

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 19th September 2013

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Cabinet response to the recommendations of the volunteering scrutiny task group

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

Lead member: Councillor Mark Betteridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Implementation; and Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety Engagement and Equalities

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Hayley James, Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager, Merton Voluntary Service Council

Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission note the action plan in respect of recommendations made by the volunteering task group.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. A task group was set up in order to review involving volunteering in Council services. During the review the scope widened to consideration of volunteering across Merton as a whole. This report is the response to those recommendations and includes an action plan.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The volunteering task group's review complements other volunteering-focussed work that is underway.
- 2.2. In March 2012, Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) recruited a Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager to deliver the Merton Partnership Volunteering and Community Action Strategy. A key objective of the strategy was to "identify new and continue to support existing volunteering opportunities to engage individuals, groups and organisations in shaping and delivering public services".
- 2.3. This has led to a report being developed between MVSC and LBM, which was discussed in March and July at LBM's CMT. Progress is now underway with a various projects.
- 2.4. Other objectives in the strategy have focussed on the culture of volunteering in Merton and communications which will lead to change in how volunteering is described and delivered in the borough.

MVSC, as the lead infrastructure body, received a Transforming Local Infrastructure Grant to merge some of the function of MVSC, Volunteer

Centre Merton (VCM) and Merton Unity Network (MUN). MUN have refocused and are no longer an infrastructure organisation and are being supported by MVSC. Following Due Diligence, MVSC and VCM are considering a formal merger.

- 2.5. The recommendations from the volunteering task group underpin and complement an ongoing commitment to involving local residents in their communities, along with a change in how volunteering infrastructure will look in the foreseeable future.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to implement the action plan would be against the commitment shown across the Merton Partnership to enabling all Merton residents to contribute to their community in some way.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations in April 2013.
- 4.2. As some recommendations are progressed, consultation will be undertaken as required.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. See action plan in the report

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no property or resource implications at this time.
- 6.2. Many of the actions will be absorbed within current staffing i.e. primarily the Volunteering Strategy Programme Manager and staff across LBM.
- 6.3. As some actions are progressed, there may be budget implications which MVSC are exploring.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None .

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The implementation of the action plan does not discriminate and will seek to build relations between local residents and partner organisations. This will improve community cohesion.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purpose of this report. Safeguarding will be considered as actions are progressed.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. Appendix 1 – Merton Partnership Volunteering and Community Action Strategy 2012-2014

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