

Employee Volunteering policy

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to update SPC on the new Employee Volunteering Scheme policy.

Background

2. Wiltshire Council's Volunteering Strategy (2017-2021) vision was to increase the number of people who volunteer in Wiltshire and outlined our commitment to explore ways in which employees can contribute to Wiltshire communities through volunteering.
3. In February 2020, CLT approved an employee volunteering scheme, and this was then agreed by JCC in February 2020 and SPC in March 2020. The scheme agreed provided employees with one paid day per annum, pro rata for part-time employees, to take part in voluntary activities which support Wiltshire communities.
4. The launch was postponed owing to the uncertainties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In May 2023, following the easing of restrictions, CLT reconfirmed their corporate approach to the volunteering scheme, aligned to the business plan and vision to create stronger communities in Wiltshire. As such, the Employee Volunteering Scheme policy has been developed to provide a framework for the scheme.

Main considerations

5. As outlined in the policy, the scheme allows employees to take one day a year or equivalent paid time off to volunteer, pro-rata for part-time employees. Employees can only use the volunteering allowance to take part in voluntary activities which support Wiltshire communities, including environment and conservation projects for local community projects or charities, community care activities.

Reason for the policy/ changes to the policy

6. In October 2019, a business case was presented to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) for developing an employee volunteering scheme for Wiltshire Council employees, to enhance social cohesion and community engagement, increase employee engagement and retention, and improve our employer brand which supports with attraction.

Environmental impact of the proposal

7. Key priority areas have been identified for approved activities including community depreciation and climate change. Any activity which falls within the areas will have a positive impact on our local environment.

Equalities impact of the proposal

8. The EIA did not identify issues throughout the policy proposal, a variety of activities to be offered allowing employees across all groups to be matched when applicable to an approved opportunity to volunteer.

Risk Assessment

9. To ensure that any activity does not result in job displacement, key priority areas have been identified by the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) and the Executive Office:
 - Social Care
 - Community Conversations
 - Corporate Parenting
 - Community Depreciation
 - Climate Change.
10. It has been identified that measurement of the impact and benefits will be key to mitigate risk, and this will be completed through our staff engagement and wellbeing survey.
11. To ensure this scheme is communicated effectively, a communications plan will be developed to ensure we are able to promote the volunteering work and this will be used to support our recruitment and retention strategy.

Financial Implications of the proposal

12. There is no additional funding or cost associated with the introduction of this policy, save the release time of volunteers which is the equivalent of an additional day's annual leave for a member of staff.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that SPC support the implementation of this new policy.

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