

**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Corporate Volunteer Project Update**  
**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

<b>1.0 Purpose of Report</b>
1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Corporate Volunteering Project and outline continued progress made to date.

**2.0 Introduction**

2.1 An overview on the Corporate Volunteer Project was provided at the Corporate and Partnerships O&S Committee in March 2019 and again in September 2020. Details were provided about how the Corporate Volunteer Project was approved as part of the 2020 Programme and how it aims to maximise and optimise the use of volunteers across all services, creating consistencies in: marketing, recruitment, induction, expenses, training, ongoing support and efficient volunteer processes with the purpose of optimising the use of volunteers and aiding retention. It was agreed that a further update would be provided on this project in 2021.

**3.0 Corporate Volunteering Project**

3.1 The Corporate Volunteer Project is being delivered by the Resourcing Solutions Team – HR, recognising the synergies between the volunteer journey and employee journey, whilst acknowledging that there are key differences between the two. The focus for this project is to achieve the objectives presented at the mid-cycle briefing in 2019. A Volunteer Sub-Group continues to meet regularly to provide a steer for the project, discussing challenges and priorities and inputting into areas of work as they progress. This group comprises of representatives from Stronger Communities and the Resourcing Solutions Team and lead officers from the services that manage volunteers.

**3.2 Impact of COVID on NYCC volunteering**

Nearly all regular NYCC volunteering services halted or significantly reduced during 2020 due to the lockdowns and impact of the pandemic. For example, the Rotters Volunteers normally attend community events to promote waste reduction and composting and most of these events were cancelled. Equally, as some services reopened in summer a number of volunteers chose not to volunteer due to shielding or through personal risk management choices. The table shows that the number of volunteer hours completed in quarter 1\* 2020 compared to the previous year reduced significantly. *\*Financial year quarters*

<b>No. of registered volunteers</b>					
Quarter 1 2019	Quarter 1 2020	Quarter 2 2019	Quarter 2 2020	Quarter 3 2019	Quarter 3 2020
5988	5868	5,925	5,868	5,923	5,809
<b>No. of volunteer hours</b>					
Quarter 1 2019	Quarter 1 2020	Quarter 2 2019	Quarter 2 2020	Quarter 3 2019	Quarter 3 2020

54,150	10,087	65,357	11,117	68,661	23,837
--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

- 3.3 As the COVID restrictions are released services are starting to engage with volunteers regarding a return, to date the number of volunteers registered hasn't significantly declined, though it is acknowledged that some volunteers may feel nervous about returning to community based volunteering and this will come to light as the year progresses.
- 3.4 Team North Yorkshire Volunteers  
 In summer 2020 a new group of volunteers was established with the purpose of them responding to COVID response community need on a weekend, e.g. collecting shopping or prescriptions. The 23 local Community Service Organisations provide this service during the week but there was a gap for weekend provision. NYCC approached existing volunteers to see if they would like to sign up to this volunteer opportunity in addition to their regular volunteering. Approximately 90 volunteers committed to this and 25 new volunteers have been recruited to Team North Yorkshire from the community. There are currently 116 Team North Yorkshire volunteers. The need for their services has however been low, with only 1 request on average per fortnight since January. We are aware that many NYCC volunteers have also been volunteering with the Community Service Organisations on an ongoing basis.
- 3.5 Digital Volunteer Journey  
 The aim is to develop and implement an online process for volunteers to; apply, complete the recruitment process, induction, record volunteering hours and log /claim expenses as currently these are all manual processes. Process mapping, consultation with Volunteer Coordinators and a Project Brief has been developed for this approach and is currently with Technology and Change (T&C) for development and implementation. This is one of the objectives of the project that will release the greatest efficiencies and benefits for volunteers themselves. Unfortunately, progress has halted and T&C have provided feedback that they are only able to progress with limited resource at the present time.
- 3.6 Online Application Form  
 This forms the first part of the Digital Volunteer Journey (see 3.4). An online Volunteer Application form for new volunteers was trialed in Summer 2020 and this is currently being finalised to be implemented by the first services in April 2021. All of the volunteer services have been consulted and involved in the content of the application. This online form is linked to the corporate recruitment system and enables swift and efficient processing, automated correspondence to applicants and, where applicable, links to DBS checks and automated reference requests. All correspondence and related activity is tracked through the system for each volunteer applicant which provides a cohesive approach for all services.
- 3.7 Volunteer Celebration events  
 The COVID pandemic completely stalled any potential ideas and plans for such an event, though consultation had taken place with Volunteer Coordinators to gain ideas. As the roadmap for transitioning out of COVID restrictions has recently been launched plans are currently being considered for a series of celebration events for both NYCC and community volunteers, led by the Community Service

Organisations across the County. Feedback from Volunteer Coordinators and the volunteers themselves is that they prefer smaller, localised events where they can network with other local volunteers, rather than one large event covering the whole county. The events will aim to celebrate volunteers and the contribution they make to local communities as a whole, rather than singling out specific groups or individuals.

### 3.8 Sustainability of the Project

Corporate funding for the Volunteer Project ceases at the end of 2021 and at present no further funds have been identified for continuation. Whilst a majority of the project objectives have been achieved and there is not a need for full time resource to deliver the project on an on-going basis, there are some larger scale objectives that still need to be driven through to ensure momentum and conclusion. There is also a regular need for reporting and coordination of existing NYCC volunteers to ensure a consistent approach is maintained, corporate volunteering is promoted and relevant Policies and Procedures are updated. Furthermore, as the County progresses through Local Government Re-organisation there will continue to be a focus on localised communities, of which volunteers and volunteering contribute significantly and thus brings this project to the fore. A paper will be submitted to Management Board in summer 2021 to summarise this position to determine a future approach.

## 4.0 **Future Focus**

4.1 The Corporate Volunteering Project is continuing to work on a range of projects to streamline the processes for attracting, recruiting and managing volunteers.

4.2 Elements include:

- Developing and implementing a marketing strategy to promote NYCC volunteering in an engaging and positive manner
- Reviewing the current Volunteer Policy and guidance
- Developing a Young People's Volunteering scheme in partnership with community organisations/charities in North Yorkshire (on hold due to COVID)
- Developing a consistent customer focussed approach to volunteer induction and training

## 5.0 **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that Members review the update provided on the Corporate Volunteer Project and provide feedback.

Neil Irving  
AD Policy, Partnerships & Communities

Report Author: Keeley Metcalfe

13 April 2021