



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Briefing Meeting

Subject DCMS and ACE Project: Volunteer Futures

Date of meeting: 16 February 2024

Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Steve Pitt, Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Economic Development.

Wards affected: All

1. Requested by: Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development

2. Purpose

To provide an update to the Portfolio Holder on the Volunteer Futures project for Portsmouth City Council commissioned by DCMS and funded by Arts Council England (ACE).

3. Information Requested

3.1 The aim of the project (1 of 19 nationally) has been to improve the retention and sustainability of volunteers engaging with Cultural Services internally and externally. The project aims to support individuals with additional support needs who may face barriers such as asylum seekers and refugees, the homeless, and those with disabilities (both physical and learning), learning difficulties, and other groups. Overall, the project seeks to improve the accessibility and diversity of volunteering.

3.2 Portsmouth City Council via the Libraries service achieved a grant of £130,000 (with £15,000 support in kind and match funding) as part of a nationwide project in 2021. A project officer was appointed in 2022 who has been working with numerous partners and volunteers themselves to improve access and make



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

recommendations via the cities partnering broker 'HIVE Portsmouth'. The recommendations co-produced by the Volunteer Futures project with volunteers and organisations will be utilised and in support of the Volunteer Passport offer which HIVE will be presenting in future.

3.3 The bid for the project and subsequent funding sought to achieve the following:

- Volunteers supported and engaged with over the lifecycle of the project (24 months)- 500 were targeted, and so far 557 volunteers have been engaged and supported.
- It was estimated we would work with 10 creative practitioners over the duration of the project to deliver creative activity with or for volunteers - so far 37 have been employed (including engagement workshops, video projects, learning about libraries, hosting celebratory parties and recruitment fayres)
- It was estimated 100 active participants would be engaged. These are defined as those taking part in the project beyond being members of an audience e.g. taking part in a workshop or sports activity. 1302 people have been engaged so far in this way. We have far exceeded this figure as we have been able to work in partnership with other organisations and directorates to deliver activity.
- It was estimated we would reach 700 people during live shows and exhibitions - so far 2639 have been reached, via events in the community and outreach to potential volunteers.
- It was estimated we would reach 300 people via streaming opportunities such as recordings or broadcasts of a live presentation through a digital platform. 617 people have been reached so far, this number is likely to be higher once we have figures from the Big Screen promotional presentation for Volunteers Week, where volunteers from organisations expressed their reasoning and benefits for and from volunteering.

The project has exceeded all target numbers within the current lifespan of the project (with 7 months left to go) and has numerous more activities budgeted and planned for to continue the project until its designated end date of July 2024.

3.4 The bid for the project and subsequent funding sought to achieve the following:

- 5 recruitment fayres (including those hosted digitally)
- 3 volunteer celebration events

Working in partnership with other directorates and listening to customer need, the project officer has attended and supported hosting with 70+ events and engaged with 68 organisations in the first year alone, including attending the City Of Portsmouth



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

College English Language classes, the DWP recruitment fayres (on average of once a month) and representing libraries and voluntary activity across culture at the University of Portsmouth (UOP) Volunteer and Employment fayres, an Employment Conference for Migrants, and co-hosting at least 13 celebratory events for volunteers.

3.5 Achievements have included:

- Engagement in the north of the city, especially Paulsgrove; with funding and activity applied specifically following engagement with residents and the community. This has included 2 'Wilder' days to promote greening and activity, emPOWER Paulsgrove (a 6 week programme of arts activity in summer 2023 which culminated in a promotional tour of community art being showcased in partnership with Portsmouth Creates at Victorious Festival). The artwork co-produced with residents is due to be installed on the pedestrian Network Rail bridge leading to North Harbour, and a mural being designed for the side of Paulsgrove library with young person's art collective 'The Young Creatives' will be installed during Easter 2024.
- A learning and physically disabled and isolated individual will be in receipt of their father's posthumous medal following archival activity done around their family tree and naval history.
- A 'Volunteers Week' video celebration shown on the Big Screen highlighting the benefits of volunteering across cultural services.
- An internal video map of Central Library created by Enable Ability Interactiv service which has proved beneficial for volunteers with mobility needs and supporting students of the English language becoming better acquainted with the library, which is hosted on the Portsmouth Libraries and Archive service website.
- 30 ESOL students in attendance in group volunteer sessions undertaking the '6 Week introduction to libraries' course. This course has been utilised with many demographics including Duke of Edinburgh award, migrants, and those with disabilities.
- Mapping of cultural organisations across the North and South of the city in accordance with ACE priorities of Environment, Sport, Youth, Civil Society, Heritage, and Arts, including in support of the UOP City of Languages bid.
- Hosting representatives from at least 20 different organisations both internally and externally as well as 2 volunteers to support the project's direction with a monthly steering group as agreed at the outset of the project bid.
- 2 volunteer hubs as agreed at the outset of the bid which are located in Central Library, and in Cosham Community Centre (CCC). The groups currently



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

engaged with the north hub at CCC are seeking to retain their rental of the space post project and are in talks to provide improvements from CIL funding.

- Volunteer processes have sought to have been standardised for volunteer support organisations across Libraries and Archives which will be the basis for the 'Volunteer Passport offer' which will be provided and implanted by Together in HIVE Portsmouth Bureau.

.....
 Signed by
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: emPOWER Paulsgrove project
- Appendix 2: Case studies

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

| Title of document | Location |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Volunteer Future export | Libraries Service |
| Year 1 Evaluation | Libraries Service |
| Target numbers | Libraries Service |
| Initial volunteer passport | Libraries Service |
| 6 week introduction | Libraries Service |
| Cultural map north and south | Libraries Service |
| Review update | Libraries Service |