

## **REVIEW OF VOLUNTEERING**

Presented by the Head of Human Resources

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At its meeting of 23 November 2023 the Scrutiny Committee agreed, subject to Executive Committee approval, that the focus of its next Scrutiny Review would be Volunteering. Volunteering is an important and vital aspect of the Authority's business. Nearly all provision of activities has a volunteering element. The Volunteers Officer will be reviewing the current volunteering programme, looking for potential improvements, ways to expand the programme and increasing the diversity of people who volunteer. The Volunteers Officer will take into account the needs and skill level of volunteers and the benefits to individual wellbeing as well as the overall objectives of the Authority's business plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Members Note: (1) the focus of the next Scrutiny Review to be Volunteering as per the scope set out in paragraph 4 of this report.

### **BACKGROUND**

1 For the benefit of new Members, it should be noted that the Scrutiny Committee was formed in 2009 following a review of the Authority's governance. It is a Committee formed under the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 and not in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in local authorities which derive from the Local Government Act 2000. The Authority has set the following terms of reference for this committee:

- To review performance and to scrutinise the activities of the Authority
- To make recommendations to the Executive Committee
- To take evidence from officers of the Authority, interest groups and individuals, and make recommendations to the Executive Committee and Authority for policy change and review the performance of outside bodies
- To consider issues referred by the Executive Committee where the views of external bodies/persons may contribute, take evidence and report to the Executive Committee and Authority
- To consider any item to be considered by the Executive Committee (except items of urgent business) before the item is considered by the

Executive Committee if required by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. The relevant report to the Executive Committee will be available to the Scrutiny Committee

- To have regard to the need to avoid duplicating the work of the Audit Committee and Task & Finish Groups when considering subjects for scrutiny
- To agree a work programme annually

## **VOLUNTEERS**

- 2 Volunteers contribute thousands of hours of their time to the Park every year. Volunteering currently supports many different sections and venues including Leisure Services Contract (LSC) venues internally and through partnerships. We have volunteers from almost every London Borough and Hertfordshire district, and most Essex districts. We retain the Investing in Volunteers accreditation – the national standard for organisations who maintain quality volunteer management programmes.
- 3 Volunteering currently supports Myddelton House Gardens, Rangers, Geographical Information Systems, Fisheries, Holyfield Hall Farm, Stanstead Marina, Learning and Engagement, Sport and Active Recreation, and Events.

The ratio of volunteers to equivalent full-time Authority staff is 1.1:1. Volunteers also support events at our LSC venues including internationally important events such as anniversary events for the London 2012 Games, 2023 Commonwealth Games and 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. In addition, there are a number of joint volunteer programmes still in development. These include working in collaboration with Major Event organisers, National Governing Bodies and smaller voluntary groups or partners to facilitate Lee Valley Regional Park Authority volunteer involvement. Current partnerships include educational establishments (schools, colleges and university students), litter picking groups, walking groups, conservation groups / charities, sporting charities, historical societies, corporate groups, retirement homes and local police.

## **SCOPE OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF VOLUNTEERS**

- 4 The following terms of reference are suggested to scope the review.

Due to limited capacity in the Volunteers Team which consists of 1 full-time member of staff and a couple of part-time volunteer admin, Members are asked to consider a phased approach to this scrutiny area and discuss what they would think are the most important aspects for review during phase 1 of this scrutiny area. Work has already commenced on this phase and with results to be presented at the February 2024 Scrutiny Committee.

### **Phase 1**

- Closer contact/involvement with volunteers by Board Members.
- Raise awareness of the volunteering activities taking place with Members of the Authority to enable them to actively participate in relevant activities taking place.
- Removal from the list of volunteers those who have made no recent contact and keeping data list relevant and up to date.
- Investigate ways in which to encourage volunteers and partner organisations to report their volunteering hours and demographic data to the Authority so

that we have a more accurate picture of volunteering within the Park.

- Audit current provision across the Regional Park including roles and demographics in-house and to include the collection of data for venues that fall within the LSC (managed by Greenwich Leisure Limited).

**Phase 2 (results to be presented at June 2024 Scrutiny Committee)**

- Investigate how our data compares to similar organisations / charities across the UK
- Investigate how our data using new gender categories compare to that of the Office of National Statistics.
- Investigate new and innovative ways to incorporate new partnerships into our programme based on the increasing interest we have received.
- Investigate how links from riparian boroughs are fully exploited to maximise the opportunities for local communities to access the Regional Park via volunteering.

**Phase 3 (results to be presented at November 2024 Scrutiny Committee)**

- Evaluate the cost and health benefits generated for volunteers within the Lee Valley Regional Park;
- Assess the potential for additional roles and opportunities to expand.
- Future proofing the volunteer programme and reaching a wider diverse participant.

**Phase 4 (results to be presented at February 2025 Scrutiny Committee)**

- Benchmark against regional statistics.
- Investigate how the Authority fully maximises funding opportunities for volunteers.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5 There are no environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

**HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9 There are no risk management implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10 There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

LSC                      Leisure Services Contract