

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Cllr Wilson, Chair of the Volunteering Opportunities Task Group and Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources	Cabinet	30 July 2014	6

Volunteering Opportunities Task Group – Final Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the work of the Volunteering Opportunities Task Group to Cabinet.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Greater use of volunteers in assisting in the delivery of the council's services.

3. Recommendation/s

- 3.1 To continue to develop the application process and the volunteer database that is already in place and to ensure that 'exit information' is gathered and recorded systematically wherever possible.
- 3.2 To ensure that the fine line between professionalism and destroying the spirit of volunteering is maintained.
- 3.3 To continue to encourage and promote volunteering to all residents in the borough.

We would like to see the council having a 'Volunteering Week', with a press and social media campaign, perhaps using the i-bus as the centre-piece.

- 3.4 To put in place a recognition scheme for volunteers, covering those who have given long service as well as those who would benefit from a certificate or other formal recognition in order to assist them when applying for paid work.

- 3.5** To ensure that accessibility issues such as time, day and location are taken into consideration when assessing all volunteering opportunities, in order that the number of potential volunteers is maximised, subject to the identified needs of the council.
- 3.6** To encourage Heads of Service to challenge their own views about the boundaries to volunteering and to think creatively about new opportunities that could be offered. We would like to see the use of volunteers considered in a number of new areas including meeting and greeting at Fleetwood and Poulton Markets, neighbourhood engagement, assisting with consultations, involvement in the council's work with sufferers of Alzheimer's and dementia to help reduce social isolation, as well as an extension of their use in Tourist Information Centres.

4. Background

- 4.1** The Council has used volunteers for many years, particularly in the delivery of the Coast and Countryside and Leisure services. The increase in the use of volunteers led to the appointment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator in September 2012 and numbers of volunteers have continued to increase. The council currently engages 175 volunteers.
- 4.2** The task group was commissioned to review whether the Council is maximising the potential of volunteers in the delivery of its services. Its stated objective was to identify opportunities for the wider use of volunteers across the Council.
- 4.3** As included in the Scoping Document, the review aimed:
1. To understand the way in which volunteers are used by Wyre Council currently
 2. To explore ways that we can develop our volunteering opportunities and shape future provision including career support and pathways to employment
 3. To explore current links with external partners involved in the provision of volunteering in Wyre, and to assess scope for the future
 4. To identify the barriers to volunteering, so that the council can understand how best to maximise the benefits of volunteering for individuals and the local community

5. Key Issues

- 5.1** The task group is very impressed by the way in which the council already engages such a large number of volunteers in a wide range of activities, and by the way in which they are supported and managed.

- 5.2** The application and approval processes are already very effective, as reflected in the quality and commitment of the volunteers currently in place. The task group feels, however, that the council would benefit from knowing more about why volunteers leave, although they also recognise that this information is not always easy to obtain. By recording this information more formally the council would build up evidence that might affect how volunteers are recruited, managed and retained in the future.
- 5.3** Volunteers enhance the delivery of the services in which they are already working and, indeed, some of those services might not exist at all were it not for the contributions made by volunteers. The task group would like to see the use of volunteers extended further, although they are also very aware of the need to ensure that a clear line continues to be drawn between volunteering and paid work.
- 5.4** Some of the barriers to volunteering were made clear to the task group (ignorance, recompense and accessibility in particular). The task group sees it as important that the council proactively addresses these points in order to provide the opportunity to volunteer for more people. It was noted that it is important to recognise the contribution made by volunteers and the task group would like to see options explored as to how this might best be achieved.
- 5.5** From comparisons that have been made with other councils it would appear that Wyre is already being much more creative in its use of volunteers than many other local authorities. The research carried out by the task group revealed that only a limited number of other local authorities use volunteers, and there were no examples uncovered where the boundaries of volunteering have been pushed back radically. Most councils quote the use of volunteers in Friends' Groups, and some engage volunteers in the delivery of cultural and leisure services, as Wyre also already does. Some single tier authorities use volunteers to support young people and those with learning disabilities, and in museums and libraries.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Should the implementation of any of the proposals require additional financial resources these will be undertaken only when appropriate resources have been allocated from within the aggregate current Service budgets.
Legal	There is a fine line between the definition of 'volunteer' and substitution for paid work, where the council could be challenged for not paying the National Minimum Wage. The definition is as follows:

	<p>“A volunteer is someone who undertakes an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives. They are not in a contractual position (written or implied) with the organisation. Volunteers should be reimbursed for any expenses they incur in volunteering, for example travel expenses.”</p> <p>For there not be a contractual arrangement there should be no expectation for them to attend at specified or regular times and no mechanism if they do not attend</p>
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OTHER RISKS/IMPLICATIONS: CHECKLIST

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

Implications	✓ / x
Community Safety	x
Equality and Diversity	x
Sustainability	x
Health and Safety	x

Risks/Implications	✓ / x
Asset Management	x
Climate Change	x
Data Protection	x

Report Author	Telephone No.	Email	Date
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer	01253 887606	Peter.foulsham@wyre.gov.uk	24 June 2014

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Volunteering Opportunities Task Group – Final Report

arm/ex/cab/cr/14/3007pf2



Volunteering Opportunities Task Group

- Final Report -

Chair:

Councillor Val Wilson

Task Group Members:

Councillor Julia Anderson
Councillor Marge Anderton
Councillor Tom Balmain
Councillor May Gandhi
Councillor Rita Hewitt
Councillor Kerry Jones
Councillor Terry Lees
Councillor Penny Martin
Councillor Ann Turner
Councillor Dave Walmsley

Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Chairman: Councillor May Gandhi

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Introduction

The Council has used volunteers for many years, particularly in the delivery of the Coast and Countryside and Leisure services. The increase in the use of volunteers led to the appointment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator in September 2012 and numbers of volunteers have continued to increase.

The task group was commissioned to review whether the Council is maximising the potential of volunteers in the delivery of its services. Its stated objective was to identify opportunities for the wider use of volunteers across the Council. The review was limited to opportunities within the Council and did not seek to address issues related to the much broader topic of 'volunteering in Wyre'.

Eleven councillors contributed to the work of the task group, which was chaired by Cllr Val Wilson.

Aims of Review

The aims of the review, as specified in the Scoping Document, were as follows:

1. To understand the way in which volunteers are used by Wyre Council currently
2. To explore ways that we can develop our volunteering opportunities and shape future provision including career support and pathways to employment
3. To explore current links with external partners involved in the provision of volunteering in Wyre, and to assess scope for the future
4. To identify the barriers to volunteering, so that the council can understand how best to maximise the benefits of volunteering for individuals and the local community

The Review Process

The group's activities included:

- Reviewing background information provided
- Consulting with the Leader of the Council (who attended on behalf of the Cabinet)
- Reviewing the Council's current use of volunteers
- Considering the Volunteer Policy
- Interviewing witnesses at task group meetings, including
 - Council officers
 - Wyre and Fylde Together Manager
 - Work Services Manager, Jobcentreplus
- Interviewing volunteers in three different 'work' settings
- Considering how other local authorities engage volunteers to see whether any 'good practice' ideas from other areas might be implemented in Wyre

Background Information – provided by Charlotte Delaney (Senior Policy and Performance Officer) and Simon Swindells (Volunteer Coordinator)

The Council's use of volunteers has grown incrementally over a number of years, without any real strategy until recently.

The council currently engages 175 volunteers, broken down by service as follows:

Coast and Countryside	111
Sports Development	29
CCTV	8
Marine Hall, Thornton Little Theatre	5
Mobile Unit Drivers	5
Parks and Open Spaces	3
Tourism (Marsh Mill)	14

On average, 79 new volunteers are recruited each year, a figure that is counterbalanced to some extent by volunteers leaving.

The average age of Wyre's volunteers is 50.36 years. Creative People and Places (now 'LeftCoast') funding is being specifically targeted to encourage younger volunteers (aged 30 and under) to engage in new arts projects in Wyre.

There is evidence of increased demand for the use of volunteers in a wider range of services and a number of requests have been received by Heads of Service from students who are interested in unpaid work placements. With such a potential development it is essential to ensure that the council's policies and procedures are fit for purpose.

Recruitment processes are modelled on HR standards, with approved documentation and checks carried out (DBS, medical etc.) Details are recorded on a dedicated secure database which is fully compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

The task group was made aware that the Volunteer Policy is to be reviewed by the end of 2014 and that a new Work Experience and Placement Policy is being drafted.

The task group heard that there is potential for volunteers to be used more within a community context which might assist in helping to reduce isolation in both the rural and urban areas. In some cases volunteering could also become a pathway to employment.

Members recognised that volunteering opportunities benefit both the volunteer and the organisation.

Summary of Evidence from Councillor Peter Gibson, Leader of Wyre Council

There is a direct link between the task group's work and the council's Business Plan and the task group's focus should be on providing volunteering opportunities to help the council deliver its services for the benefit of local communities. There are already a number of good examples in the borough where volunteering initiatives enhance local communities, including the Rossall Beach Residents' Association and Friends' Groups at Hawthorne Park, Stanah, Vicarage Park and Memorial Gardens.

It is recognised that there are barriers that discourage some people from coming forward as volunteers; the Volunteer Bus is one method by which the council is already seeking to overcome barriers.

As a result of the discussion with Councillor Gibson about barriers to volunteering, the task group agreed to include one further aim for the review namely

“To identify the barriers to volunteering, so that the council can understand how best to maximise the benefits of volunteering for individuals and the local community.”

Summary of Written Evidence from Heads of Service

Written responses were received from the council's twelve Heads of Service.

(a) Volunteers are not used in the following seven service areas:

- Built Environment
- Planning
- Contact Centre
- Financial Services
- Governance
- Transformation
- Business Support

Various reasons for this were given. There is a requirement for staff in some areas to be professionally qualified (Built Environment) and other work requires in-depth knowledge of legislation and processes as well as access to specialist software (Contact Centre).

In Governance and Financial Services it is seen as simply inappropriate for volunteers to be involved. In Planning there could be some scope for using volunteers who are graduates, although it is recognised that internships and modern apprenticeships, for example, involve some form of payment.

The Transformation Team has identified that volunteers might be able to be used more to assist in consultation exercises, particularly when needing to conduct face to face surveys with residents.

(b) Volunteers are used in the following five service areas:

- Culture, Leisure and Tourism
- Engineering
- Environmental Health and Community Safety
- Housing Services
- Operations

Volunteers have been used extensively for over ten years as part of the Coast and Countryside Ranger Service. They carry out regular litter picks, assist with beach and environmental monitoring and undertake the widest range of tasks that help to maintain and improve the local area. There are currently over one hundred volunteers on the books.

In tourism the volunteers work predominantly at Marsh Mill, giving tours of the historic site and providing customer and visitor information. The council has an artist in residence who co-ordinates a rotating programme of exhibitions in the Kiln House Gallery attached to the Mill. There is one other volunteer who has carried out duties at

the Tourist Information Centres. Volunteers are also used in a variety of roles at the Marine Hall.

Volunteers assist with coaching sessions at the Leisure Centres, setting out equipment, providing encouragement for participants and helping to ensure that all sessions are delivered safely. The Wyre Wheels sessions are also significantly supported by volunteers.

The CCTV monitoring station is heavily reliant on volunteers who receive the requisite training and provide valuable support to the police.

Housing Services jointly commission volunteers with Regenda and Groundwork to help provide the community with energy efficiency advice and to help refer clients to appropriate winter warmth interventions. Volunteers can often be more effective than council officers when advising tenants.

It is expected that further opportunities for volunteers will arise from the council's bid for a share of the Big Lottery's Fulfilling Lives, Ageing Better fund, which will also have an impact upon some of the harder to reach and more lonely residents in the borough.

Definition of 'volunteer'

A more general point was made by, Liesl Hadgraft, Head of Business Support, who reminded the task group of the importance of delineating the work of volunteers from that of paid workers. She advised the task group:

"There is a fine line between the definition of Volunteer and substitution for paid work, where we (the Council) could be challenged for not paying the National Minimum Wage. I have included the definition to assist with this:

"A volunteer is someone who undertakes an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives. They are not in a contractual position (written or implied) with the organisation. Volunteers should be reimbursed for any expenses they incur in volunteering, for example travel expenses."

For there not to be a contractual arrangement there should be no expectation for them to attend at specified or regular times and no mechanism (disciplinary or other) if they do not attend."

Summary of Evidence from Jane Williams, Wyre and Fylde Together Manager

Jane Williams, Wyre and Fylde Together Manager, is employed by Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). She manages the Wyre & Fylde Together network and is provided with office facilities at Wyre Civic Centre. She facilitates the link between the Council and the third sector and ensures that volunteering is visible in the local community.

Wyre Together was launched in 2010 with the intention of providing a single point of contact for third sector organisations. It started with 48 groups and now has 168 who are working together to share information and address priorities that are important to the local community. The partnership is free to join for all Wyre voluntary, community and faith sector groups.

A Steering Group, made up of 20 partner organisations, meets every three months to discuss the progress and actions of the partnership and agree future priorities. There are currently six Task and Finish Groups that have been set up to work on the agreed actions, including one on volunteering. The group meets regularly to discuss how volunteering can be promoted and developed across Wyre. Members include Wyre Council, Lancashire County Council Volunteering Services, Lancashire Police, Help Direct, UR Potential, Volunteer Centre, Age UK, YMCA and Healthwatch, amongst others.

Two 'Volunteer Snapshot' exercises have been run during 2011 and 2013 respectively, to assess the scale and to get a sense of the value of volunteering in Wyre. The second of these showed that there were over 5,000 volunteers in Wyre, contributing an average of 22,664 hours per week. This equated to an estimated annual monetary value of volunteers of £7.3m.

The Volunteer Wyre 'i-bus' Programme has been available for the promotion of volunteering in the rural areas of the borough for three days a week since 3 March 2014, and is due to be launched officially on 9 April 2014.

Summary of Evidence from Simon Swindells, Wyre's Volunteer Coordinator

Simon Swindells, Wyre's Volunteer Coordinator, explained his role and responsibilities as the council's Volunteer Coordinator. He is responsible for the recruitment of volunteers but service managers carry out the day to day task of supervision.

The role has been steadily expanding over the past 18 months and now also includes the development of the volunteering web page and promotional material, attendance at open days at local colleges as well as representation on Wyre Together and other community groups. In addition the Coordinator plays a role in the management of the i-bus, which has a funding commitment from Shaping Your Neighbourhood of £25,250 covering a two-year period. The project has opened up new opportunities for engaging isolated communities in volunteering across Wyre.

In answer to questions from members of the task group Simon Swindells added the following:

- a) There is a cost to an organisation that uses volunteers in terms of recruitment and retention. Training, supervision and out of pocket expenses all contribute to that.
- b) It is important to be able to give something back to volunteers and the possibility of accrediting volunteers is being explored.
- c) Voluntary work can be used as relevant experience when applying for jobs.
- d) More women are now volunteering than used to be the case.
- e) We are seeing a smaller percentage of volunteers than previously who are on organised schemes (Duke of Edinburgh's Award, for example).
- f) In Wyre the volunteer works for the benefit of the whole organisation and is not necessarily restricted within one service area.
- g) There has been no formal recognition of long service in the past three years.
- h) It is accepted that the social side of volunteering is very important and this is something that the council could encourage further.
- i) The council does not have a volunteers' database that captures information such as (i) how many volunteers have moved into paid work (ii) what sort of work (iii) what qualifications are held by volunteers (iv) whether the volunteer is transient.
- j) There are a number of things that act as barriers to volunteering which include ignorance, recompense and accessibility.

Ignorance can be addressed to some extent by improving promotion and marketing (the i-bus, for example, as well as the potential of social media);

Recompense is not simply a monetary issue, although it is important that volunteers are not out of pocket. They are currently reimbursed travelling expenses if they are asked to carry out a task away from their usual volunteering work base. There is a range of other motivational factors that affect whether someone chooses to become a volunteer. These include, for example, providing people with something to occupy them, making people feel valued and appreciated, volunteering as a social outlet, developing new skills and becoming better equipped to make a successful job application.

Accessibility can be increased by providing a wide range of volunteering opportunities. Consideration should be given to the contributions that could be made by people of all ages; some tasks might be relatively active and some more sedentary, some might be more challenging and some less so, some might demand a variety of skills, others might be more repetitive in nature. It might also be possible to offer more volunteering opportunities at different times of day, in order to increase accessibility.

There are some options for possible further expansion of the use of volunteers – for example, for greeting at council venues such as the Marine Hall, Thornton Little Theatre and Fleetwood Market (an initiative called ‘Discover Wyre’ is currently being discussed). Marsh Mill is a successful working example of this.

Further evidence from Simon Swindells

The task group Chair (Cllr Val Wilson) and Vice Chair (Cllr Kerry Jones) met with Simon Swindells on a separate occasion to discuss a number of points that had been raised by task group members, specifically, although not exclusively, about the management information system and recruitment process.

A database is used to hold information about all of Wyre’s volunteers. It includes the information provided on the application form, such as details of training and experience, relevant medical information and the names and addresses of two referees. Heads of Service receive a monthly print out of all volunteers.

Councillors suggested that, as the council is looking at new ways of working with volunteers, this should be reflected in the application form, perhaps using an additional question such as, “Are there any other skills that you have that the council might find helpful?”

An Exit Survey is not carried out with volunteers who leave as this is thought to be too formal a process for people who are giving up their time of their own volition. In many cases volunteers simply do not return and ‘disappear’ without warning, which is their prerogative. The Volunteer Coordinator does, however, try to find out why someone leaves although it is acknowledged this is not always possible.

Simon Swindells suggested that additional roles for volunteers might include not only meeting and greeting (‘Discover Wyre’) at places such as railway stations and Cleveleys (almost like a mobile tourist point), but also supporting the council’s increasing work with sufferers of Alzheimer’s and dementia (an initiative being developed by the Head of Housing Services) and to help reduce social isolation. The

Chair, Cllr Wilson, added that she also thought that volunteers could assist with consultations run by the council.

Summary of Evidence from Volunteers

Seven task group members visited volunteers in three different work settings as part of the review. These were:

- Wyre Wheels at YMCA, Fleetwood
- Countryside Team at Wyre Estuary Country Park, Stanah
- CCTV at the Civic Centre, Poulton

Councillors focused their discussions on what it was like to be a volunteer in Wyre – what the benefits are, what motivates volunteers and whether volunteering might assist with job searches in specific situations.



Chair, Cllr Val Wilson and other task group members meeting with volunteers at Wyre Estuary Country Park, Stanah

The following motivating factors and benefits were articulated by volunteers:

- Good use of time during retirement
- Chance to meet new people
- Health benefits, including help to stop smoking
- Opportunity to talk to visitors to the area
- Receiving positive feedback from visitors
- Opportunity to enhance CV for job applications
- Pride in their work
- Feeling valued
- Up-skilling

Volunteers have been recruited through a variety of different routes, including

- Word of mouth
- Garstang Walking Festival
- Referral from doctor
- Mountain Rescue

Volunteers travel from a wide geographical area, not just from within the borough, although most come from the FY5, FY6 and FY7 post code areas.

The point was made that different work settings require different approaches, even for volunteers. The CCTV volunteers, for example, are managed in a much more structured way and work with a strong team ethic. The feedback from CCTV volunteers was, nonetheless, very positive, as it was in all three of the work settings visited by members of the task group.

Summary of Evidence from Jo Monk, Work Services Manager with Jobcentreplus

Jo Monk advised councillors about the value of volunteering from the point of view of potential employers. Anything that improves people's job chances is to be encouraged, particularly in relation to three groups:

- i. Young people
- ii. The long term unemployed
- iii. Those with little or no job experience.

There are a number of benefits that volunteering enables people to demonstrate, including:

- Commitment
- Structure – responsibility and time-keeping
- Confidence
- Motivation
- Skills
- Working in a team
- Enrichment – giving something back
- Sense of achievement
- Enhances CV and provides a reference

The current 'Work Experience' programme and its links with various volunteering organisations has been "incredibly successful" across the county as a stepping stone to getting an apprenticeship. However, the word "apprenticeship", as it was now used, might be somewhat misleading as it refers to a placement in which an employer receives funding from the Government for its duration.

Task group members recognised that volunteering is now delivered on a much more 'professional' basis than previously, which they welcome.

In the words of one member, "Volunteering can be transformational".

How are volunteers used in other local authorities?

The task group emailed all local authorities in the North West inviting them to provide details of the way in which they engage volunteers. Posts were also placed on the Forums of two national organisations (i) the Centre for Public Scrutiny and (ii) the Association of Democratic Services Officers.

Despite this wide regional and national invitation to provide information about the use of volunteers by local authorities only eight responses were received.

Two respondents (Southend-on-Sea and the London Borough of Merton) have completed scrutiny reviews of volunteering in the past two years. One focused on its own use of volunteers within 'Cultural Services' (Southend) and the other looked at how the council could extend its role in facilitating and supporting volunteering in the local area (Merton).

Most of the councils that responded reported that volunteers were used as 'Friends Groups' or in areas of what might broadly be called leisure and culture services (museums, sports coaching, nature reserves, for example). Wigan and Southend-on-Sea Councils are both unitary councils, and they use volunteers to assist with supporting young people and people with learning disabilities, as well as in libraries, museums and leisure and cultural services.

Wigan Council is developing a very interesting and innovative initiative whereby Council staff are being encouraged to undertake volunteering work within the community. To persuade more staff to get active in the community, the council's Senior Management Team has agreed to give all staff, regardless of whether they live in Wigan or not, two paid days a year to be used for community work in Wigan Borough. The full details of the scheme are still being finalised.

Wyre's Work Life Policy includes something similar. It states:

"Volunteering Activities

The Council recognises the valuable work that volunteers provide to the community and how this can also be used to aid employee's personal and professional development.

In supporting employees with volunteering activities the council will allow up to 10 days unpaid leave to enable them to engage in volunteering activities. Arrangements will need to be agreed between employees and line managers and should not conflict with work requirements.

Approval for time off will need to be sought using the 'Special Leave' Form available from Human Resources or on the intranet and employees should provide evidence of the voluntary activity if required."

This is also mentioned in the council's Volunteer Policy.

In summary . . .

The small number of responses to this comparative research suggests that the use of volunteers by local authorities might not be as wide-spread as might have previously been assumed. Further evidence in support of this hypothesis comes from the task group's post on the Centre for Public Scrutiny's website, which received 382 'views' and no direct responses. This appears to be further evidence that, although councils are interested in volunteering, not many are in a position to be able to share details of their own best practice.

Volunteer Policy

The council's Volunteer Policy was considered by the task group who were advised that it has been in place for nearly three years and would be subject to review in October 2014. Once refreshed the revised policy would be implemented following consideration at the Employment and Appeals Committee.

A Work Experience and Placement Policy is also in the process of being developed.

Conclusions and Proposals

Our conclusions and proposals can neatly be summarised under the following three headings:

- (a) Management of volunteers
- (b) The barriers to volunteering
- (c) Future volunteering opportunities

(a) Management of Volunteers

The task group is very impressed by the way in which the council already engages a large number of volunteers in a wide range of activities, and by the way in which they are supported and managed.

The application and approval processes are already very effective, as reflected in the quality and commitment of the volunteers currently in place. We do feel, however, that the council would benefit from knowing more about why volunteers leave, although we also recognise that this information is not always easy to obtain. By recording this information more formally the council will build up evidence that might affect how volunteers are recruited, managed and retained in the future.

PROPOSAL 1

To continue to develop the application process and the volunteer database that is already in place and to ensure that 'exit information' is gathered and recorded systematically wherever possible.

There is no doubt that volunteers enhance the delivery of the services in which they are already working and, indeed, some of those services might not exist at all were it not for the contributions made by volunteers.

We would like to see the use of volunteers extended further, although we are also very aware of the need to ensure that a clear line continues to be drawn between volunteering and paid work.

PROPOSAL 2

To ensure that the fine line between professionalism and destroying the spirit of volunteering is maintained.

(b) The barriers to volunteering

Some of the barriers to volunteering have been made very clear to us (ignorance, recompense and accessibility in particular) and the task group sees it as important that the council proactively addresses these points in order to provide the opportunity to volunteer for more people. We also note that it is

important to recognise the contribution made by volunteers and we would like to see options explored as to how this might best be achieved.

PROPOSAL 3

To continue to encourage and promote volunteering to all residents in the borough.

We would like to see the council putting on a ‘Volunteering Week’, with a press and social media campaign, and using the i-bus as the centre-piece.

PROPOSAL 4

To put in place a recognition scheme for volunteers, covering those who have given long service as well as those who would benefit from a certificate or other formal recognition in order to assist them when applying for paid work.

PROPOSAL 5

To ensure that accessibility issues such as time, day and location are taken into consideration when assessing all volunteering opportunities, in order that the number of potential volunteers is maximised, subject to the identified needs of the council.

(c) Future volunteering opportunities

From comparisons that have been made with other councils it would appear that Wyre is already being much more creative in its use of volunteers than many other local authorities. The research carried out by the task group revealed that only a limited number of other local authorities use volunteers, and there were no examples uncovered where the boundaries of volunteering have been pushed back radically. Most councils quote the use of volunteers in Friends’ Groups, and some engage volunteers in the delivery of cultural and leisure services, as Wyre also already does. Some single tier authorities use volunteers to support young people and those with learning disabilities, and in museums and libraries.

PROPOSAL 6

To encourage Heads of Service to challenge their own views about the boundaries to volunteering and to think creatively about new opportunities that could be offered. We would like to see the use of volunteers considered in a number of new areas including meeting and greeting at Fleetwood and Poulton Markets, neighbourhood engagement, assisting with consultations, involvement in the council’s work with sufferers of Alzheimer’s and dementia to help reduce social isolation, as well as an extension of their use in Tourist Information Centres.

Responsibility for Implementation of Agreed Proposals

The responsibility for implementing the proposals will be as follows:

Proposal 1 Corporate Director of People and Places

Proposal 2 Corporate Director of Resources

Proposal 3 Corporate Director of Resources

Proposal 4 Corporate Director of People and Places

Proposal 5 All Heads of Service

Proposal 6 All Heads of Service

Councillors' Attendances

There were four meetings of the task group.

Councillors were also invited to go on a site visit and meet volunteers at their places of work and all councillors who did this have been credited with one further 'attendance'.

Name	Meetings Attended (including site visit to volunteers) Maximum 5
Councillor Anderson	3
Councillor M Anderton	4
Councillor Balmain	3
Councillor M Gandhi	4
Councillor Hewitt	2
Councillor Jones	5
Councillor Lees	5
Councillor Martin	3
Councillor Turner	3
Councillor Walmsley	4
Councillor Wilson	5

Acknowledgements

The task group would like to thank all the witnesses who have been so generous in giving up their time to attend meetings and provide information, which has been invaluable to this Review.

List of Appendices

APPENDIX 1 Volunteering Opportunities Task Group – Scoping Document

24 June 2014

arm/ex/cab/cr/14/3007pf2

Volunteering Opportunities Task Group**Scoping Document**

Review Topic	Volunteering Opportunities
Chair	Cllr Val Wilson
Group Membership	Cllrs Julia Anderson, Marge Anderton, Tom Balmain, Rita Hewitt, Terry Lees, Kerry Jones (Vice Chair), Penny Martin, Vivien Taylor, Ann Turner and Dave Walmsley
Officer Support	Peter Foulsham (Scrutiny Officer)
Purpose of the Review	To review whether the Council is maximising the potential of volunteers in the delivery of its services
Objective of Review	To identify opportunities for the wider use of volunteers across the Council
Aims of Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To understand the way in which volunteers are used by Wyre Council currently 2. To explore ways that we can develop our volunteering opportunities and shape future provision including career support and pathways to employment 3. To explore current links with external partners involved in the provision of volunteering in Wyre, and to assess scope for the future 4. To identify the barriers to volunteering, so that the council can understand how best to maximise the benefits of volunteering for individuals and the local community
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review any previous reports and documentation • Consider how other councils approach volunteering • Consult with relevant portfolio holder(s), council officers and volunteers • Interview witnesses at task group meetings
Scope of Review	The review is limited to opportunities in Wyre and does not cover volunteering opportunities outside the Council.
Potential Witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council (link to Business Plan) • Corporate Director of People and Places • Heads of Service • Volunteer Co-ordinator • Volunteers • Representatives from the Volunteer Centre Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde and One Lancashire

Documents to be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Volunteering – Background Information – Report by Charlotte Delaney, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, January 2014 • Volunteer Policy • Shaping Your Neighbourhood – Volunteer Wyre Project – Cabinet report 19 June 2013 • Report explaining the ways in which volunteers are used currently at Wyre, including input from Heads of Service, to be prepared by Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer, and submitted to the task group
Risks	
Level of Publicity	Low
Indicators of a Successful Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of volunteering opportunities offered by the Council
Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved delivery of Council services • Greater community engagement in the Council's business • Improved health and well-being (link to Big Lottery bid) • Increased opportunities for employment
Approximate Timeframe	3 months
Projected Start Date	29 January 2014

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