

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL JOINT PANEL – 6 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT BY SECRETARY TO THE EMPLOYER'S SIDE

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To approve the new Volunteering Policy

<u>RECOMMENDATION: that</u>	
(A)	Members approve the new Volunteering Policy

1.0 Background

1.1 This report sets out the legal status of volunteers, provides feedback on the current volunteering pilot and sets out the proposed Volunteering Policy.

1.2 Volunteering brings immense benefits for both the volunteer and the Council. It gives the volunteer an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences and builds bridges between the Council and the local community.

2.0 Report

2.1 Legal Background

2.2 A volunteer is a person who gives freely of his/her time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering can take many forms. Volunteering may be for a limited time to complete a particular project or may be on an ongoing basis.

- 2.3 Volunteers cannot be recruited to take on roles which otherwise would have been filled by paid employees. Volunteers may undertake duties which are beneficial for the Council but which, without volunteers, would not have been carried out.
- 2.4 A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the Council. The Council will agree a role, with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements and that the Council will provide work for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Council is not bound to provide the work. The Council and the volunteer will endeavour to give as much notice as possible if unable to meet these expectations, however either party can terminate the agreement with or without notice at any time.

2.5 Volunteering Pilot

- 2.6 In June 2011 a volunteering pilot was commenced at Hertford Theatre. Due to the increased programming at the Theatre, volunteers were needed to assist on show days. The volunteers were asked to meet and greet customers, steward shows and sell merchandise.
- 2.7 All theatre volunteers attended an induction at the theatre prior to signing up to shifts. There are approximately 17 active volunteers at the theatre.
- 2.8 The pilot has been a great success. The Front of House Manager has found the extra help during performances very beneficial to the overall customer experience. The volunteers themselves are mainly local to Hertford and enjoy the opportunity to be part of this community resource.
- 2.9 Environmental Health Promotion have also taken advantage of the volunteering pilot by recruiting a volunteer to assist the officer with promotional events.

2.10 Volunteering Policy

- 2.11 Please see **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for the new Volunteering Policy
- 2.2 The policy sets out the legal requirements, recruitment processes, insurance and health and safety considerations. It also introduces the role of 'volunteer coordinator' and explains how volunteering will be managed

at the Council.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A' (Page 3)**.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Emma Freeman - Head of People, ICT and Property Services

Report Author: Jaleh Nahvi – HR Officer

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:	Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with UNISON and Heads of Service.
Legal:	As detailed in the report
Financial:	As detailed in the report
Human Resource:	As detailed in the report
Risk Management:	None.