

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Central Area Council Meeting:
8th September 2014**

Agenda Item: 8

**Report of Central Area Council
Manager**

Insurance Cover for Volunteering

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines for Members the Council's policy for Working with Volunteers and consideration of insurance cover.
- 1.2 The report also highlights the Love Where You Live 'toolkit' to support residents and community groups in organising community action projects.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 **Members note the Council's 'Working with Volunteers' policy and actively consider insurance implications when working with community groups to promote volunteering.**
- 2.2 **Members note the Love Where You Live 'toolkit' and seek to promote this with community groups to encourage effective community action.**

3.0 Background and Context

- 3.1. Promoting volunteering is seen as a key strand of helping to deliver the Council's priority to build strong and resilient communities and develop a new relationship with the community. This reflects that volunteering strengthens the life of the borough, by increasing human, social and economic capital. It is a major building block in the development of a high trust society and an important expression of citizenship. A high trust society is one where people trust one another and there are high rates of participation in social, community networks and activities.
- 3.2 The encouragement of volunteering, as a key strand of helping to build strong and resilient communities, has instigated a number of queries about the Council's insurance cover in relation to possible future claims and what levels of insurance community groups may require themselves. The Council's existing 'Working with Volunteers' policy sets out the Council's position on insurance and is attached at Appendix 1. It is not meant to be a barrier to

volunteering, but simply to raise awareness around when volunteers will be covered by the Council's insurance arrangements and when separate insurance cover is required.

- 3.3 The Council's 'Working with Volunteers' policy relates primarily to formal volunteering opportunities which have been created by the Council and reflecting the creation of a role description. The policy recognises at section 6 that where a volunteer's role will be a 'one-off', for example helping at a school fete or assisting at a jumble sale that the procedures outlined in the policy are not necessary, provided that the volunteer is not left alone and unsupervised in charge of children or adults in a regulated activity position.
- 3.4 To support the launch of the 'Love Where You Live' Barnsley campaign in June 2014, a toolkit was developed to support residents and community groups in developing community action projects. This includes advice on insurance and carrying out risk assessments on projects. The guidance suggests that if community groups do not have their own insurance that they should contact the Communities and Area Governance team for each activity to be assessed on a case by case basis. Members will obviously play a key role in helping to facilitate this process with the support of the Area Teams and linked to the delivery of Ward Alliance action plans. The Love Where You Live Toolkit is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The level of insurance cover required for one off community action projects needs to be proportionate to the activity and it with this in mind that the toolkit has been produced. By following the checklist to support the effective planning of a community event and liaising with the community and area governance team to consider insurance requirements, should enable successful and safe events to be undertaken.

4.0 Insurance Position

4.1 Section 9 of the Working with Volunteering policy states:-

- The Authority's insurance arrangements will extend to cover volunteers or persons co-opted to assist the Council whilst they are undertaking tasks directly for the Council and in connection with business activities.
- There is no requirement to notify the Insurance Section when volunteers are enrolled by the Council. However, if there is any doubt as to whether a volunteer meets the required criteria, the Insurance Section should be contacted for guidance.
- Managers/Headteachers must ensure that volunteers using their own vehicle in the course of their duties are adequately covered by their insurance. In accordance with Council policy, volunteers will sign the Vehicle Details Form (VEH1) to ensure that their documentation is current and lawful prior to travel.

4.2 In summary all volunteers are covered by the council's insurance arrangements provided:-

- they are working under the supervision and control of a council officer.