

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	3 July 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Volunteer Charter
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/179
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald, Corporate Services
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe, People & Citizen Services Michelle Crombie, Community Planning Manager
REPORT AUTHOR	Lesley Strachan, Talent Manager Allison Swanson, Improvement Programme Manager
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Introduction 6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report introduces the Volunteer Charter and recommends that Aberdeen City Council becomes a Charter Champion. Becoming a Charter Champion would be a signal to the voluntary sector that Aberdeen City Council formally recognises the significant role which volunteers have in supporting our communities of people and place. Furthermore, it would be a declaration that the Council considers the impact of its decisions on volunteers and the contribution they make to Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council agree that:-

- 2.1 Aberdeen City Council become a Volunteer Charter Champion; and
- 2.1 the Council Co-Leaders pledge their support for the Volunteer Charter .

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Volunteer Charter, produced by Volunteer Scotland, is a tool for policy makers, elected members and funders to use when making decisions about how volunteering is represented in decision making processes, policy development, and how volunteering is resourced and utilised. It sets out ten key principles which help to underpin good relations within a volunteering environment and is open to any individual, group or organisation from any sector who either involve volunteers, or influence decisions on volunteering.
- 3.2 Volunteer Scotland and Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) have invited Aberdeen City Council to sign up to the Volunteer Charter. The invitation is extended to any other individual, group or organisation from any sector who either involve volunteers, or influence decisions on how volunteering is resourced or reflected in policy. Community Planning Aberdeen will also consider signing up to the Volunteer Charter at its next

meeting on 25 September 2024.

4. ASSESSMENT OF OUR ABILITY TO MEET THE PRINCIPLES

4.1 The table below sets out the principles of the Volunteer Charter. It also provides an indication of our ability to meet these principles in terms of our current practice.

4.2 Following a recommendation by Internal Audit of the Council's volunteering arrangements, reported to Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee on 9 May 2024, a corporate volunteering policy and associated guidance for managers is currently being developed, which will set out formally the arrangements for all aspects of managing volunteers to support council activity. This policy will be reported to the Staff Governance Committee later in the year.

PRINCIPLES	COMMENTS
1. Any volunteer activity is a freely made choice of the individual. If there is any compulsion, threat of sanctions or force, then any such activity is not volunteering.	Aberdeen City Council does not compel volunteers to volunteer with us. Volunteers are likely to sign up to volunteering activities following advertising from various council services on our website and by contacting them directly to arrange.
2. Volunteers should receive no financial reward for their time however out of pocket expenses should be covered. No one should be prevented from volunteering due to their income.	Aberdeen City Council does not offer payment for volunteering. Any costs attributed to the volunteering activity beyond commuting to and from the relevant location would be covered by the Council (e.g. ACC would recompense reasonable travel costs and pre-approved out of pocket expenses).
3. Effective structures should be put in place to support, train and develop volunteers and their collaboration with paid workers.	Volunteers would normally always have a link point of contact who is a paid employee of Aberdeen City Council and they will receive induction and relevant training and development to enable them to undertake their volunteering activity. Volunteers will also have access to a wide range of self-paced learning resources through a guest account to the corporate learning management system - ACC Learn. Content will cover key topics, such as Introduction to Health and Safety, Child Protection, Prevent Awareness and Corporate Parenting. When registering, volunteers self-identify by choosing the "volunteer" option on registration,

	allowing for straightforward reporting and monitoring for reduction of corporate risk across key areas.
4. Volunteers and paid workers should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination.	Employers have a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their volunteers, as well as their employees. This means that Aberdeen City Council must assess the risks involved in the volunteering activities, provide adequate training, supervision and equipment, and consult with the volunteers on health and safety matters which affect them. Employers must also comply with the relevant legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. Aberdeen City Council has employer liability insurance which covers volunteers.
5. Volunteers should not carry out duties formerly carried out by paid workers, nor should they be used to disguise the effects of non-filled vacancies or cuts in services.	This is taken into consideration when advising managers on using volunteers, as by allocating duties to volunteers which are included in a paid established role can risk the creation of an "employment contract". Whilst volunteers can undertake tasks associated with an established role, they should not be fulfilling the majority of duties of that role (even on a part-time basis).
6. Volunteers should not be used instead of paid workers or undercut their pay and conditions of service nor undertake the work of paid workers during industrial disputes.	As above. Where there is a vacancy, it is not an option to fill this with a volunteer. The Council's normal recruitment and selection process would apply.
7. Volunteers should not be used to reduce contract costs nor be a replacement for paid workers in competitive tenders or procurement processes.	As above. We do not ask unpaid volunteers to undertake or fulfil specific paid roles.
8. Volunteers should not be used to bypass minimum wage legislation nor generate profit for owners.	Volunteers are unpaid and will not be asked to undertake the duties associated with established council job roles.
9. Volunteers and paid workers should be given the opportunity	Aberdeen City Council is currently developing a Corporate Volunteer

to contribute to the development and monitoring of volunteering policies and procedures, including the need for policies that resolve any issues or conflicts that may arise.	Policy, which will be implemented by November 2024. As part of the development of the policy, volunteer input will be undertaken.
10. Volunteer roles should be designed and negotiated around the needs and interests of volunteers, involving organisations and wider stakeholders. Finding legitimacy and avoiding exploitation through consensus depends on mutual trust and respect.	This will be considered in developing the Corporate Volunteer Policy and associated guidance for managers.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no immediate financial implications involved in pledging support to the Charter. The principle of the Charter is that volunteers should receive no financial reward for their time however out of pocket expenses should be covered. No one should be prevented from volunteering due to their income. Any costs attributed to the volunteering role beyond commuting to and from work would be considered by the Cluster in advance of the volunteering opportunity being agreed and would be covered by Cluster.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications involved in pledging support to the Charter.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the report.

8. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Declining to become a Charter Champion risks isolation from the voluntary and public sector as the Charter	Aberdeen City Council is currently developing a Corporate Volunteer Strategy which will recognise the significant role which volunteers have supporting our	L	Yes

	becomes commonplace throughout both sectors. All Community Planning Aberdeen partners are considering signing the charter.	communities of people and place and will also set out a volunteering environment.		
Compliance	Staff are unaware of the principles and there is non compliance.	Aberdeen City Council is currently developing a Corporate Volunteer Strategy and will ensure there is clear and consistent guidance for staff on the principles of the Charter. This will include a regular review to ensure the Strategy remains relevant.	L	Yes
Operational	Staff have the skills and knowledge to support volunteers	Aberdeen City Council is currently developing a Corporate Volunteer Strategy and will ensure there is clear and consistent guidance for staff.	L	Yes
Financial	The Council alone is unable to resource the out of pocket expenses of volunteers.	Cluster will consider budget for any potential out of pocket expenses before promoting any opportunities. Aberdeen City Council is currently developing a Corporate Volunteer Strategy and will ensure there is clear guidance on expenses.	L	Yes
Reputational	Declining to sign the charter may have a negative	Report recommends that charter be signed. Aberdeen City Council is currently developing	M	Yes

	impact on the public's perception of the Council and value of volunteers.	a Corporate Volunteer Strategy and will ensure there is clear volunteering guidance and environment. A communication plan will be developed to coincide.		
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			Yes

9. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The report supports the empowerment of communities and demonstrates civic leadership in this area.</p>
Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Signing of the charter will ensure a consistent volunteering environment and promotion of opportunities to participate in improvements to support achieve the Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes. This will support all aims in this section, but particularly, 2.8 Support 25 individuals to gain employability skills via volunteering opportunities by 2026.</p> <p>Community Empowerment is an overarching theme that supports all Stretch Outcomes. Approval of the recommendations in the report will support achievement of the following aims:</p> <p>16.2 Increase the number of community ideas identified within locality plans being tested by CPA and partners where communities are involved in the design process to at least 50% by 2026.</p> <p>16.3 Increase the number and diversity of community members participating in community planning at a meaningful level (Rung 5 and above) by 100% by 2025</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Signing of the charter will ensure a consistent volunteering environment and promotion of opportunities to participate in improvements to support achieve the Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes. This will support all aims in this section, but particularly, 10.3 Increase by 50% the number of</p>

	<p>people engaged with Stay Well Stay Connected initiatives by 2025.</p> <p>Community Empowerment is an overarching theme that supports all Stretch Outcomes. Approval of the recommendations in the report will support achievement of the following aims:</p> <p>16.2 Increase the number of community ideas identified within locality plans being tested by CPA and partners where communities are involved in the design process to at least 50% by 2026.</p> <p>16.3 Increase the number and diversity of community members participating in community planning at a meaningful level (Rung 5 and above) by 100% by 2025</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Signing of the charter will ensure a consistent volunteering environment and promotion of opportunities to participate in improvements to support achieve the Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes. This will support all aims in this section, but particularly:-</p> <p>13.4 Increase by 20 the number of teams and/or volunteers ready to mobilise in icy weather by 2025 and</p> <p>15.5 Increase by 50% the number of community groups delivering local environmental improvements in their neighbourhoods by 2026</p> <p>Community Empowerment is an overarching theme that supports all Stretch Outcomes. Approval of the recommendations in the report will support achievement of the following aims:</p> <p>16.2 Increase the number of community ideas identified within locality plans being tested by CPA and partners where communities are involved in the design process to at least 50% by 2026.</p> <p>16.3 Increase the number and diversity of community members participating in community planning at a meaningful level (Rung 5 and above) by 100% by 2025</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	

10. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Integrated Impact Assessment completed and submitted.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Data Protection Impact Assessments will be required to be completed when Services identify a need for volunteers.
Other	N/A

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - [Volunteer Charter Guide](#)

13. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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