

To: Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub-Committee	Subject: Draft Volunteering Policy
From: Chief Executive	
Date: 26 May 1998	Ref: NS/CE012/004/040

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Sub-Committee to approve a draft policy statement on volunteering as a basis for consultation and agree an approach to developing the policy for adoption by the Council due course.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Scottish Office, principally via circular 15/1995, and with support from CoSLA and Volunteer Development Scotland have encouraged local authorities to develop policies on volunteering to complement policies on local authority relationships with voluntary organisations.

2.2 The Council adopted a voluntary sector policy and strategy in August 1997. Under the terms of the strategy the Council is due to develop a volunteering policy concerning the engagement and support of volunteers by the Council.

3.0 DRAFT POLICY

3.1 A draft policy statement on volunteering has been prepared for consultation. This is attached as Appendix 1. The draft is based on a model policy for volunteering prepared by Volunteer Development Scotland.

3.2 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee approve the draft policy as a basis for developing a policy for adoption by the Council in due course.

4.0 PROPOSED APPROACH

4.1 A corporate approach to developing the policy which involves all relevant departments and key partners is proposed.

4.2 The following steps are suggested:-

- Chief Executive's Department in collaboration with representatives of other departments including, Education, Social Work and Leisure Services and North Lanarkshire Volunteering Development Agency (NLVDA), review current practice in all departments and identify relevant issues.
- Prepare a position statement on current practice as a basis for developing the content of the policy.
- Prepare a policy statement for final consultation by departments, NLVDA and other interested parties and adoption by the Council including recommendations on implementation, monitoring and review.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that the Sub Committee:

- a) approve the draft policy statement on volunteering as a basis for consultation;
- b) agree the approach to developing the policy as set out in the report; and
- c) otherwise note the contents of this report.


R Castle
Chief Executive

1 Definition of Volunteering

The Council favours the definition of volunteering in Circular 15 / 1995:

‘The commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside one’s immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.’

2 Council’s Role in Relation to Volunteering

The Council recognises that it has a variety of roles in relation to volunteering including acting as funder, purchaser, supporter, engager and employer.

3 Principles

The Council:

- recognises the important role played by volunteers in the work of its departments and the important and valuable contribution made by volunteers across the range of the Council’s interests;
- recognises that the role of volunteers complements but cannot replace that of professional staff and others who are required to provide the Council’s services;
- acknowledges the unique contribution made by volunteers to the life of communities, service users, paid staff of the authority and to the volunteers themselves;
- will support volunteering through funding and other forms of help;
- will develop good practice with regard to the involvement of volunteers;
- recognise North Lanarkshire Volunteering Development Agency (NLVDA) as the key co-ordinating and development body for volunteering in the area, and as an ‘open door’ recruitment centre for volunteers;
- will aim to provide training and support for volunteers engaged in Council led projects;
- will monitor the policy to help ensure policy, consistency of approach across departments and will keep staff informed of the work of volunteers;

4 Aims of the Policy for Volunteering

This policy statement aims to:

- recognise the importance of volunteering to the communities in the local authority area;
- actively promote the importance, effectiveness and value of volunteering;
- secure greater recognition and appreciation for the contribution of volunteers in society;
- mobilise more people to volunteer and improve the ease with which people may participate in volunteering;

- improve the accessibility of volunteering to include under-represented groups such as young people, older people, and people from black and minority groups;
- ensure the application of policies of equal opportunities in relation to volunteering;
- increase the range and number of volunteering opportunities in all sectors;
- improve the quality of volunteering throughout all sectors and in all areas of the Council's work and within its local area;
- clarify the role of volunteers and address the relation between volunteers, those who engage volunteers and those who receive their services;
- improve the quality of volunteering throughout all sectors and in all areas of the Council's work and within its local area;
- improve the organisation and infrastructure of volunteering through consultation with the voluntary sector;
- clarify the key areas of the Council's responsibility and practice in relation to volunteering in its area; and
- develop good practice in working with volunteers.

5 Principles of Good Practice

5.1 The Council in engaging volunteers will accept the following principles:

- It is the responsibility of paid staff to identify ways in which the work of the Council can be extended by the involvement of volunteers, and to ensure that these opportunities complement rather than supplement the work of paid staff.
- The tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all concerned with their activities are sure of their respective responsibilities.
- Volunteers will not be asked to take on tasks formerly undertaken by paid staff.
- Steps will be taken to help ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and that good working relationships are fostered between paid staff and volunteers.
- All volunteering opportunities will be advertised, in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community. Such advertising will specify the task to be undertaken, time commitment, necessary skills and will draw attention to the benefits and experience to be gained from participation in volunteering.
- The Council's Equal Opportunities policy will be adhered to in relation to appointing volunteers.
- The Council will establish clearly understood procedures for vetting volunteers who are to work with children and other vulnerable groups.
- The Council may request references from volunteers where this is seen to be appropriate.
- Placements will match the volunteer's skills, talents and interests with the Council's needs.
- The Council will ensure the adequate management of volunteers.
- Where appropriate the Council will provide an induction period and a review session to assess the progress of the placement and to resolve any problems at an early stage.
- The Council will provide funding for payment of expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

- The Council will ensure adequate provision of insurance for volunteers where appropriate. Volunteers will be given information on other legislation or policies e.g. Health and Safety, which may affect them..

5.2 The Council in engaging volunteers recognises the rights of volunteers:

To know what is expected of them
 To have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
 To be shown appreciation
 To have safe working conditions
 To be insured
 To know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
 To be paid expenses
 To be trained
 To be free from discrimination
 To experience personal development through participation

and expects that Volunteers will:

Be reliable
 Be honest
 Respect confidentiality
 Attend training and support sessions where agreed
 Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the authority
 Work within agreed guidelines and remits.

5.3 The Council in purchasing services involving volunteers will ensure that:

The role of volunteers is made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management.

5.5 The Council in its encouragement of employer-supported volunteering will:

Increase employees' awareness of the opportunities for volunteering through advertising in Council publications, pre-retirement courses etc.

5.6 The Council will develop its relationship with the voluntary sector and volunteering organisations by:

Developing the voluntary sector strategy including mechanisms to ensure that the voluntary sector is consulted on the wide range of issues which affect volunteers.

Recognising the need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering and supporting the work of NLVDA in providing leadership on volunteering issues.