



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 21 September 2023

Volunteering in Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Rajash Mehta - Cabinet Member: Inclusion, Engagement, Equalities & Civic Pride	
Lead Director:	Felicity Mercer - Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	
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Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision	
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable	
Report considered by:	SMT - 29 August 2023 Business Briefing - 7 September 2023 Cabinet – 21 September 2023	

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Notes the updates to the Corporate Volunteer Policy (Appendix A) and the progress being made with recruiting and supporting Council volunteers;
- 1.2 Approves the development of a new Volunteer Telford system to improve the way organisations can promote volunteer opportunities across the borough

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and connect local voluntary organisations with businesses, please refer to paragraph 5.1;

- 1.3 Approves the project approach and funding to recruit more Street Champions (with a target to reach 2,000 by 2026/27) as set out in paragraph 5.2;
- 1.4 Approves the introduction of a new volunteer satisfaction survey as set out in paragraph 5.3;
- 1.5 Endorses the development of a new partnership volunteering group as part of the delivery of Vision 2032, to share best practice and explore opportunities to join up activity to recruit and support volunteers.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide an update on the progress being made with volunteering for the Council as well as the support we provide to external organisations and our plans for further development.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Volunteering is what binds communities together and is a big part of community life here in Telford and Wrekin. According to the Residents Survey conducted in 2020, 30.5% of respondents said that they had been involved in volunteering over the last 2 years. Whether as individuals, organisations, businesses, or schools, we recognise the need to work together to help people and make a positive difference.

- 3.2 We find that people choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons:

- For some it offers **the chance to give something back or make a difference** to the people around them. Very often we find it is the people that have been in need themselves and have received help from others that want to give something back as a way of saying 'thank you'.
- For others, it provides an **opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge**, improving employment prospects. Volunteering is looked at favourably by many educational establishments and employers.
- **Giving back and acts of kindness also benefit people's health** and form one of the components of the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' model which are: connect, get active, take notice, learn, and give. Many volunteers have reported improvements in mental and physical health including reduced stress and symptoms of depression, increased confidence, and more social interaction which has helped them to feel less isolated.
- Regardless of the motivation, what unites all volunteers is that **their roles give them purpose and an increased level of satisfaction and reward.**

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- 3.3 Volunteers are an extremely valuable asset for the Council. They make important contributions, bring a diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge and add unique value to service provisions across our borough by providing additional support in areas that matter the most to our residents - things like cleanliness, health and wellbeing for example.
- 3.4 Whilst it is not possible to exactly quantify the monetary value of the contributions made by volunteers throughout the borough, it is clear that it is significant. To help put this into context, according to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, the value of a volunteer carrying out a role similar to that of our Street Champion scheme per day is approximately £50.
- 3.5 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic we had a total of 1,545 Council volunteers. With a 35% increase from these figures, we now have almost 2,400 volunteers supporting 17 Council services which is nearly the same amount as our own workforce (2,826). Examples of volunteer roles include Street Champions, Health Champions, Climate Change Champions, Summer Reading Challenge volunteers (libraries), the GEMS (Golden Event Makers) who help at Council-run events, My Options volunteers, Child and Family Ambassadors working within Children and Young People's Services and Adult Social Care, Making It Real Board volunteers and Mystery Customers. In addition to this, we also recruit emergency volunteers to help out in times of need such as during floods, heavy snow over the winter period or during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.6 Alongside the schemes aimed at adults, we also have some young volunteers supporting their local communities. The Junior Street Champion scheme, predominantly aimed at primary aged children, runs in conjunction with the Community Services team and our partners Veolia. This involves school-based workshops around recycling and a class litter pick. Information is given to children enabling families to litter pick together.

Below are some case studies highlighting the breadth of Council services supported by volunteers and the diversity in people's skills and experiences as a result of participating in these roles:

Street Champions - Meet Matt:



Matt is a 21-year-old student with severe learning disabilities and autism. He joined Street Champions to help with litter picking in his local area and in addition to this, he has helped clean fences and pathways in the Town Park. Matt also volunteers at a community grocery store, a community cafe, and our local plant centre. He has support to carry out all these activities.

Matt enjoys volunteering because he likes to be busy, meeting people and helping out in the community. He gains many personal benefits from his volunteering roles such as a sense of self-worth and fulfilment and the feeling of belonging to a team. These activities have also increased his self-confidence and communication skills.

Child and Family Ambassador - Meet Claire:



Alongside this role, Claire also volunteers for Children's Services in other capacities including as a Peer Parent Advocate and Leaving Care Mentor. Claire says:

"I volunteer in these roles because I want to make a difference to the families struggling in our community. Volunteering has been a godsend to me, particularly in relation to my own self confidence and mental health. When I had my first child nearly 14 years ago it quickly became apparent he had additional needs which presented as very challenging..."

I went from having a career I loved to being at home all day every day... For the longest time I felt I had lost my identity, and depression and anxiety loomed large in my life. I was frustrated because I had all this experience and qualifications but could do nothing with them. I saw an advert for volunteers... and I can honestly say I have never looked back. I can now employ my qualifications and experience that I had gained before having children and my lived experience of raising a child with challenging behaviour...

Volunteering has done wonders for my own self confidence and has had a real positive impact on my mental health. I now feel useful again and the experience I have gained is going to be invaluable on my CV when I am in a position to look for paid employment again."

Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for Telford and Wrekin – Meet Rae:



Alongside this role, Rae is also the Social Action Group Lead for the Midlands and a Mental Health Foundation Young Leader. Rae says:

"As MYP, I've been able to do some of the most incredible things such as debating at the House of Commons and attending several meetings with key decision makers. But, I think the most impactful things I've done have been on a local basis.

Alongside the Young People's Forum, I'm helping shape the Youth Mental Health summit and the Year of Well-being for young people in Telford. It's difficult to articulate the thing I'm the most proud of, but if I had to, I'd say it's just my involvement. I think it is very easy for young people to feel powerless in our current political climate, but Youth Parliament and the Young People's Forum have given me a way to change that."

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- 3.7 We have a duty of care for our volunteers, just as we do for our employees, and it is important we provide adequate support for them, show our appreciation, and make them feel valued for all the amazing work they do to support us.
- 3.8 However, there are many other people in the borough also volunteering with other organisations. The importance of volunteering in Telford and Wrekin has recently been recognised in the Vision 2032 which sets an ambition where 'Volunteer groups play a key role...' and 'communities are strong and resilient - the borough is a place where local activism and community groups thrive.' The partnership delivering Vision 2032 have identified volunteering as a key priority for future collaboration.
- 3.9 Volunteering is also a priority for the Council, and we will continue supporting volunteers, finding more ways for them to get involved, helping to shape and influence community life in the future.

This includes the role that volunteers play to support the local voluntary and community sector where there is strong partnership working in place. We work with a wide range of partners, using a preventative approach to support individuals and families to live as independently and healthy as possible, without having to gain support from Adults and Children's Services. For example, the Wellbeing Independence Partnership (WIP) is a collaboration between Telford and Wrekin, CVS Age UK, Carers Centre and Taking Part. Collectively they provide information and advice for adults with care and support needs who are not known to statutory services.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The Community Services team lead on volunteering for the Council. They provide advice and guidance to services setting up a volunteer scheme and have developed a range of toolkits to guide officers through the process.
- 4.2 They are also responsible for managing several volunteer schemes themselves including:
- Street Champions - volunteers who play an active role in taking pride in their community. They care about their local area and want a clean, safe place to live. Their role usually involves litter picking and reporting any environmental hazards in their local community such as fly tipping and dog fouling, and they also take part in environmental projects from time to time.
 - Snow Wardens - this is a seasonal role playing an important part during the winter period. Volunteers receive guidance and the necessary equipment to clear snow and ice safely. The Council notifies them regularly when snow or freezing conditions are anticipated, and they help clear pavements and pathways of any snow or ice in their local area. This not only helps nearby neighbours but also our more vulnerable residents who can't help themselves.

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- Health Champions – volunteers who care about the health and wellbeing of those around them. They bring a mixture of their own life experiences, skills, and training to make positive changes within their communities and help others to enjoy healthier lives. The role adds value by supporting Public Health with their early intervention work. As well as sharing health related messages via their own networks and social media, some have trained to do regular blood pressure checks out in the community, some run their own activity groups (like walking or running groups or outdoor gyms for example), some have supported Betty the Vaccination Bus with clinics around the borough and others provide regular support at Council run events. Most recently the scheme co-ordinator organised a health information event specifically for the deaf community. This included information on topics such as healthy eating, mental health, physical activity, and the importance of getting your blood pressure checked.
- Feed the Birds (Telford) – a project set up in collaboration with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Telford & Wrekin Council, using the love of birds and nature to tackle social isolation. The team of dedicated volunteers regularly visit adult clients who are housebound, isolated, or lonely to help them clean and fill bird feeders and keep them company by chatting about the birds and wildlife they have seen visiting their gardens.

Feed the Birds - Meet Laura and Olwen:

Volunteer Laura has been matched with Olwen for three years and visits on a weekly basis to help fill her bird feeders, and to have a chat about the birds and more.



Olwen says “I have really appreciated Laura coming weekly. I enjoy the visits and I have learnt from her. Every year, we do the Great Big Bird Watch. We wait in the conservatory for the birds to come. Sometimes they are shy that day but they do normally visit!”

Laura says “I’ve visited Olwen for three years and I really enjoy it. I have learnt so much from her and I think it’s good for inter-generations to mix- you learn more that way. We put the world to rights. We both get something out of it and I think everyone should volunteer!”

4.3 Corporate Volunteer Policy

Services need guidance on how best to support their volunteers, so the team are responsible for managing the Corporate Volunteer Policy. This sets out a consistent approach for supporting volunteers, ensuring they are all treated fairly and feel valued.

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- 4.3.1 Originally developed in October 2012, with an ever-increasing number of volunteers, the policy has recently been updated to reflect the learning we have taken from our experiences over the years, particularly from emergency situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, the Council was required to recruit volunteers very quickly and immediate action was taken to remove some of the more time-consuming aspects of our usual recruitment practices to be able to react quickly under these circumstances.
- 4.3.2 It is important to note that when reviewing the policy, the team looked at best practice elsewhere including guidance from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and engaged with a range of internal services including Human Resources (HR), Health & Safety, Enforcement, Insurance and Information Governance to make sure everything is joined up appropriately. An engagement session also took place with the Volunteer Managers' Forum to make sure all services that manage volunteers at the Council had the opportunity to provide feedback as well.
- 4.3.3 A summary of the key updates to the policy include:
- **A 'being inclusive' section** - setting out our commitment to treat people with fairness, respect and dignity, considering individual needs, taking into account any protected characteristics and making reasonable adjustments where required.
 - **Special considerations for young volunteers** – what to be aware of when creating roles for young people under the age of 18 years.
 - **Updated guidance on references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks** – conducting checks on young people aged 16-18 years and overseas criminal history-taking.
 - **A clearer explanation around reimbursements**
 - **Recognition and voice** – this new section provides guidance on the various ways volunteer managers can celebrate, give recognition to and collect feedback from volunteers.
 - **Managing concerns and reporting incidents** – includes the additional support the Corporate Communications and Enforcement Teams can provide where concerns are raised and information on the Council's incident reporting processes, including near misses and links to further Health and Safety guidance.
 - **Making complaints** – details a process for volunteers to raise complaints via their volunteer manager, their line manager or if they do not feel comfortable doing so, they can contact the Community Services team to assist with this.

4.4 Our commitment to employee volunteering

- 4.4.1 As well as championing volunteering across the borough, we are also committed to supporting our own employees to volunteer.

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As part of the update to the Corporate Volunteer Policy, information relating to Council employee volunteering has now been removed to make way for a standalone Employee Volunteering Policy.

- 4.4.2 Employee volunteering is now led by Human Resources as a separate provision to corporate volunteering, to further support our employees to access internal and external volunteering opportunities in line with our vision, values, and priorities. The annual entitlement for employee volunteering hours has also now been increased to two working days (pro rata for part-time employees). Following Cabinet's approval of the Corporate Volunteer Policy, both policies will be launched and promoted across the organisation.
- 4.4.3 A number of our employees already volunteer for good causes such as GEMS (Golden Event Makers) who support Council events and Christmas Smile, a project run by the community for the community, ensuring that no child or adult goes without at least one special gift from Santa. Additional volunteers are key to wrapping thousands of gifts each year and since 2017, the Council have worked with the project to offer special corporate wrapping sessions so that Council staff can volunteer to help wrap gifts in the run up to Christmas. Staff have also generously donated at various collection points across Council buildings. Practitioners using the project for residents have said:

Employee Volunteering - Christmas Smile Feedback



“Christmas Smile is an absolute life saver for so many families who struggle to survive either on benefits or a low income. At Christmas everyone wants to see the joy on their children’s faces as they open their gifts from Santa, Christmas Smile gives this gift to parents. Relieving the burden and worry from parents so they can enjoy a special Christmas Day. The joy of Christmas Smile is that the parents are not left out either, and with added sweet treats, it ensures the family experience that bit of Christmas magic everyone should enjoy. They all work incredibly hard to ensure no one is left out, sometimes even magic-ing gifts out of thin air. They are worth their weight in gold and are very much appreciated by staff and parents alike.”

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4.4.4 Another great example of employee volunteering includes the Corporate Communications Team's volunteering away day, where the team built raised planters for Telford Mind to enable them to grow produce, which will then be distributed to the community via Telford Crisis Support:



4.5 Supporting external organisations

4.5.1 As well as supporting Council services, the Community Services team also provide support to local voluntary and community sector groups and organisations. They have developed toolkits that provide a useful reference to help organisations plan and deliver effective volunteer schemes. These include information on planning, recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers. Further information can be found on the Council's website, please refer to paragraph 15.1.

4.5.2 A total of 57 organisations have been supported by the team over the last 12 months, and guidance provided can vary dependent on where the organisation is in their volunteering project. Some are at the very beginning and need help with policies and procedures, recruitment and how to manage volunteers. Others need ongoing support as their projects grow and develop.

One example of an organisation we have supported is Wellington Orbit – a 63 seat community cinema in the heart of Wellington town centre.

They have received ongoing support from us with their volunteering programme since first setting up. This included help with developing role descriptions, risk assessments, putting policies and procedures in place – all leading to the recruitment of a variety of roles. Initially these ranged from painters, carpenters and builders to help with the initial refurbishment, but as the project has progressed, they have also recruited for other roles.



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In fact, they have been so successful that at present they have 60 volunteers supporting their organisation in roles such as kitchen assistants, café assistants and cinema stewards.

- 4.5.3 A key challenge for many organisations is recruiting trustees with the right skills to lead and run their organisations, and work is currently underway to identify how we can do more to support them. One example of this is support for Community Centres who are a vital part of community life. We will be bringing Community Centre Managers together to take stock, share common issues and best practice, and discuss recruitment of volunteers and trustees.
- 4.5.4 The Council also works with over 20 'Friends of' groups supported by volunteers who look after our green and open spaces including Telford Town Park, Dawley Park, Apley Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Dothill LNR, Holmer Lake & Madebrook, and Granville Country Park. The 'Friends of' groups assist with promotion of the parks and green spaces through events and conduct a wide variety of voluntary activities to help enhance our green spaces for people and wildlife. Their support has complimented the Council's £2.7m investment which has contributed to the increase in the number of Green Flag parks we have across the borough to 6.



As part of the 2022 Platinum Jubilee campaign the 'Queen's Green Canopy', the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner, presented a rowan tree to Friends of Dothill LNR in recognition of the valuable and tireless work that the volunteers undertake for the benefit of their community.

- 4.5.5 In addition to this, through our partnering contracts with Veolia, idverde and Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), our communities also have access to annual social value investment funding. Whether this is via the Envirogrant (Veolia), Community Fund (idverde) or Community Investment Fund (BBLP), this further enhances our volunteering offer locally. A recent example delivered by BBLP includes improvements to the community garden at Sutton Hill where 8 employees spent a day improving the area to leave a useable space for the community. Other examples include improvements to a community car park in Wellington and improvements to the access to Donnington Boxing Club.



4.6 **Volunteer Telford website**

To help with promoting volunteer opportunities across Telford and Wrekin, we manage the Volunteer Telford website, which is the platform available for advertising these opportunities on behalf of the Council and other local voluntary organisations in the borough. At present we have 86 organisations registered on the site and there are currently around 170 volunteer opportunities advertised, ranging from environmental projects, sports, recreation, catering and culture to supporting children and young people and older people. Please refer to paragraph 15.2 for the website link.

- 4.6.1 It is worth noting that this site is well used – we have on average 500 visits a month and this continues to rise. However, the platform this site currently sits on is being phased out, so we are working with the Information and Digital Technology (IDT) team to deliver an improved in-house version that will provide additional/enhanced functionality. The intention is to also develop a new matching site between local community groups and businesses. We know there are a lot of organisations out there needing more volunteers, but at the same time there are also several local businesses that want to engage more with their communities and offer up staff time to support organisations as part of their corporate social responsibility. This will provide a single reference point for people to connect with one another.

4.7 **Celebrating volunteers**

- 4.7.1 **National Volunteers' Week** is very important as it recognises the contribution of volunteers each year. It shows that we recognise their input, make them feel valued and appreciated, and they are more likely to stay with an organisation who takes the time to show their gratitude. There are many different ways we do this – through our actions, how we support volunteers, how we communicate and involve them but the central focus for us each year is National Volunteers' Week which is a national campaign and always takes place during the first week of June.

It is something the Council has been celebrating for many years now – and this year's theme was 'a time to celebrate and inspire'. A week-long promotional campaign took place that included service areas and some of our partners in the voluntary sector, highlighting the diverse range of volunteering opportunities available across the borough. We also distributed 'thank you' cards in hard copy and electronic formats to Council volunteers, sharing with councillors and partners so they could distribute them too. This year's social media campaign proved very engaging with a reach of over 68,000 across the borough.

4.7.2 **Street Champions Thank You Event.**

As we have over 1,400 Street Champion volunteers it is not possible to bring them all together regularly for shared supervisions and support meetings in the way we do for our other volunteer schemes. However, it is important to recognise their achievements and give them the opportunity to



network with one another and provide us with some valuable feedback. So last October the Community Services Team organised a 'thank you' event. It was a night of celebration recognising the Street Champions recent Cabinet Award at the 2022 Telford Community Pride Awards and their contributions towards Telford being named 'second cleanest city' in the UK. A great night was had by all and the feedback has been considered and used to help inform the development of the scheme in future.

5.0 **Next Steps**

Moving forward there are a number of things the Community Services team would like to do to build on the foundations already in place:

- 5.1 **Develop an improved in-house version of Volunteer Telford** – as mentioned in paragraph 4.6 there is a need to develop an improved in-house version of the site which we are currently working on with IDT. We will ensure we engage with the new partnership volunteering group in future to support with ongoing development.
- 5.2 **Recruitment of 600 additional Street Champions** – one of the Council's key priorities is to increase the number of Street Champions we have to 2,000 by the end of March 2027. The current total stands at just over 1,400 and an action plan has been put in place for recruiting additional champions. This includes a 'thank you' and recruitment event in 2024 to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean campaign, targeted recruitment to increase family sign-ups, work-based champions and supporting more local businesses to fulfil their corporate social responsibility as well as improving under-representation. All of this will be supported by focused communications through a variety of channels such as local community noticeboards, schools, colleges, business forums, youth organisations, and faith and cultural groups, to name a few.
- 5.3 **Distribution of a Council-wide volunteer satisfaction survey** – to make sure we are supporting all Council volunteers in the best way we can it is important we ask for their feedback, in a similar way to how we gain feedback from employees. We are currently working on a volunteer survey that we aim to launch immediately after Cabinet's approval of the Corporate Volunteer Policy and therefore alongside volunteering related communications during

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October. The survey will ask volunteers how satisfied they are with their overall experiences volunteering for the Council, the results of which we will use as a baseline measurement of success.

6.0 Alternative Options

6.1 Consideration has been given to the option of doing nothing. In doing so it will mean we will not have adequate governance arrangements in place to appropriately support and manage Council volunteers. We will not be taking into account the lessons learnt from the pandemic period and beyond and are less likely to meet our duty of care commitments.

6.2 By doing nothing we will also not be treating prospective and existing volunteers with fairness and dignity, or ensuring that opportunities are as inclusive, flexible and accessible as possible to encourage more people to apply.

7.0 Key Risks

7.1 The recommendations mitigate against the risks of:

- Reputation - fewer people coming forward to volunteer for the Council based on poor experience or word of mouth
- Loss of existing volunteers based on poor support
- Individuals not being able to find out about or access the variety of volunteering roles available at the Council or across the borough
- Volunteers potentially seeking employment rights due to roles being inadequately particularised and seen as akin to paid roles
- Legal claims – especially where risk assessments are not carried out effectively, or where roles are not correctly particularised or defined
- Other organisations not being able to adequately recruit volunteers to meet service demand and needs amongst the communities they serve

8.0 Council Priorities

8.1 As part of the Council's Manifesto Pledge to be delivered over the next 4 years and 100 Day Plan, we have given a commitment to protect, care and invest in Telford and Wrekin and to create a cleaner, greener and safer borough for all. Volunteering has and always will be an important part of the Council's business and we are very proud of the fact we have over 2,400 volunteers. Due to the wide range of volunteer roles and breadth of support provided across the organisation, the report and its recommendations actively support all of the Council's objectives:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live

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- Our natural environment is protected, and the Council is taking a leading role in tackling the climate emergency
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 Whilst it is not possible to place a precise figure on the contributions made by volunteers throughout the borough, both to Council services but also through the vast range of other voluntary activities undertaken by other groups, it is clear that the financial value of volunteering is immense. Given the extremely challenging financial position faced by the Council there is no way that the contributions made by the thousands of volunteers that support our work could be replaced by direct provision. With regard to specific proposals within the report:

9.2 **Street Champions** – it is important to note the costs associated with the recruitment of an additional 600 Street Champions. For every Street Champion recruited, this amounts to £35 approximately to cover the costs of their equipment including a high visibility vest, litter picker, hoop, gloves and bags. There are also additional ongoing running costs including some for hosting another ‘thank you’ event which is being planned for the spring to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean campaign. An ongoing annual budget of £15k has been identified to cover these costs over the next 4 years.

9.3 **Volunteer Telford website** – an estimation of £7-10,000 has been quoted for the associated implementation costs, due to the complex nature of the matching functionality, plus an additional annual support and maintenance cost estimated at around £1,200. The implementation costs will be met from the current capital programme and the ongoing costs from existing budgets.

9.4 **Partnership volunteer group** – this group is currently being explored and not yet established, therefore costs associated with the partnership are yet to be realised. However, since a partnership group is proposed with the aim of recruiting and supporting more volunteers as a collective, this will inevitably incur costs. These will need to be managed within existing resources.

10.0 Legal and HR Implications

10.1 These are as referred to above at 7.1. It is particularly important that there are adequate risk assessments prepared at volunteer events where the use of power tools is involved.

11.0 Ward Implications

11.1 This report has a borough-wide impact.

12.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 12.1 The Corporate Volunteering Policy references understanding the demographics of volunteer schemes and ensuring inclusive practices. Some schemes within the Council focus on reducing health and social inequalities, and all services supported by volunteers are doing so to serve our communities to ensure they are healthier, experience greater levels of wellbeing and have the resources they require to flourish socially and economically.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13.1 Serving a mixed rural and urban geographical area with an increasingly diverse and ageing population, as the latest Census 2021 data shows, we recognise the importance of ensuring all sections of our community are well represented across all services provided by the Council.

As an organisation committed to the advancement of opportunity and treating people with fairness, dignity and respect, we are morally obliged to expand our existing responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty to the benefit of our volunteers. While volunteers are not given the same protections under the Equality Act 2010 as paid employees, through the implementation of the Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, we have shown commitment to ensuring all residents across our borough are treated equitably when accessing our services – this includes volunteer provision.

Mirroring the Council's actions in embedding inclusion into the recruitment and selection processes to ensure that the make-up of employees reflects the demographics of the borough, the Corporate Volunteer Policy also gives specific guidance around being more inclusive and understanding our communities. Targeted recruitment to address under-representation within volunteer schemes is an important part of building a successful volunteer scheme that serves its purpose well. The policy emphasises this message and encourages volunteer managers to take this into consideration as part of the planning process.

14.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 14.1 Whilst not all our volunteer schemes have climate change or environmental implications, we have two schemes that are being delivered to support this agenda:
- **Street Champions** – this scheme responsibly sources equipment and materials and has a direct positive impact on the environment as volunteers conduct litter picks and report environmental issues all year-round to keep their local areas clear of rubbish and hazards such as fly-tipping and dog fouling. This has an impact on their neighbours, local businesses, visitors to the area and the local wildlife, contributing towards a cleaner Telford and Wrekin for all to enjoy.

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- **Climate Change Champions** – this scheme involves volunteers encouraging borough residents to start talking about climate change and to take action. A big part of the role is the champions making changes to their own lifestyles to reduce their carbon footprint and plastic and sharing their experiences of this. They also advocate in their local communities, schools and connect with local community organisations to help them to become more sustainable and to reach out to others, write blogs and articles to raise awareness, conduct litter picks, and have recently taken part in a behaviour change pilot focusing on introducing more sustainable daily habits.

15.0 Background Papers

- 1 [Telford & Wrekin Council Volunteering Toolkits](#)
- 2 [Volunteer Telford website](#)

16.0 Appendices

- A Updated Corporate Volunteer Policy

17.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Finance	16/08/2023	24/08/2023	MLB
Legal	16/08/2023	24/08/2023	JB