

<b>Policy and Development Committee</b>		<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	Wednesday 3 September 2014	
<b>Report Title</b>	Volunteering Strategy 2013-16	
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism	
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Pete Raine	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Emma Wiggins	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Sophia Taylor	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	
<b>Classification</b>	Open	
<b>Forward Plan</b>	Reference number:	
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommend any changes to the policy that it wishes the Cabinet member to consider	

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report summarises the Volunteering Strategy and its policy aims. The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommend any changes to the policy that it wishes the Cabinet Member to consider.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 Swale's Volunteering Strategy sets out a strategic approach for the Council, working in partnership with other agencies, to increase volunteering within Swale, including a series of priorities and actions for the next three years.
- 2.2 With the growing Localism agenda, a greater number of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations are taking on services and assets traditionally run by public sector organisations, increasing their need for volunteers, often in a wide range of new positions.
- 2.3 This Strategy has been developed to ensure that the Council can support those volunteer-involving organisations to ensure they are in the best possible position to deliver these new services, whilst also ensuring that the opportunities for residents to volunteer are in place to improve their employability, skill sets and health.

## Strategy to Date and Options for Improvement

A full outline of everything that has been delivered so far is highlighted in the Volunteering Strategy Action Plan (Appendix I). Below is each of the strategies priorities, the achievements so far, plans for the future, aligning performance indicators and any recommendations put forward for the Committee to consider. Full list of the Performance Indicators can be found in Appendix II.

<b>1. To support VCS organisations in their recruitment, retention and upskilling of volunteers.</b>	
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers are currently working with <b>89 groups</b> to provide a range of support and advice.</li> <li>• SBC currently <b>grant funds infrastructure organisation</b> Swale Community Voluntary Services (SCVS) £15,000 to deliver support to VCS organisations.</li> <li>• The <b>capacity building toolkit</b> is currently in progress, with officers identifying this as a welcome tool. The toolkit will provide a centralised location for all information that officers may require to help VCS organisation; finance, fundraising, governance etc.</li> </ul>
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trustee's Network has not been launched but with the help of SCVS, this will be launched in October 2014 (Trustee's Week).</li> </ul>
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of VCS organisations managing either alone or within partnership services and assets previously managed by Swale Borough Council.</li> <li>• Number of members of the Swale Trustees Network</li> </ul>
Recommendations	No change
<b>2. Promotion volunteering opportunities, benefits and the positive work of existing volunteers.</b>	
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Volunteer Swale Awards</b> - Since the Strategy has been adopted the Volunteer Swale Awards have been delivered. The awards took place in March 2014 and proved to be very successful in providing an opportunity to celebrate the hard work of local volunteers, promote volunteering and also build our network of volunteers and voluntary organisations within the Borough. The awards were heavily backed by the local Kent Messenger Newspapers.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Volunteer Swale campaign</b> – The Volunteer Swale campaign ran alongside the Volunteer Swale Awards. During the campaign the Volunteer Centre received an increased number of enquires about volunteering opportunities. In October they received 39 enquiries, once the campaign started in November they received 55 enquiries and the same again in January, this is an increase of 41%.</li> <li>• <b>Volunteers' Week</b> – Swale Borough Council celebrated national Volunteers' Week (1-7 June), this gave the chance to promote the winners of the volunteer awards, show case the stories of local volunteers via our volunteering webpage and social media pages alongside the promotion within the local paper. During Volunteers' Week the average number of people visiting the SBC volunteering webpages increased 345%, from 20 visits per week to 89 per week.</li> <li>• SCVS have attended a <b>Youth Forum</b> – proving the young people information on volunteering (including the benefits and how to get involved).</li> </ul>
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015 Volunteer Swale Awards alongside the Volunteer Swale Campaign.</li> <li>• Targeted poster campaign.</li> <li>• Continued promotion at the Youth Forum</li> </ul>
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The % of residents that have given unpaid help to a group, club or organisation at least once a month over the past year (Local Area Perception Survey – Swale Borough Council).</li> <li>• Number of long term unemployed people gaining employment through volunteering</li> </ul>
Recommendations	Data collection for performance indicator (PI) 7 (Number of long term unemployed people gaining employment through volunteering) has proved very challenging and has meant that the data we have received has come from such a small sample size it is not representative of the borough. It is suggested that this <b>PI is reworded</b> to be source specific (Number of long term unemployed people gaining employment through volunteering via the volunteer centre or via Job Centre Plus).
<b>3. Collation of all volunteering opportunities for the borough through the volunteering centre.</b>	
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More staff are <b>aware of the volunteer centre</b> and that volunteering opportunities should be promoted through them and their bank of volunteers. Their details and services are also promoted on our volunteering webpage.</li> </ul>
Future Plans	There does, however, seem to be a lack of local knowledge around the volunteer centre and the support

	they can offer. It is therefore important that we continue to promote and signpost alongside linking in with them on any campaigns we run.
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal volunteering levels across Swale by volunteer-involving organisations</li> <li>• Number of volunteers recruited through Swale Volunteer Centre</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<b>Expand this priority to include other online volunteer databases</b> - <a href="http://www.do-it.org.uk">www.do-it.org.uk</a> is a national website that allows users to search for specific types of volunteering opportunities in their area. It is also important that we promote volunteering activity specific online databases – for example the sport volunteering page <a href="http://www.joininuk.org">www.joininuk.org</a> , this specifically targets those who want to volunteer their time for a local sports club or sporting event. The drivers behind the different types of volunteering and why people get involved are hugely varied, therefore activity specific volunteering pages would target more people.
<b>4. Increase number of employees as part of local organisations from all sectors involved in volunteering.</b>	
Achievements	Work still continues to encourage staff to take advantage of their community action days individually or as part of a team day. The opportunities available have been limited, which we believe has affected the uptake.
Future Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted marketing campaign for local businesses – promote the benefits of their staff volunteering.</li> <li>• Develop a ‘Mentor Bank’ – this will be developed from the Trustees Network.</li> </ul>
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of organisations with an employee volunteering policy or programme in place</li> <li>• Number of SBC staff and Councillors participating in individual volunteering opportunities or team community action days.</li> </ul>
Recommendations	Data collection for performance indicator (PI) 3 (Number of organisations with an employee volunteering policy or programme in place) has proved very challenging and has meant that the data we have received has come from such a small sample size it is not representative of the borough. It is suggested that this <b>PI is removed</b> or a <b>better approach</b> to data collection is decided.

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 To discuss the Volunteering Strategy and consider implementing any improvements that could be made in order to ensure the outcomes of the strategy are delivered.

### 4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 To continue with the Volunteering Strategy as it was adopted 6 months ago, using the same Performance Indicators (PI's) and action plan. The strategy has allowed for some successes in the last 6 months; Volunteer Swale Awards, Volunteers' Week. This is not recommended because it will not allow amendments after Committees feedback.

### 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation was undertaken with the Voluntary and Community Sector, Public Sector, Private Sector and general community between Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
- 5.2 A specific stakeholder session for the VCS was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> November and the consultation document was also discussed by the Policy Overview Committee at their meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> November. In addition to these sessions, the draft document was discussed by the Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN) and one consultation response was received.

### 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>This strategy sets out how increasing volunteering will contribute to the Localism Corporate Priority.</p> <p>Increasing volunteering can support action to support local community-based trusts and groups to manage assets and services. These organisations are led by trustees and require a pool of people with suitable expertise to be able to deliver what is required by the community.</p> <p>Volunteering by residents can also increase their employability through skill and knowledge development, which could in turn lead to reductions in unemployed numbers within the borough.</p> <p>The strategy also sets out the importance of staff within the Council (and other organisations) in volunteering their time both as individuals and teams.</p>

Financial, Resource and Property	The delivery of the priorities within the strategy will be largely delivered by existing resources within the Economy and Community Services team, in conjunction with partner agencies and the Localism Fund.
Legal and Statutory	None identified at this point.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this point.
Sustainability	None identified at this point.
Health and Wellbeing	A Community Impact Assessment has been completed and has not identified any equality or diversity issues.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this point.
Equality and Diversity	<p>This strategy sets out how increasing volunteering will contribute to the Localism Corporate Priority.</p> <p>Increasing volunteering can support action to support local community-based trusts and groups to manage assets and services. These organisations are led by trustees and require a pool of people with suitable expertise to be able to deliver what is required by the community.</p> <p>Volunteering by residents can also increase their employability through skill and knowledge development, which could in turn lead to reductions in unemployed numbers within the borough.</p> <p>The strategy also sets out the importance of staff within the Council (and other organisations) in volunteering their time both as individuals and teams.</p>

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Volunteering Strategy Action Plan
- Appendix II: Volunteering Strategy Measuring Success

## 8 Background Papers

None