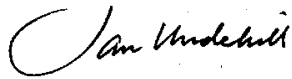


<b>Report to:</b>	Environment and Neighbourhood Committee	<b>Date:</b>	1 November 2017
<b>Report title:</b>	Libraries Volunteer Pilot		
<b>Report from:</b>	Jan Underhill - Assistant Director, People Services Directorate (Wellbeing)		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Borough Wide		
<b>Chair of Committee/Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Jill Whitehead		
<b>Author(s)/Contact Number(s):</b>	Madeline Barratt - Head of Libraries, Heritage and Arts - 020 8770 4755		
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Open Council</li> <li>• A Fair Council</li> <li>• A Smart Council</li> </ul>		
<b>Open/Exempt:</b>	Open		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	18 October 2017

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 Sutton Library Service commissioned Volunteer Centre Sutton to work in partnership with them for the initial stages of a volunteer pilot following a public consultation on the future of the library service in the autumn of 2015. The pilot commenced in the autumn of 2016. At the same time a restructure of Libraries, Heritage and Arts (LHA) services was taking place and a new post of Volunteer Officer was established. Following the conclusion of the initial stage, recommendations were taken forward and developed by the new Volunteer Officer, Caroline Watson from April 2017 resulting in an enhanced volunteer offer.
- 1.2 The volunteer pilot concluded at the end of September 2017 and this report represents the final report on the pilot.
- 1.3 This report also sets out the progress made since March 2017 and makes recommendations to Members for the continuation of an enhanced volunteer offer, to be rolled out across the whole network of LHA services.

## 2. Recommendations

The Environment and Neighbourhood Committee is recommended to:



- 2.1 Agree to role out an enhanced Volunteer offer across the whole of the Libraries, Heritage and Arts Service led by the libraries Volunteer Officer taking into account learning gained from the volunteer pilot regarding recruitment, marketing and retention of volunteers.
- 2.2 Note that the Libraries Heritage and Arts Service will continue to grow opportunities for volunteering across the libraries and heritage network with a specific focus upon volunteer opportunities for young people in particular.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the overall review of the Sutton Library Service a public consultation on the future of the library service was carried out in the autumn of 2015. A clear message from members of the public who took part in the consultation was that there should be more use of volunteers and more community involvement to support modernisation and add value to the work of paid library staff. It should be noted that the recruitment of volunteers has always been part of business within Sutton Libraries Heritage and Arts services and staff working within the service will continue to recruit volunteers in the future, in order to establish parameters around which the service could be enhanced by the use of volunteers, to establish best practice for recruitment and retention and to particularly target young people for volunteering opportunities. Members agreed that a volunteer pilot project should be set up. Circle and Cheam libraries were selected and the service commissioned Volunteer Centre Sutton (VCS) to work in partnership with the service to develop the offer. These libraries were chosen due to the different local demographics and patterns of use at the libraries. The pilot was to be set up in the autumn of 2016 to run for one year. In addition and as part of the planned restructure of the Libraries, Heritage and Arts service, a post of Volunteer Officer was established in order to ensure that specific volunteering opportunities continued to be developed across the borough, to enhance the offer to customers.
- 3.2 A report was submitted to committee on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, setting out interim findings and initial recommendations. The pilot has now been completed and final recommendations are set out in section 2 of this report.
- 3.3 Initial Pilot recommendations have been implemented:
  - New policies and procedures for volunteer management are now in place.
  - A single point of contact, the Volunteer Officer has been established as part of the service restructure which ensures consistency within the programme and enables ongoing evaluation to take place.
  - Effective and creative new marketing materials have been created, increasing visibility on social media and locally. Branded promotional materials have been designed and a core group of staff in the Community Engagement team support volunteering event days.
  - Training has been provided and staff have developed greater skills and knowledge in working with and managing volunteers.
  - Better Impact volunteering software is being trialed. This enables volunteers to log their hours and timesheets, volunteering activities, and training. The software provides reports for both the service and volunteers.



- A solid base has been established through the points above for the new Volunteer Officer to take this work forward.

### 3.4 Recruitment activities April – September 2017

A refresh of the volunteer recruitment system has taken place to ensure all volunteers have two references and a health check. This ensures that volunteers are well supported according to individual needs. This also ensures that the volunteer programme is inclusive and open to all. If a DBS check is required for the role this is completed and clearance gained before the volunteer starts.

### 3.5 Training and development

A training programme for staff and volunteers has been developed. This includes induction sessions developed and delivered quarterly by the Volunteer Officer. Summer reading Challenge Volunteer induction sessions were attended by 50 young volunteers. Staff have received initial training, however a new programme devised by the Volunteer Officer started in September 2017 entitled “how to work alongside/supervise volunteers utilising best practice”. A training and induction session was delivered by the Volunteer Officer to National Citizen Service (NCS) volunteers who volunteered over two days in Sutton Library promoting self help and mental awareness for teenage readers. A celebration was held for Summer Reading Challenge volunteers and certificates handed out to 25 young volunteers.

### 3.6 Volunteer activities

The Volunteer Officer, supported by Community Engagement team members set up and attended outreach recruitment events at Sainsbury’s, Morrisons, Job Centre Plus job fair, Cheam Charter Fair, University of the Third Age, Honeywood Museum, Wallington Library, Sutton Library and a disability event held at Sutton Library.

3.6.1 Marketing materials have been distributed to a variety of community venues around the borough, including schools, colleges, children’s centres, the CAB and Sutton railway station.

3.6.2 The Libraries, Heritage and Arts Service has taken photographs, film footage and organised interviews with volunteers over the past 6 months in order to produce an ‘in house’ volunteer film to assist with future recruitment events.

### 3.7 Key Statistics

#### 3.7.1 Social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter

Facebook had a 30% engagement increase during Volunteer week (1-7 June 2017) and Twitter a 22% engagement increase during the same period.

#### 3.7.2 Active volunteer numbers (as at October 2017)

44 Adult

48 14-25yr old summer reading challenge volunteers provided 800 hours of volunteering in total over the summer holiday period.



This is a total of 92 new and active volunteers recruited in 2017 so far, in addition to the 57 volunteers already working across the service and borough. Additionally and at the time of writing, a further 18 volunteers have applied and their requests are being processed.

### 3.8 National profile

The Reading Agency were extremely interested in our summer reading volunteer programme and came to film our summer readers and summer reading volunteers in action. Their film will be released in October on the Reading Agency website. Further information about the Reading Agency and the Summer Reading Challenge can be found on their website at: <https://readingagency.org.uk/children/quick-guides/summer-reading-challenge/>

## 4. **Issues**

- 4.1 Payment of expenses had initially been raised during the pilot as a potential block to recruitment, in practice this has not been the case and numbers are on target. We will keep this under review to ensure that arrangements do not adversely affect any potential volunteers or deter people from volunteering.

## 5. **Options Considered**

- 5.1. Continue with low level and ad hoc volunteering in line with practices in place prior to the pilot. This was rejected on the grounds that there was not a consistent volunteer offer or a cohesive strategic plan to ensure volunteering benefitted both the LHA service and the local community.
- 5.2 Outsource volunteering to a third party. this was investigated with Authorities that have taken that route, E.G. Kent CC. This was found to be expensive and inefficient as there is still a considerable input by service staff and managers to support day to day working with volunteers and ensure service specific training takes place.
- 5.3 Adopt the learning gained with the Pilot and in line with the staffing review. This was considered to be the most efficient and cost effective solution and has enabled the LHA service to establish best practice for Sutton. Following the pilot conclusion appropriate recommendations to Members are the subject of this report.

## 6. **Impacts and Implications**

### Financial

- 6.1 The volunteer programme is provided from existing resources therefore there are no financial implications.

### Legal

- 6.2 A volunteer agreement is in place covering issues such as confidentiality of library user data etc. The Volunteer Officer consulted HR /DBS team/Health Management Team and Sutton Volunteer Centre. There are currently no corporate volunteer agreements.

## 7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	Equality Impact Assessment

Background documents
The Future of Sutton's Library Service, Environment and Neighbourhood committee report 4 February 2016
Volunteer pilot interim report, Environment and Neighbourhood committee 30 March 2017

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 18 October 2017
Consultation with other officers		
Finance	No	N/A
Legal	Yes	Tracy Swann
Equality Impact Assessment required?	Yes	Completed. See Appendix A

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