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## **OUR VOLUNTEER CAPITAL - ACTION PLAN TO INCREASE AND PROMOTE VOLUNTEERING**

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### **1. Purpose of report**

This report outlines Our Volunteer Capital, an action plan to grow, connect and showcase the contribution of volunteering to Wellington and its quality of life.

### **2. Executive Summary**

Our Volunteer Capital (OVC) is an evolving action plan that recognises the importance of volunteers and their contribution to our City including making Wellington an attractive place to be. It highlights that volunteering is an important part of living and working in Wellington. Volunteers contribute significantly to local resilience as well as to services and activities that deliver on the Council's priorities. OVC links strongly with Our Living City and Our Capital Spaces.

OVC has been closely developed with expert partners in the volunteering sector, in particular with Volunteering New Zealand, Volunteer Wellington, Deloitte, Chalkle and Enspiral. This work with our partners and feedback from the sector has informed OVC's goals and priorities around enhancing and supporting all aspects of volunteering, especially in how people connect with volunteering opportunities. OVC seeks to develop initiatives that will tell people what's happening and gives them the opportunity to join in. OVC seeks to incorporate a balanced and broad approach to volunteering. The action plan incorporates an initial focus on corporate social responsibility and the need to connect skilled volunteers with community groups.

Lots of volunteer groups function well on their own and will continue to do so. Others will benefit from greater connectivity with volunteer and social enterprise networks. OVC aims to add value through connecting people and resources where it is needed and not impede the good work that is already happening.

The OVC action plan addresses some immediate gaps and provides focus and recognition and the building blocks for ensuring Council's investment in volunteering best meets the needs of the city.

A two phased approach is planned. Phase 1, developing OVC, commences with the launch of OVC at Volunteer Week in mid-June. This will coincide with a celebration of Wellington's volunteers and the promotion of a range of activities

through to the end of August. It will also focus on working with the sector on the following identified actions:

- **developing an Online Matching Platform and database** that is simple to use and effectively matches people, organisations, skills and values around volunteering. This would be hosted by one of our partners
- **telling our (wider city and internal) stories** to let people know what's happening by increasing networking and promotional events and publications (for example 'Our Volunteer Capital' in Appendix 1)
- **expanding training around best practice** helping employers and organisations to form sustainable partnerships and effectively resource and manage volunteers
- **working with partners** to understand the motivations for volunteering and start to break down barriers around volunteering of all types (mapping the process from start to finish).

Council will use its extended networks to connect the right partners into OVC.

In phase 2, Council will help our partners make progress on the above actions. Those actions will be led by different partner organisations across the volunteering sector.

Officers also plan, in phase 2, to scope work that will look at how the Council generally supports an extensive volunteering network. Our Volunteer Capital provides the building blocks to test Council's role and support to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the city and community.

### 3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note that in November 2012, the Committee agreed that officers consider the merits of a strategy or an action plan to promote volunteering in Wellington.*
3. *Note that officers have partnered with Volunteering New Zealand, Volunteer Wellington, Deloitte, Chalkle, Enspiral and others to develop "Our Volunteer Capital", a City-wide action plan to grow and support volunteering at the local level and support relevant national initiatives.*
4. *Agree to the following objectives for "Our Volunteer Capital":*
  - *grow the contribution and variety of volunteering nationally, to local communities, and the city*
  - *connect resources and grow capability among people, businesses and community organisations around the volunteering space*
  - *showcase, invest in and celebrate the contribution of volunteering*

- *show leadership and respect.*

### ***Partnership***

5. *Agree that officers work with key community and corporate partners to achieve the following priority actions for Our Volunteer Capital:*
  - *developing an Online Matching Platform and database*
  - *telling our (wider city and internal) stories*
  - *expanding and tailoring the resources that support best practice*
  - *mapping the barriers to and motivations for volunteering.*

### ***Leadership***

6. *Agree that Council provide leadership as an organisation that supports volunteers, including investigating:*
  - *internships for skilled people (including university students) to provide their expertise to volunteer groups*
  - *the benefits of a formalised annual volunteer programme for the Council's staff.*

### ***Implementation***

7. *Note that Council will implement Our Volunteer Capital in two phases. In phase 1 we will:*
  - *draft a prospectus (see Appendix 1) to be used (online and in hard copy) in our interactions with businesses and community groups to help showcase opportunities to contribute to and be part of "Our Volunteer Capital". This would be used alongside other communication tools and media, including supporting our partners with the Online Matching Platform and database*
  - *launch Our Volunteer Capital at National Volunteer Week (16 to 22 June 2013)*
  - *support and participate in the Engaging Employer-Supported Volunteering and Workplace Giving workshop on 27 June 2013*
  - *support and participate in Social Enterprise Week - 14 to 18 August 2013.*
8. *Note that in phase 2, officers from Community Networks plan to scope work that will look at how the Council supports an extensive volunteering network, including partnering and collaborating to support organisations to progress actions under Our Volunteer Capital.*
9. *Note that Our Volunteer Capital provides the building blocks to test Council's role and support to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the city and community.*

10. *Note that a dedicated “Local Hosts” team leader will co-ordinate event volunteers, including the groups of volunteers that helped Wellington host the 2011 Rugby World Cup.*

## **4. Background**

### **Emerging issues for Council to consider**

In November 2012, officers sought Committee approval to consider the value of a strategy with an action plan to assist in the promotion, growth and support of volunteering. In response, the Committee agreed to progress work but emphasised that any strategy or actions undertaken by Council needed to effectively add value.

## **5. Discussion**

In progressing this work, it became very clear to officers that volunteers make an enormous contribution to the city and that this contribution is essential in supporting local resilience and helps make Wellington a fantastic place to live. Council officers consider volunteering to be a key part of Wellington’s unique identity and that the Council can effectively add value to the sector by focusing on actions to support and enhance volunteering.

### **Context**

*The value of volunteering as part of Our Living City, Our Capital Spaces and a place where talent wants to live*

Volunteers make a huge contribution nationally and in Wellington. Volunteering connects people and adds vibrancy and value to communities. Volunteers play a big part in how our city looks and feels. Many community projects or events critically depend on the ability to effectively mobilise volunteers.

Community volunteers contribute significantly to the resilience of the city. Knowing your neighbour and being connected into your local community was identified as significant contributor to local resilience in Christchurch post the earthquake in 2011 and volunteering was considered a key component in enhancing this. Voluntary community groups (this includes sports, and arts groups) are our partners that deliver services and activities that align with and deliver on the Council’s outcomes.

*Significant contribution to the city economy*

Many volunteers and non-profit organisations give an incredible amount of time to their communities. If this labour was costed at market rates, the overall contribution of non-profits nationally would equate to \$6.95 billion. Their contribution to the Wellington Region would equate to \$1 billion or 4.9 per cent

of GDP – this contribution is equivalent to the contribution made by the entire construction industry in our region (StatsNZ)<sup>1</sup>.

*It's diverse and needs to fit with a fast paced, busy lifestyle*

People and organisations volunteer their time in many different ways. The following examples provide just a small snap-shot of the huge variety of volunteering opportunities available.

- People spending a few hours per week refereeing a local sports team, undertaking conservation work, community health or counselling.
- The large pool of Rugby World Cup volunteers and Parks Sport and Recreation Volunteers.
- Employers, professionals and students providing free skilled (pro-bono) services such as accountancy, project management, marketing and legal advice.
- Regular volunteering.
- One off volunteering.
- Volunteering as a family.
- Volunteering online from home.

*What are the barriers to Volunteering?*

Officers from across Council worked with the Council's volunteer partners to identify some of the immediate barriers to volunteering and identify opportunities to grow the sector.

The barriers identified were:

- a lack of awareness about the huge variety of volunteering opportunities, including how to easily find out about when and where to volunteer in a way that best suits each person
- some community organisations struggle to recruit, retain and manage volunteers (due to knowledge and / or resource issues)
- volunteers can sometimes not feel valued and / or feel they are being used as cheap labour
- community organisations may not know how to partner with skilled volunteers and employers (for example project managers, lawyers, marketing professionals or accountants) to make the most of this expertise.

*The opportunities identified to grow the sector were:*

- development of an action-focussed coordinated initiative jointly with our partners, that looks at the city as a whole rather than as a Council strategy and action plan

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<sup>1</sup> The non-profit sector as a whole contributed 4.9% to GDP. Of that 4.9%, volunteers contributed 2.3% to GDP with the paid non-profit workforce contributing 2.6%.

- the potential for the wider community to increase capability and resilience through more organisations sharing knowledge and experience, pooling resources and forming durable partnerships
- work within a national framework through Volunteering New Zealand, in particular for corporate volunteering where businesses have national coverage
- targeting skilled volunteers and connecting businesses with skills and a desire to share those with the community as part of their corporate social responsibility objectives
- some smart people are developing processes and systems to support volunteering. It is about leveraging those skill sets and ensuring people are aware and know how to join in (Don't reinvent the wheel)
- the Council volunteer network would substantially benefit from a coordinated approach across the City and access to the tools developed to support it.

### **Phase 1 - Developing Our Volunteer Capital**

Officers have concluded that the initial focus in phase 1 should be on actions guided by some goals and that these goals needed to be informed by a context and framework. This led to the development of Our Volunteer Capital (OVC) action plan.

The Council's initial role has been to work with our partners and the wider volunteering sector to identify goals and actions and build partnerships to deliver them. OVC is not something that the Council will implement on its own. It will be implemented in partnership with the Community, the Volunteer sector and businesses. OVC has already received a lot of buy-in and enthusiasm from the wider community. Several organisations are already keen to partner with the Council.

#### *The Goals*

Officers have developed the following OVC Goals to guide actions:

- Grow the contribution and variety of volunteering nationally, to local communities, and the city.
- Connect resources and grow capability among people, businesses and community organisations around the volunteering space.
- Showcase, invest in and celebrate the contribution of volunteering.
- Show leadership and respect.

The final goal reflects that OVC is about investing in and valuing volunteering and not about using volunteers as a substitute for paid workers. It also recognises that there are many volunteers in our communities already who may be very happy to continue to do what they are doing. OVC is not prescriptive and aims to add value where it is needed and wanted.

The Council and our partners are working to bring other people and organisations to help develop and implement OVC. We are mindful to avoid unnecessary duplication of great initiatives already existing in the community.

### *The Actions*

Initially, the main action areas that we are focusing on include:

- **developing an Online Matching Platform and database** that is simple to use and effectively matches people, organisations, skills and values around volunteering. This would be hosted by one of our partners
- **telling our (wider city and internal) stories** to let people know what's happening by increasing networking and promotional events and publications (for example 'Our Volunteer Capital' in Appendix 1)
- **expanding and tailoring the resources to support best practice** helping employers and organisations know how to form sustainable partnerships and effectively resource and manage volunteers
- **working with partners** to understand why people choose to volunteer and what barriers they face in doing this, so that the barriers to volunteering can be reduced.

The objective is to get as many partners involved as possible with OVC and have a draft prospectus to use to encourage partners to join OVC and participate and connect. This would be used in conjunction with other communication tools and media. Many people and organisations are already seeing OVC as something that they want to be part of and are offering their skills to progress work.

While the above action areas have been particularly informed by the need for more involvement by skilled volunteers and employers, Our Volunteer Capital will expand to capture more areas of volunteering that most need to be enhanced.

### *Launching Our Volunteer Capital*

It is planned that the Council and partners will launch OVC at National Volunteer Week - 16 to 22 June 2013. This will include a media release and coverage in Our Wellington with a page highlighting the goals and objectives, our partners and how the community can get involved.

OVC will also be promoted by officers participating in the workshop on Engaging Employer-Supported Volunteering and Workplace Giving on 27 June 2013. The workshop will be run by Volunteering New Zealand and the Social Good Foundation and will be targeted at non-governmental organisations.

It is also planned that OVC will Support Social Enterprise Week - 14 to 18 August. This is a great opportunity to significantly progress the online matching platform and database (refer to Recommendation 5). Social Enterprise Week will be run by Chalkle and Enspiral. We are hoping to capture the week on video and use it to help tell the Wellington story.

### *How we will implement the actions*

The key implementation issues include getting the online platform and other products of Our Volunteer Capital initiative launched so that people know about them and can use them. These products will spread the knowledge of volunteering opportunities and get more partners involved. Over time, other volunteering networks that operate in the city and more widely will leverage the value of Our Volunteer Capital. Implementation will give us better connections, skilled partners and resources.

It is intended that the easily searchable public online platform will host all types of volunteer roles - one-off, ongoing, skilled, team, virtual, governance, events, sports, etc. The online platform will also contain links to a wealth of information on best-practice and resourcing to grow capability among people and organisations for managing volunteers.

Council's role will be to provide support to the lead for the online platform, Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ), as VNZ extends existing platforms or develops new ones in a cost-effective way to make the comprehensive matching platform and database possible. Council will help attract new partners (through our extended networks) to input into this platform and direct those new partners to work with Volunteering New Zealand.

Council will also look at its communications to tell Our Volunteer Capital stories with a potential to connect with Our Living City stories, again on that online platform. This will include ensuring that a large number of city-wide volunteering opportunities are included on that online platform.

*Partnership* - This is about adding value in a sustainable way to co-ordinate and connect what is happening across volunteering groups in Council and the wider city. Council will work to ensure connections are made rather than missed. Partnership in Our Volunteer Capital will connect new skills and expertise into this action plan.

### **Phase 2 - On-going work and next steps**

OVC is a living action plan that will be owned by the wider community with Council partnering and collaborating with other organisations involved to ensure that it gains momentum.

A lot is already happening. In phase 2, officers also plan to scope work that will look at how the Council generally supports an extensive volunteering network. Our Volunteer Capital provides the building blocks to test Council's role and support to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the city and community.

Internally, Council will also seek to investigate:

- possible internships for skilled people (including university students) to provide their expertise to volunteer groups (for example accounting or project management expertise)
- the benefits of establishing a formal annual volunteer programme for the Council's staff.



A dedicated “Local Host” team leader will co-ordinate event volunteers, including the groups of volunteers that helped Wellington host the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

Our events, sports and conservation volunteers already provide invaluable support to make Council’s objectives possible. We want to add value to these groups where this is appropriate and wanted without detracting from the good work already being done. The world - class Makara Peak mountain biking park and Wellington’s impressive Botanic Gardens are two examples of what volunteers can make possible. We want the initiatives to support these types of activities by showcasing volunteering and getting more interested people involved.

### ***5.1 Consultation and Engagement***

Consultation has included those that manage and work with volunteers across Council and volunteer networks in Wellington. Consultation is ongoing and is increasingly resulting in partnerships and growing enthusiasm. Extensive engagement has been carried out through face-to-face meetings, events and through the networks of partner organisations, including Volunteering New Zealand, Volunteer Wellington, Deloitte, Chalkle and Enspiral.

### ***5.2 Financial considerations***

Resourcing implications will be identified as officers further scope the actions under the OVC initiative, with funding coming from Council grants and from some of the partners who engage on this initiative. The development of OVC has been funded through the policy and partnership development. Significant, in kind contributions, by way of a facilitated workshop have been received from Deloitte. Vertigo Design has offered to work to support future design and marketing.

### ***5.3 Climate change impacts and considerations***

No climate change impacts.

### ***5.4 Long-term plan considerations***

No long term plan considerations.

Contact Officer:     Andrew Stitt, Manager Policy

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

*The policy direction supports Council's overall vision of Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital. The policy direction particularly supports creating a liveable and people-centred city.*

### 2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

*This will be scoped as the Our Volunteer Capital initiative further develops.*

### 3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

*No Treaty of Waitangi considerations.*

### 4) Decision-making

*This is not a significant decision under the Council's Significance Policy.*

### 5) Consultation

#### a) General consultation

*Interested parties have been identified and consulted on actions. This process is ongoing.*

#### b) Consultation with Maori

*No specific Maori consultation but we are keen to involve Maori, particularly in partnerships, as Our Volunteer Capital progresses.*

### 6) Legal implications

*No legal implications.*

### 7) Consistency with existing policy

*Actions should be consistent with current policies.*