteers do not have the same employment rights as staff, although the City Corporation will seek to ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently.
5. It is also important to recognise the difference between volunteering and work experience. The City Corporation is committed to providing good quality work experience to young people who are at school or college in the form of one or two week unpaid placements. Other forms of work experience include student placements and adult placements which are usually paid London Living Wage for placements of two weeks or more.
6. The National Council for Volunteering Organisations (NCVO) champions the voluntary sector and volunteering, which they believe are essential for a better society. The NCVO define volunteering as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.
7. The City of London Corporation supports volunteering which can be classified into three categories:
  - A. volunteering that supports the work of the City Corporation and its beneficiaries;
  - B. engaging residents and City workers in volunteering for other organisations;
  - C. employee volunteering that supports other departments and organisations.

For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on category A.

8. An independent review of volunteering was commissioned by the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) in 2015 to inform the future tendering and commissioning of two volunteering contracts.
9. The review identified that there was no overarching City Corporation volunteering offer and recommended a number of short and long term actions for consideration.
10. The recommendations included developing:
  - a strategic approach, a robust needs analysis and priority focus;
  - common policies, procedures and practices;
  - recruitment and management of volunteers.
11. On 29 November 2016, DCCS presented a paper to the People Steering Group outlining these findings and asked the Group to consider the short and long-term recommendations for review and to consider the development of an organisation wide volunteering offer. It was agreed that a group of officers from across the City Corporation should consider how to take forward the recommendations of the review and the report.

## **Current Position**

12. In early 2017, the Volunteering Working Group was formed to take forward the recommendations from the review and to ensure consistency in practice across departments. The Group has representation from Town Clerk's, Open Spaces Department, City Bridge Trust and HR. Staff from the Economic Development Office and DCCS are also represented in the Group.
13. The Volunteering Working Group will explore the way in which a cross-departmental approach to volunteering could contribute to both the new Corporate Plan and the Responsible Business Review.
14. A survey was conducted by the Volunteering Working Group in May 2017 to gain more detail about the involvement of volunteers. The outcome of the survey provided an overview of the volunteering taking place and some confirmed volunteers were used occasionally. The City Corporation does not currently hold a central database of volunteers by department and due to the nature of this type of work, it would be difficult to maintain and keep up-to-date.
15. The Group will endeavour to provide consistency across the City Corporation with regards to the engagement of volunteers and ensure that all departments are aware of their roles and responsibilities when using volunteers.
16. The Open Spaces Department, is one of many that have developed guidance, including:
  - a Volunteer Policy;
  - a Vision for Volunteering;
  - a Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Policy;
  - insurance and Duty of Care Arrangement for Volunteers.
17. The Volunteering Working Group will determine how best to collate the relevant guidance and policies from across the City Corporation and recommend which supporting documents should be rolled out and made available to all departments to provide consistency and transparency in practice. A flowchart about volunteering activity and supporting documents is attached at Appendix 1.
18. The Volunteering Working Group will meet to take forward the recommendations of the review.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

19. Strengthening the volunteering offer across the City Corporation will contribute to delivering the Corporate Plan, specifically the People outcomes and aligns with the trends identified in the Responsible Business Review.
20. In addition to the work of the Volunteering Group, the Corporate Strategy and Performance Team will lead on developing a Corporate Volunteering Strategy. This strategy will be devised in partnership with the Working Group and HR.

21. Colleagues from Town Clerk's and the Open Spaces department have provided input into this report.

## **Conclusion**

22. The City Corporation will seek to ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently.

23. Although, it is not possible to provide data on volunteers, the Volunteering Working Group will seek to ensure that consistency in practice across all departments.

24. The Volunteering Working Group will provide a progress report to the Establishment Committee in January 2018.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Volunteering Flowchart

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