

Merton Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Date: 7 April 2014

Time: 19:15

Venue: Committee rooms B & C - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Page Number

7. Update on response to volunteering scrutiny task group report 1 - 12

The Chair has agreed to accept this item as urgent so that the Commission can receive an update on progress made in implementing the recommendations of the volunteering scrutiny task group prior to the end of the 2013/14 municipal year.

**This is a public meeting – members of the public are very welcome to attend.
The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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Overview and Scrutiny Commission membership

Councillors:

Peter Southgate (Chair)
Peter McCabe (Vice-Chair)
Iain Dysart
Samantha George
Suzanne Grocott
Jeff Hanna
Logie Lohendran
Russell Makin
Diane Neil Mills
Dennis Pearce

Substitute Members:

John Dehaney
Brenda Fraser
Mary-Jane Jeanes
Oonagh Moulton
Henry Nelless
John Sargeant

Co-opted Representatives

Simon Bennett, Secondary and Special School Parent Governor Representative
Peter Connellan, Roman Catholic diocese
Denis Popovs, Primary School Parent Governor Representative
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny describes the way Merton's scrutiny councillors hold the Council's Executive (the Cabinet) to account to make sure that they take the right decisions for the Borough. Scrutiny panels also carry out reviews of Council services or issues to identify ways the Council can improve or develop new policy to meet the needs of local people. From May 2008, the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Panels have been restructured and the Panels renamed to reflect the Local Area Agreement strategic themes.

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

- ⇒ **Call-in:** If three (non-executive) councillors feel that a decision made by the Cabinet is inappropriate they can 'call the decision in' after it has been made to prevent the decision taking immediate effect. They can then interview the Cabinet Member or Council Officers and make recommendations to the decision-maker suggesting improvements.
- ⇒ **Policy Reviews:** The panels carry out detailed, evidence-based assessments of Council services or issues that affect the lives of local people. At the end of the review the panels issue a report setting out their findings and recommendations for improvement and present it to Cabinet and other partner agencies. During the reviews, panels will gather information, evidence and opinions from Council officers, external bodies and organisations and members of the public to help them understand the key issues relating to the review topic.
- ⇒ **One-Off Reviews:** Panels often want to have a quick, one-off review of a topic and will ask Council officers to come and speak to them about a particular service or issue before making recommendations to the Cabinet.
- ⇒ **Scrutiny of Council Documents:** Panels also examine key Council documents, such as the budget, the Business Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan.

Scrutiny panels need the help of local people, partners and community groups to make sure that Merton delivers effective services. If you think there is something that scrutiny should look at, or have views on current reviews being carried out by scrutiny, let us know.

For more information, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 020 8545 3864 or by e-mail on scrutiny@merton.gov.uk. Alternatively, visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 07 April 2014

Wards: All

Subject: Update on Response to Volunteering Scrutiny Task Group Report

Lead officer: Simon Williams, Director of Community and Housing, LBM

Lead member: Edith Macauley, Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Contact officer: Hayley James, Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager, MVSC

Recommendations:

A. Discuss and comment on the update

- 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
 - 1.1. The report gives an update on work progressed since 26 September 2013.
 - 1.2. Appendix 1 details the updates on each recommendation.
- 2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**
 - 2.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 3 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**
 - 3.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 4 TIMETABLE**
 - 4.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**
 - 5.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**
 - 6.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
 - 7.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**
 - 8.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
 - 9.1. None for the purposes of this report
- 10 APPENDICES**
 - Appendix 1 –Updated response and action plan
- 11 BACKGROUND PAPERS - NONE**

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Update on the response to the scrutiny task group review of volunteering in Merton

Action Plan

Recommendation	Response and Action	Who	Timescale start	Timescale end
<p><u>Recommendation 1</u> We recommend that data on volunteering, collected in 2012 from the annual resident's survey and the council's staff survey, should be analysed to plot variations in volunteering and to build a more detailed profile of volunteering activity in Merton.</p>	<p>1.1 Annual Residents Survey (ARS) It was proposed in the Merton Partnership's Volunteering Strategy that the ARS would include volunteering questions biennially.</p> <p>1.2 Following the Commission's recommendation, the Consultation and Community Engagement Team were approached to include the questions in 2013, however, the deadline for the survey had passed and the survey was at capacity.</p> <p>1.3 Questions can be submitted for inclusion alongside other demands on the survey in June 2014 for the ARS 2014 survey.</p> <p>1.4 Staff survey The same volunteering questions are included in the 2013 staff survey which takes place at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Community and Engagement Team (LBM)</p> <p>Kate Martyn (LBM)</p>	<p>May 2014</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>November 2014</p> <p>December 2013</p>
<p>07 April 2014 update Annual Residents Survey – the volunteering questions have been submitted for the 2014 survey and will be considered along with other questions, should the survey take place. Staff survey – Kate Martyn is liaising with HR at LBM to include the volunteer questions in 2014. Voluntary sector survey – this was ran in November 2012 and will be repeated in November 2014, primary through Merton Connected.</p>				

<p><u>Recommendation 2</u> We recommend that future Mayors consider continuing to give out a Mayoral crest pin badge to residents and staff who have made a significant contribution to the community, including those who have made a significant impact through volunteering. Clearly this will be at the discretion of the Mayor.</p>	<p>2.1 The current Mayor supports the recommendation.</p>			
<p>07 April 2014 update The mayoral pins are continuing.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 3</u> We recommend that the Cabinet consider the provision of a certificate to recognise the volunteer's service to the Council and to provide a form of reference for prospective employers. It is proposed that there would be regular award ceremonies at which these certificates would be given out by the Mayor.</p>	<p>3.1 Volunteers involved in Council services References are good practice and will need to continue to be promoted as such to Council staff who are involving volunteers.</p> <p>3.2 A brief guide about involving volunteers to be designed and circulated to LBM staff as part of the shift to involving volunteers in adding value to public services.</p> <p>3.3 To investigate a 'thank you' certificate for Council volunteers that will be signed by the Chief Executive of LBM and the Mayor.</p> <p>3.4 To investigate an annual 'thank you' evening to which all Council volunteers will be invited and will receive the certificate and the Mayoral crest pin badge. The current Mayor supports this recommendation.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Mayor's Office (LBM)</p>	<p>December 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>January 2014</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>October 2013 (late notice and so possibly 2014)</p>

	<p>3.5 Note that the deadline of October in the above two recommendations is to coincide with Compact Week.</p> <p>3.6 Volunteers in Merton A 'thank you' certificate for volunteers giving the time in Merton will signed by the Chief Executive of LBM, the Mayor and the Chair of Merton Voluntary Service Council.</p> <p>3.7 There are the Mayor's Civic Awards (April) and the Merton Partnership Volunteering Awards (June) each year. A Mayoral crest pin badge will be given to the winners and highly commended in each category.</p> <p>3.8 The voluntary and public sector will be encouraged to nominate volunteers.</p> <p>3.9 To investigate with LBM's CMT the possibility of including a volunteering award in LBM's Staff Excellence Awards.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Joseph Dance (LBM)</p> <p>Mayor's Office (LBM)</p> <p>Sophie Matthews (MVSC) Abby Burford (LBM)</p> <p>Simon Williams (LBM)</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>October 2013</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>March 2014</p>
<p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>3.1 – references would be provided for volunteers</p> <p>3.2 Volunteer documents, including Key Points for Staff, are being developed for staff involving volunteers on a case-by-case basis. It will be considered as projects progress whether universal document is the right approach.</p> <p>3.3 To be discussed at CMT in April 2014.</p> <p>3.6 To be considered further post VCM being merged into MVSC.</p> <p>3.7 The Mayor's Office have been asked if they would be happy to distribute a Mayoral pin badge at the Volunteering Awards.</p> <p>3.9 To be discussed at CMT in April 2014.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 4</u> We recommend that Cabinet</p>	<p>4.1 Note that voluntary groups carry out this service e.g. Grenfell.</p>			

<p>give consideration to the provision of an offer from Merton Adult Education for those volunteers who need support with CV writing and interview skills, as well as the opportunity to gain an accredited qualification in community volunteering.</p>	<p>4.2 A list of organisation's with this offer to be compiled and circulated to LBM and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>4.3 Investigate possible volunteering accreditation / qualification options for further discussion.</p>	<p>Hayley James</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>February 2014</p>
		<p>Hayley James</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>February 2014</p>
<p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>4.2 Volunteers seeking support with CV skills is embedded in the culture of volunteer-involving organisations. Support is available from Merton Adult Education, Grenfell, Young Advisors, YMCA, JobCentre Plus and others.</p> <p>4.3 to be considered again post VCM being merged into MVSC.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 5</u></p> <p>We recommend that Cabinet should investigate the costs and benefits for volunteers who make a significant contribution to council services receiving reduced prices for some library and leisure services.</p>	<p>5.1 The challenges of defining 'significant contribution' and the administrative resource required to deliver this recommendation are noted.</p> <p>5.2 Investigate the feasibility of this recommendation.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC) and Joseph Dance (LBM)</p>	<p>February 2014</p>	
<p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>5.2 Consideration has been given to this recommendation. The cost of investment in setting up and administering the scheme, for a fairly low number of volunteers, is not advised.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 6</u></p> <p>We recommend that the web-based approach to advertising volunteering opportunities should be complemented by the use of My Merton and other low-tech mechanism for those</p>	<p>6.1 Low-tech mechanisms e.g. My Merton and printed materials will be used to promote volunteering opportunities across the borough.</p> <p>6.2 Please note the remaining points for information: as part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and merger discussions between MVSC and VCM, one online access point for volunteering in</p>			

<p>who do not access the internet, including banners and touch points.</p>	<p>Merton will emerge.</p> <p>6.3 The online presence will have clear contact information for those requiring face-to-face support.</p>	<p>Hayley James (MVSC)</p>	<p>October 2013</p>	<p>April 2014</p>
<p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>6.1 Ongoing discussions about including volunteering in My Merton. It is a challenge with the requirements for space. It has been suggested that space is paid for which there currently is not the budget for. It has been the most effective medium for engaging the local community. To be discussed by CMT in April 2014.</p> <p>6.3 Continuing to be considered as part of VCM being merged into MVSC.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 7</u> We recommend that Volunteer Centre Merton and the Council encourage volunteers to use social media (such as Twitter and Facebook) to share their experiences of volunteering in order to raise public awareness and to encourage a wider range of people to become volunteer</p>	<p>7.1 As part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and merger discussions between MVSC and VCM, volunteering communications will become increasingly more co-ordinated.</p> <p>7.2 MVSC recruited a Marketing Communications Manager in April 2013 who has developed a MVSC Facebook page and increased tweets to engage more followers. Conversations between MVSC and LBM through social media are underway and will continue to engage more followers.</p> <p>7.2 For information, the Council and MVSC have previously discussed a volunteering specific Facebook page and it was decided this was not currently the way forward.</p> <p>7.3 January 2013's SHOUT ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING encouraged those featured to talk about their volunteering on their personal social media. It was met with resistance by some volunteers.</p> <p>7.4 Encouraging volunteers to talk about their volunteering is part of the ongoing communications of the MP volunteering strategy.</p>	<p>Communications Team (LBM) and Sophie Matthews (MVSC)</p> <p>Hayley James (MVSC)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

07 April 2014 update				
7.2 Conversations on social media continue. MVSC have 1164 followers on Twitter and 77 likes on Facebook. Volunteer Centre Merton have 852 followers on Twitter and 60 likes on Facebook. There are several closed Facebook groups for specific volunteer groups e.g. Young Advisors. LBM has 4740 followers on Twitter and 778 likes.				
A volunteering app is going to be launched in stages throughout the Spring and Summer, with a full launch in Autumn to coincide with the launch of the new Do-it website.				
7.4 SHOUT ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING is being ran again in June 2014 as part of National Volunteers' Week celebrations.				
<u>Recommendation 8</u> We recommend that the Council work with Merton Voluntary Service Council to continue to support voluntary sector groups' volunteering activities by identifying and signposting potential sources of funding	8.1 It is testament to the successful Compact that a grants system has been retained, administered in partnership and the amount has been increased during austere times. 8.2 Funding opportunities in and outside of the Borough are promoted on Merton Connected and support available if required. This will continue. 8.3 MVSC are committed to identifying new sources of funding for the voluntary sector, are founder members of United Way London and have recently launched the Merton Community Fund (see response to recommendation 12).	Ian Beever (MVSC)	Ongoing	
07 April 2014 update				
8.2 Each Merton Connected e-bulletin from MVSC includes funding opportunities which stay live on MVSC's website. There have been two e-bulletins which have promoted all current funding opportunities.				
<u>Recommendation 9</u> We recommend that Merton Voluntary Service Council provide information (or a link) on its Merton Connected website to help local volunteering groups make	9.1 Merton Connected is MVSC's website. 9.2 MVSC are currently redeveloping their website which will include opportunities to be more interactive. Making links, advice and support are key functions of MVSC and this will improve further with the new website.	Jon Stone (MVSC)	July 2013	Stage 1 – September 2013

contact with other groups within the borough, to encourage them to share experiences and for advice and support.	9.3 In response to demand, MVSC are also producing a new printed edition of the Directory of Community Organisations which will also aid communication between groups.	Jon Stone (MVSC)	July 2013	December 2013
07 April 2014 update 9.2 MVSC's new website went live in January 2014 which is more user-friendly for groups to use. 9.3 The Directory of Community Organisations will be printed April/May.				
<u>Recommendation 10</u> We recommend that councillors should get involved with volunteering groups in their wards, promoting the work that the groups do and helping them to forge links with other groups doing similar work.	10.1 In the review of the Councillor Handbook, consider including a guide on how a Councillor can support voluntary groups.	Ian Beever (MVSC) and Kate Martyn (LBM)	September 2013	May 2014
07 April 2014 update 10.1 The induction for new Councillors will include a section on the voluntary sector and volunteering.				
<u>Recommendation 11</u> We recommend that the Council's Communications Team contact Merton University of the Third Age to discuss how they can help with publicity. Options to consider should include My Merton, resident association magazines and ward newsletters.	11.1 It is positive that the Council's Communications Team will support U3A. 11.2 U3A will continue to be supported by the Ageing Well Community Connector at MVSC to promote its activities and to develop in the east of the borough. 11.3 There is a volunteering communications group which meet regularly and includes voluntary and public sector partners. The aim is to co-ordinate communications to raise the profile of volunteering and ultimately encourage more individuals to give their time. 11.4 Whilst recognising the high demand for space in	Abby Burford (LBM) Bec Yusuf (MVSC) Hayley James	Ongoing Ongoing September	 February

	<p>My Merton, the volunteering communications group is to consider a proposal to dedicate space in each issue highlighting volunteering.</p> <p>11.5 This will be done in partnership with the Compact team are considering a proposal to have dedicated space for the voluntary sector.</p> <p>11.6 Communications will continue be a key part of the Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy and volunteering infrastructure. This will include broadening communication channels.</p>	(MVSC)	2013	2014
		Kate Martyn (LBM) and Ian Beever (MVSC)	September 2013	February 2014
		Hayley James (MVSC)	Ongoing	
<p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>11.1 and 11.2 U3A continue to get supported.</p> <p>11.4 and 11.5 A dedicated space is difficult given the demands for space. Conversations continue.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 12</u></p> <p>We recommend that Cabinet support work to explore the feasibility of developing a "United Way" in Merton so that there is one-stop-shop approach to making charitable donations, whereby a fund is built up which can then be used to give grants to local good causes.</p>	<p>12.1 United Way London was launched in May 2013 at the Tower of London and Merton is one of 6 founding boroughs.</p> <p>12.2 A Community Fund was launched on 17th May and contributions are being regularly made and the aim is to increase this and continue with publicity.</p> <p>12.3 LBM are supportive of the Community Fund. All staff received an e-bulletin in June/July with an e-form so that they could sign up to donate.</p>			
		Kate Martyn (LBM)	July 2013	
<p>07 April 2014 update</p> <p>12.1 United Way is progressing.</p> <p>12.3 The Community Fund has currently raised almost £5000 with a mix of regular and one-off donations. MVSC will be open the first round of applications shortly.</p>				
<p><u>Recommendation 13</u></p> <p>We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission continue to</p>	<p>13.1 The Volunteering Strategy Implementation Group currently consisting of Simon Williams (LBM), John Dimmer (LBM), Chris Frost (MVSC) and Hayley James (MVSC) meet quarterly to monitor progress.</p>			

monitor the implementation of the Merton Partnership's Merton Volunteering and Community Action Strategy 2012-2014 and beyond.	13.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission are welcome to receive copies of the reports provided by Hayley James if required.	Julia Regan (LBM)	As required	
07 April 2014 update See volunteering strategy update paper				
<u>Recommendation 14</u> We recommend that the Council's Corporate Management Team continue to look for new and innovative ways to involve volunteers in order to supplement service provision. Progress on this should be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on a regular basis.	14.1 Hayley James (MVSC) met with all Directors in February/March 2013 to discuss adding value to public services by involving volunteers.	Simon Williams (LBM) and Hayley James (MVSC)	Ongoing	
	14.2 A report drafted by Simon Williams (LBM) and Hayley James (MVSC) has been discussed on two occasions at CMT in March and July 2013.			
	14.3 Progress is underway across the council with a selective list of initiatives.	LBM Departments	Ongoing	
07 April 2014 update See volunteering strategy update paper, objective 4				
<u>Recommendation 15</u> We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission should take an ongoing interest in progress on volunteering and should ask the lead Director (currently the Director of Community and Housing) to bring an annual update on behalf of the Council's Corporate Management	15.1 Agreed. 15.2 Hayley James (MVSC), as lead for strategy delivery on behalf of the Merton Partnership will attend also.	Simon Williams (LBM) and Hayley James (MVSC)	April 2014	

Team and the Merton Partnership				
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Author: Hayley James
Merton Partnership Volunteering Strategy Manager
Merton Voluntary Service Council

Lead Director: Simon Williams
Director of Community and Housing
London Borough of Merton