

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Personnel Committee – 12 December 2018
Subject: Employment Policy - Employer Supported Volunteering
Report of: Director of HR & OD

Purpose of Report

To present to Personnel Committee an amended policy in relation to employer supported volunteering. This policy has been updated to include amendments resulting from feedback received and the resulting review of the policy provisions following the first year of operation. The changes proposed allow greater flexibility for both employees and the Council in order to maximise take up and impact of the policy provisions whilst continuing to ensure employer supported volunteering is targeted at Manchester's Social Value Priority Groups.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

1. Approve the implementation of the revised policy as detailed within this report and attached at Appendix A.
 2. Note that that the amended policy will come into force immediately, allowing the City to benefit from staff volunteer leave in hours and in support of corporate priority events outside of normal working time.
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Wards affected: All

Financial implications for the revenue and capital budgets:

There are no financial consequences arising from the proposals within this report.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Report to Personnel Committee: *Employer Supported Volunteering* - September 2017.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's enhanced Employer Supported Volunteering Policy was launched in October 2017 and provided staff with access to up to three days of paid volunteering time per year to support the Council's Social Value Priority Groups and, ultimately the aims of the Our Manchester Strategy. The Policy has been supported by internal communications and guidance and an online Employer Supported Volunteering Portal to match employees to opportunities identified by the Council's VCSE partners. In its first year of operation 252 employees have been supported to provide 1,778 hours of volunteering in support of Manchester communities. Feedback has been positive and a significant number of employees have gone on to volunteer more broadly as a result of their initial work.
- 1.2 The provision of paid volunteering leave illustrates the Council's commitment to volunteering and the benefits this provides to further support the communities we serve. Staff are signposted to opportunities which support the Council's Social Value Priority groups and four broad criteria are in place to inform managers' consideration of requests:
- contribute to an individual's personal development
 - support Manchester through contributing to the objectives of the Our Manchester Strategy and/or supporting our social value priorities
 - benefit the organisation, either directly or by building the knowledge and experience of the workforce.
 - volunteering activity will normally take place with the City of Manchester.
- 1.3 This broad approach and the supporting criteria have worked well and there is no indication that revisions here are needed.
- 1.4 Following the initial year of operation a review of the policy has been undertaken to understand its impact and effectiveness. The revised policy appended has been informed by this review which has included:
- a benchmarking exercise which identified that a number of other local authorities are allowing employees to take volunteer leave in hours.
 - feedback from employees at HROD workshops used to promote volunteering, third sector organisations and MACC who host the Employer Supported Volunteering Portal.
 - surveys of both employees who have volunteered in line with the policy and senior leaders across the Council

2. Proposed Policy Revisions

- 2.1 Whilst the policy is working well two specific revisions are suggested to maximise uptake and the potential support which employer supported volunteering can provide. Currently:

- Volunteering leave can only be taken in blocks of full or half days which, if required, can be taken all together.
- Volunteering leave can be taken during normal working hours but cannot be used to 'claim back' any time spent volunteering outside of these hours

Both the external benchmarking and feedback received suggest revisions to these elements of the Policy.

- 2.2 The suggestion is therefore that the policy is revised to support **volunteering in hours** where managers can accommodate this without having an impact on service delivery, or requiring additional interim support (e.g agency) to cover for leave being taken.
- 2.4 Furthermore the suggestion is that the policy is amended to support **volunteer for corporate priority events** which may not take place during normal working time and require the provision of Time Off in Lieu. Application of the policy in these circumstances would require consideration by managers pin advance and, again, would only be agreed where managers can accommodate this without having an impact on service delivery, or requiring additional interim support (e.g agency) to cover for leave being taken. - Consideration as to what is deemed a Corporate Priority Event would be made on a case-by-case basis by the Director of HROD but, as an example, may include supporting events such as Manchester Day.

3. **Key Policies and Considerations**

(a) **Equal Opportunities**

Support will continue to be offered to disabled employees who wish to volunteer in both identifying opportunities and accessing them.

(b) **Risk Management**

Employees and managers will continue to be required to ensure that the volunteering organisation has the appropriate liability insurance in place with the volunteering organisation holding liability during the volunteering work. The policy makes clear that employees are bound by the Council's Employee Code of Conduct when undertaking volunteering.

(c) **Legal Considerations**

None

4. **Comments from Director of HROD**

- 4.1 I have been consulted on and am supportive of the proposed revisions as a clear mechanism to maximise the effectiveness of Employer Supported Volunteering.

5. Comments from Trade Unions

5.1 To follow

6. Conclusion

6.1 A draft updated policy on employer supported volunteering is appended below. As noted above this has been developed reflective of the feedback received to further improve our offer and is intended to enhance job satisfaction and support the residents of Manchester. The policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and no disproportionate implications identified.

6.2 Members are asked to approve the appended employer supported volunteering policy.