



CABINET – 9TH JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING SCHEME

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of Cabinet on a proposed Employee Volunteering Scheme.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval to implement the Scheme with a review carried out at 12 months on the uptake and benefits of the Scheme.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Employee Volunteering Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees at Caerphilly County Borough Council, with the benefit of releasing the capacity of employees in supporting local communities and the associated benefits to employee well-being.
- 2.2 The proposed Scheme includes volunteering for a day/part day event or volunteering on a longer-term basis. Employees who have volunteered on a longer-term basis will be able to apply for a maximum of two days leave of absence per year.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet are asked to:
Approve the Employee Volunteering Scheme (**attached at appendix 1**) and implement the Scheme with a review to be carried out in 12 months on the uptake and benefits of the Scheme.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To strengthen relationships with residents, voluntary and community sectors, and to deliver on our commitment set out in the new whole-authority operating model – 'Team Caerphilly – Better Together' strategy and support the 'social heart' ethos of the Council.
- 4.2 To release the capacity of employees in supporting local communities.
- 4.3 To demonstrate a commitment and support to employees by encouraging them to

play a more active role in building a more robust and resilient society.

4.4 To contribute to improved employee job satisfaction, health and wellbeing, morale, commitment and performance.

4.5 To encourage individual development, with opportunities for employees that would not otherwise be met through the usual training routes.

5. THE REPORT

Employee Volunteering Scheme

5.1 The proposed Scheme has been drafted to meet the objective of the Team-Caerphilly Better Together strategy and the 'social heart' ethos of the Council by allowing the release of employees to volunteer and support the local community. Employee volunteering has numerous benefits which are set out in the draft Scheme (**attached as Appendix 1**). In addition, employee volunteering supports corporate social responsibility. The Scheme has been developed after research carried out on other public sector schemes operating in Wales and the rest of the UK (**attached as Appendix 2**).

5.2 Volunteering can be undertaken with voluntary or community organisations that meet the criteria set out in the Scheme. The Scheme is intended to support voluntary organisations and activity that contributes to well-being in the Caerphilly county borough area.

5.3 Activities should benefit the environment, individuals (other than close relatives), charities and voluntary/ community groups within Caerphilly County Borough, or regional charities where there is a benefit to Caerphilly.

Day or part day Volunteering

5.4 Employees can register to volunteer for an organised whole or part of a day community event and subject to manager's approval they may be released to take part in these events.

5.5 Volunteering events will be available from a list of options decided by the Council, in partnership with voluntary organisations. The limited number of events will be available to employees on a first come basis.

5.6 The Scheme is intended to create additional capacity in communities and allow employees to take part in different opportunities to develop skills.

5.7 Examples of day/part day event volunteering could be marshalling a fun run in Caerphilly or painting a community centre.

Long-term Volunteering

5.8 Longer-term volunteering involves a commitment of a minimum of 12 months with regular volunteering and engagement taking place at least once a month. Longer-term volunteering will be carried out in employee's own time and outside working hours.

5.9 In some cases, employees may volunteer more regularly over a shorter period in line with demand from services, for example, employees may support night shelters over the winter months which run more regularly over a shorter period. These volunteering

opportunities will be considered as providing an appropriate commitment and considered as long-term volunteering.

- 5.10 Employees who undertake longer-term volunteering will be able to apply for two days leave of absence which equates to 14.48 hours for fulltime employees or equivalent in hours depending on individual work pattern per calendar year. Examples of longer-term volunteering could be a trustee for a voluntary organisation, a telephone befriender, or social media support volunteer or volunteer as a buddy on the Caerphilly Cares Buddy Scheme.
- 5.11 Volunteering time will be managed through the Volunteering Wales Website.
- 5.12 Employee volunteering will be supported and monitored by managers and the experience will be discussed during My Time sessions. Employees will complete pre and post volunteering forms which will be discussed and signed off by managers during My Time sessions.

Conclusion

- 5.13 An increasing number of councils, other public sector bodies and businesses, recognise the positive contribution that an Employee Volunteering Scheme can make in encouraging employees to take an active role in their communities. The Scheme provides the opportunity for employees to share skills, knowledge, and experience within the local community.
- 5.14 Employee volunteering can strengthen relationships with residents, voluntary and community sectors and help to deliver on the commitments set out in the new whole-authority operating model – 'Team Caerphilly – Better Together'. The Scheme is also consistent with the Caerphilly Cares strategy and the 'social heart' ethos of the Council.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The Scheme assumes that employees will propose themselves for volunteering opportunities. Managers should support any requests subject to the exigencies of service delivery which will take precedence.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out by the group working on the development and implementation of the Scheme and most areas have been recorded as neutral or having positive impacts. Any negative impacts identified will be mitigated through risk assessments. The Scheme has been developed to ensure employees across all contracts and departments can participate in volunteering. The day or part day events will cover a variety of opportunities and employees can participate during working hours. The long-term volunteering option can be carried out during the employee's own time and leave of absence can be arranged with managers. An employee will participate in a minimum of 12 days volunteering which for full time staff will qualify them for two days leave of absence which demonstrates the economic benefit to the community. Employees have been positive about the Scheme and the benefits of volunteering in general.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Attached as Appendix 3.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Employees taking part in the day/part day volunteering events will receive their normal pay, therefore any costs associated to this will be covered by the service area. There is a cost when employees undertake longer-term volunteering as they can apply for additional leave of absence days or hours.
- 8.2 Further research is required regarding any extra costs for additional resources required to set up and monitor the Scheme. A report will be published in due course with additional financial information.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Releasing employees to undertake volunteering activities will have implications on employee resources within service areas, which managers will need to consider against the guidance. The proposal will have positive personnel implications with employees potentially benefiting from improved job satisfaction, health and wellbeing, morale, commitment and performance as a result of volunteering.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1

Response	Reply
The GMB recognise that volunteering is the commitment of time by an individual to engage in events and activities in society and within the community to support others. For those staff who wish to be involved in volunteering the GMB believe that it could help with their wellbeing and provide valuable skills and experience to the member of staff, this will also build confidence to deal with people and organisations in the community and this will in turn build an individual's self-esteem. We are pleased to see how the council will support the member of staff when undertaking their volunteering commitments, we believe the report sets out all the support clearly and the GMB are happy to support the document.	
UNISON asked that the distinction between day/part day and long-term volunteer is clarified. UNISON sought clarification that volunteering would not be used to replace paid employment opportunities. UNISON wanted confirmation that a review would take place at the end of the year to capture numbers of employees who participated and the type of volunteering that was required. With these amendments in place, UNISON is happy to support the scheme.	An email response and a meeting were arranged with UNISON and the requested amendments have been made to the Employee Volunteering Scheme.
Social Services - asked questions regarding	The policy frequently refers to the

managing requests from employees who want to volunteer and demands from service provision.	importance of employees discussing all volunteering opportunities with their manager and that service provision will be a consideration. Discussions with managers demonstrated that management of volunteering could be carried out in the same way managers arrange training or cover sickness. Managers can also plan and agree several employees who can take part in a volunteering opportunity in any given year.
HR Strategy Group – several recommendations to wording and liability were suggested.	All recommendations were accepted and made. Liability was confirmed with insurance and amended to reflect the advice from the Council's insurers.
Education Services – questions regarding managing employee demand for volunteering.	An email response was provided explaining the process.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 There are no enabling statutory power(s) for the decision under consideration.

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Consultees: Cllr. Eluned Stenner - Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Planning
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education & Corporate Services
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Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Finance Services & S.151 Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
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Background Papers:

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Draft Employee Volunteering Scheme
- Appendix 2 Background and supporting information
- Appendix 3 Integrated Impact Assessment