

	Report to: Northwards Housing Board 12 th May 2009	Item No: 8b
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Title:	Employee Volunteering Scheme		
Date:	29 th April 2009		
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Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL ✓

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek outline the background to a new Employee Volunteering Scheme which is being introduced to help deliver further benefits to communities and the environment; and promote the image of the organisation to residents, partners and stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to approve the Employee Volunteering Scheme.

IMPLICATIONS

Equality & Diversity:	Desktop EIA Screening undertaken – see below
Financial:	The financial value of allowing 327 full-time and 21 part-time/job-share employees (employee count as at 20 th April 2009) one day per year to volunteer is £28,500 or £86 per person on average.
Staffing:	It is expected that the scheme will improve working relationships, morale which in turn will help employee retention
Decency Target:	None directly
Governance:	None directly
Risk Assessment:	None directly

Equality Impact Assessment	
Function being assessed	Employee Volunteering Scheme
Section	Covers whole organisation
Date of assessment	28 th April 2009
Person Responsible for assessment	Greig Lees
Is this a new or existing policy?	New policy
If there are significant implications in terms of equality please append a summary report.	No – scheme will deliver positive impacts in terms of equality to community / employees

Consultation/Consideration:

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
Sub-Committee:	No		
Area Panel:	No		
Task Groups:	No		
Ward Councillors:	No		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Many employers now actively encourage their employees to volunteer in the communities in which they serve. Often referred to as 'Corporate Social Responsibility', this approach has delivered significant benefits to communities across the UK.
- 1.2 Northwards has made significant strides to improve homes and neighbourhoods across North Manchester. However, the introduction of a volunteering project would help deliver further benefits to communities and the environment; and promote the image of the organisation to residents, partners and stakeholders.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is to allow all employees (including fixed term and agency staff) to take **one day per year** out of the office, to devote time to a project (that is outside of their day job) that would either benefit the community or improve the environment within one of the eight wards in which Northwards operates. Employees will be encouraged to give any additional time required voluntarily.
- 2.2 An appropriate name for the scheme is currently being developed.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 The financial value of allowing 327 full-time and 21 part-time/job-share employees (employee count as at 20th April 2009) one day per year to volunteer is £28,500 or £86 per person on average.
- 3.2 However, it is envisaged that the activities undertaken will improve working relationships and morale; allow employees to develop confidence and new skills; demonstrate the organisations commitment to communities served; and enhance tenants', residents' and stakeholders' opinions of the organisation.
- 3.3 No budget has been allocated for the project; therefore schemes will have to be carefully assessed before approval. Northwards will encourage its contractor partners to support the project wherever practicable, through the donation of their employees' time and/or materials.

4. Management of Scheme

- 4.1 In order to get buy in from employees, it is proposed that they can nominate an activity in which they would like to be involved in. If an employee does not identify a project they would like to be involved in, they will be asked to contribute to a pre-organised activity. All employees will be required to seek approval from their line manager when agreeing volunteering activities to undertake.

4.2 It is proposed that Hayley Crane (Workforce & People Planning Manager) coordinates this activity, in consultation with Greig Lees (Regeneration Manager), to ensure that proposals fit with Northwards' strategic objectives, are in line with the three spines of the City Council's Community Strategy and support the priorities identified within the eight Ward Plans. It is also important to consider proposals in light of activity planned through IMPACT Manchester's Community Benefit Sub-Group and any environmental schemes proposed through the three Area Panels.

4.3 As with any new initiative, it is important that all projects undertaken are evaluated to monitor their success/impact; and to allow lessons to be learned for future projects. Subject to Board approval, it is proposed that details of the scheme (including projects supported, hours committed, impact etc) will be reported quarterly through the Resources Sub-Committee.

5. **Scope of Volunteering**

5.1 The type of projects envisaged (although not exhaustive) includes:

- Clean Up Days / Planting Days / Fun Days
- Mentoring / Tuition
- Supporting Community Run Projects or Community Organisations (including Youth groups, BME groups, Older People groups, Community Centres, Sports Clubs etc)
- Undertaking Community Questionnaires / Audits
- Offering training / professional advice to groups or local businesses

5.2 As detailed above, any volunteering opportunity must fit with specific criteria.

6. **Publicity**

6.1 Northwards will look to publicise activity under the project wherever possible through a range of media including the website, Northwards Natter, Ward Newsletters and the local press.

7. **Recommendation**

7.1 The Board is asked to approve the Employee Volunteering Scheme.