North Lanarkshire Council
Report

Finance and Resources Committee

Does this report require to be approved? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Ref FW/LC **Date** 19/11/25

Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure

From Fiona Whittaker, Chief Officer (People Resources)

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Executive Summary

As part of our ongoing commitment to social responsibility and community engagement, the Council is progressing the introduction of an Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) Policy. This initiative reflects our belief that supporting the communities in which we live, and work not only strengthens those communities but also enriches the personal and professional lives of our employees. By encouraging and enabling staff to volunteer their time and skills, we aim to foster a culture of compassion, collaboration, and shared purpose, while making a meaningful impact beyond the workplace.

The Finance and Resources Committee is now invited to consider the policy, acknowledge the benefits it offers to both employees and the wider community, and to endorse its implementation at the earliest opportunity.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:

(1) Agree to the principles as outlined within the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure.
(2) Endorse the implementation of the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure
(3) Acknowledge the Council's commitment to supporting employees who wish to volunteer with an appropriate organisation or charity as described within the policy and procedure.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base
Ambition statement	(23) Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition
Programme of Work	Brighter Futures

1. Background

1.1 Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) policies are gaining momentum across both the public and private sectors, as senior leadership teams increasingly recognise the wide-ranging benefits they bring, not only to the organisation and its employees, but also to the communities in which they operate.

1.2 In recognition of the benefits of volunteering, North Lanarkshire Council is introducing an Employer Supported Volunteering Policy that aligns with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and specifically supports the strategic aims of the Brighter Futures Programme of Work.

1.3 Of the five key themes within Brighter Futures, the fourth focuses on offering alternative pathways for residents to contribute to and support North Lanarkshire's economy and communities. While the Council has a well-established system for training and volunteering opportunities, these provisions do not currently extend to its own staff.

1.4 To date, a range of actions have been undertaken under the Brighter Futures Volunteering theme as detailed within the recent report to Policy and Strategy Committee on 25 September 2025. These include analysing current volunteer activity; engaging with internal services; schools, and local employers; and building partnerships with community groups and organisations such as VANL and Volunteer Scotland. The Council has developed volunteer role profiles, created promotional campaigns, and supported accreditation and qualification pathways to enhance employability. Collaborative efforts have also focused on mentoring local groups and promoting the Volunteer Friendly award.

1.5 The Employer Supported Volunteering Policy is considered a key component of the Brighter Futures Programme that will strengthen opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful volunteering, while also supporting wider community development goals. Alongside this, the Council is progressing towards achieving the Invest in Volunteering Award and accreditation as an SQA centre to deliver Volunteering Skills qualifications at levels 3, 4, and 5—further enhancing the impact and value of volunteering across the organisation and the local area.

1.6 The remainder of this report outlines the key benefits of implementing an Employer Supported Volunteering Policy, along with the core principles guiding its application and operation.

2. Report

2.1 As Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) continues to grow across organisations, it is increasingly important to recognise the mutual benefits it brings both to the organisation and the communities in which it operates. While North Lanarkshire Council has long encouraged community engagement through volunteering, it has not yet extended this opportunity to its own workforce. Expanding ESV to employees would represent a meaningful step forward in aligning internal practices with the Council's broader commitment to community participation and social impact.

2.2 Volunteering offers a wealth of opportunities for both personal and professional growth. It enables employees to develop a broad range of transferable skills, including effective communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. In addition, engaging in volunteer activities cultivates adaptability, resilience, and cultural awareness, while also enhancing emotional intelligence and empathy, qualities that are increasingly valued in today's dynamic workplace.

2.3 Volunteering, in addition to skill development, can also positively impact an employee's wellbeing and job satisfaction, aligning with the Council's commitment to support a motivated, skilled and socially responsible workforce.

2.4 The Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure has been developed to enable employees to participate in volunteering and community activities during their normal working hours. While the Council will actively encourage staff to engage in volunteering, it acknowledges that participation is entirely voluntary and a matter of personal choice.

Key Components of the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure.

2.5 The introduction of the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure aims to ensure that all Council employees have equal access to consider volunteering opportunities. It sets out the entitlements, expectations, and processes required to support meaningful, well-organised volunteering activities that are aligned with the Council's operational priorities. The main components are as follows:

2.5.1 All permanent and temporary employees of the Council who have completed one year of service are eligible to submit a volunteering application. However, applications are subject to approval by the relevant line manager and must be compatible with the operational requirements of the Service.

2.5.2 Those applicable, will be entitled to up to one full day of paid leave per calendar year (pro rate for part time employees) to volunteer with a registered charity or non-profit organisation operating within the North Lanarkshire Council area. This time can be taken in one full day or broken down into periods where it suits the needs of the service and voluntary organisation.

2.5.3 Volunteering applications can be on an individual or team basis. Some organisations use team volunteering as both a team bonding and development opportunity.

2.5.4 The Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure also outlines the support available to employees and clearly defines their roles and responsibilities when participating in volunteering activities.

2.5.5 The implementation of this policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to deliver meaningful benefits for both employees and the wider community. Where appropriate, updates or improvements will be recommended to enhance its effectiveness and alignment with organisational priorities.

Next Steps

2.6 If approved by the Finance and Resources Committee, the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure will be implemented at the earliest opportunity. Staff will be informed of the policy and its benefits through Council-wide communications, ensuring awareness and encouraging participation across the organisation.

2.6.1 iTrent will be updated to enable the recording of up to one day of paid time off for volunteering activities, ensuring accurate tracking and alignment with the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy.

2.6.2 A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and other supporting materials will be developed to help both managers and employees understand the policy, its procedures, and the underlying aims of Employer Supported Volunteering.

3. Measures of success

3.1 Employees demonstrate a strong willingness to engage in volunteering activities that deliver meaningful, positive outcomes and create value for all involved.

3.2 The community recognises that the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy generates tangible benefits and lasting impact.

3.3 Employees feel that volunteering helps them develop new skills, contributing to both their personal growth and professional development.

3.4 Volunteering becomes embedded in the Council's culture, with employees actively encouraged to explore how it can enrich their work and lives.

4. Supporting documentation

4.1 Appendix 1 – Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure

Fiona Whittaker
Chief Officer (People Resources)

5. Impacts

5.1	**Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty** Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes ☐ No ☐
5.2	**Financial impact** Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.3	**HR policy impact** Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes ☒ No ☐ If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes ☒ No ☐ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Policy has been created to ensure consistent application across all services, however due to operational issues within some services, it may not be possible to approve applications in all areas of the Council. Managers will be encouraged to support applications whenever possible.
5.4	**Legal impact** Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.5	**Data protection impact** Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes ☐ No ☐

5.6	**Technology / Digital impact** Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)? Yes ☐ No ☒
5.7	**Environmental / Carbon impact** Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.8	**Communications impact** Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities? Yes ☒ No ☐ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Staff will need to be communicated with to ensure that they are aware of the policy and procedure.
5.9	**Risk impact** Is there a risk impact? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?
5.10	**Armed Forces Covenant Duty** Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.
5.11	**Children's rights and wellbeing impact** Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these? Yes ☐ No ☒ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out? Yes ☐ No ☐

Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure

Version 1

October 2025

Document control			
Title	Employer Volunteering Policy and Procedure		
Owner	Fiona Whittaker, Chief Officer (People Resources)	**Contact**	whittakerf@northlan.gov.uk
Governance Group	Business Management Team (BMT) and Finance and Resources Committee		
Author	Linda Cullen	**Contact**	CullenLi@northlan.gov.uk

Revision History

Number	Originator	Date Review Commenced	Revision description/record of change
Version 1	Linda Cullen	13 October 2025	First draft of Policy and procedure for consideration

Document Approvals

Number	Governance Group	Date approval granted	Date approval to be requested (if document still draft)
1	CMT	24 October 2025	Approved
1	F&R Committee	19 November 2025	

Consultation Record (for most recent update)

Status of document consulted upon	First Version
Stakeholders consulted/date	CMT Trade unions Equality Forum Finance and Resources

Strategic Alignment

All priorities and programmes of work that encourage employee engagement with the community in which they work

Next review date

Review Date	One year from implementation and then as and when deemed necessary to ensure remains fit for purpose and aligned to organisational values.

Contents

1. Introduction

As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to community engagement and corporate social responsibility, employees are encouraged to contribute their time and professional skills in support of local charitable and non-profit organisations. To support this initiative, employees are entitled to up to one full day of paid leave per calendar year (pro-rata for part-time employees) to volunteer with a registered charity or non-profit organisation operating within the North Lanarkshire Council area.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure is to establish a clear framework that supports and encourages employee participation in volunteer activities. It reflects the Council's commitment to community engagement and corporate social responsibility by enabling staff to contribute their time and skills to charitable and non-profit organisations. The policy outlines entitlements, expectations and procedures ensuring that volunteering efforts are meaningful, well-coordinated and aligned with operational needs. Additionally, it promotes personal development, strengthens community ties and enhances the organisations public image through active social contribution.

3. Benefits

Volunteering provides employees with valuable opportunities for personal and professional development. Through engagement with charitable and non-profit organisations, individuals can enhance a range of transferable skills, including communication, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving. Participation in volunteer activities also fosters adaptability, resilience and cultural awareness while promoting emotional intelligence and empathy. These experiences contribute to improved confidence, broadened perspectives and strengthen interpersonal relationships. In addition to skill development, volunteering can positively impact employee wellbeing and job satisfaction, aligning with the Council's commitment to supporting a motivated, skilled and socially responsible workforce.

4. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees of the Council, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, occupational level, functional area, seniority, employment status or any other protected characteristic as defined by law.

5. Eligibility

All permanent and temporary employees who have completed one year of service from their start date with the Council are eligible to submit a volunteering application including those on Teacher's terms and conditions of employment. However, all requests made under this policy are subject to approval by the relevant line manager and must be compatible with the operational requirements of the service.

As the work of teachers is governed by national terms and conditions, discussion must be undertaken with the relevant Chief Officer as to how teachers can utilise this policy effectively.

6. Activities

Eligible volunteering activities may include a wide range of roles that support the operations and mission of registered charities or non-profit organisations. Examples include assisting with community events, supporting food banks or shelters, mentoring young people, participating in environmental clean-up initiatives, helping with fundraising efforts, providing administrative or technical support. Activities should contribute meaningfully to the organisations objectives and be carried out within the North Lanarkshire Council area, in alignment with this policy's intent and approval requirements.

Team Activities

Team volunteering can be a meaningful way to foster collaboration, strengthen team dynamics and contribute positively to the community. Employees may participate in approved team volunteering activities that align with the Council's values and social responsibility goals. Participation is voluntary and will be supported through paid time off, subject to operational requirements and managerial approval. Activities may include environmental initiatives, mentoring programs, charity events, or other community-based efforts.

Teams are expected to coordinate with designated staff to ensure proper planning, safety, and representation of the organisation. It should also be recognised that team activities may not suit everyone, and the make-up of the team will need to be taken into consideration when arranging such events.

Feedback and outcomes from team volunteering efforts are welcomed and may be recognised through internal communications or employee engagement initiatives. Requests for Team volunteering activities should be in writing to the service Chief Officer for their consideration and approval.

Area

The volunteering activity must be within the North Lanarkshire Council area and must be for a local charity or non-profitable organisation. Organisations such as Volunteer Scotland (https://www.volunteerscotland.net) and Volunteering Action North Lanarkshire VANL (https://voluntaryactionnorthlanarkshire.org) provide details of organisations who accept volunteers and the type of activities they cover.

Employee Conduct During Volunteering Activities

Upholding professional standards of behaviour is essential to maintaining the trust, reputation, and integrity of the Council. Whether in the workplace or representing the organisation in external capacities, employees are expected to demonstrate conduct that reflects our core values.

Accordingly, the Employee Code of Conduct remains in full effect for all employees engaged in volunteer activities. This Code sets out principles that uphold the highest standards of integrity and personal conduct expected of all staff members.

Misconduct during volunteer activities such as inappropriate behaviour, failure to represent the Council responsibly or compromising the safety or dignity of others will be investigated under the Council's disciplinary policy and procedures.

7. Liability

North Lanarkshire Council acts as a facilitator in connecting volunteers with partner organisations. While reasonable steps are taken to ensure that our partner organisations provide safe and supportive environments, the Council is not responsible for day-to-day management, supervision or safety of volunteers once placed.

Volunteers are advised that any liability for injury, loss or damage during their placement rests with the host organisation. Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the host organisation's policies, including health and safety and insurance coverage before commencing.

8. Clothing and Equipment

If the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be supplied by the host organisation. If employees are involved in community transport volunteering using their own car, they will need to check that their own motor insurance is suitable.

9. Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Disclosure Check

Where employees are permitted to undertake volunteering activities with external organisations, it is the responsibility of the host organisation to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. This includes determining whether a PVG check is required for the role and if so, ensuring that the individual is appropriately vetted through Disclosure Scotland. The Council will not assume any responsibility for PVG membership or checks related to external volunteering roles but does encourage employees to engage only with organisations that uphold robust safeguarding standards.

10. Public Duties

Activities such as school governance, serving as a magistrate, participation in electoral duties (including support at polling stations) and trade union responsibilities are recognised as distinct from general volunteering. These are covered under separate organisational policies and are subject to difference procedures and entitlements.

11. Applying for a Volunteering Opportunity

Employees can apply to undertake a volunteering activity by completing the application form provided at Appendix 1. All sections should be fully completed and submitted to the line manager for authorisation.

Employees may be granted permission to undertake volunteering activities with external organisations, provided the following criteria are met:

- The volunteering does not incur additional costs to the Council
- The activity does not disrupt or adversely impact individual performance or team operations.
- There is no conflict of interest between the volunteering role and the employee's duties within the Council.
- The host organisation is a registered charity or non-profit operating within the boundaries of North Lanarkshire Council. Employee must provide evidence of this.
- Volunteering activities must not be used to replace or replicate roles that are the responsibility of Council employees

When considering an application for volunteering the employees' level of attendance should also be taken into account. Managers should discuss any concern around the employee's attendance with a member of the Employment and Policy team.

Employees may take this leave as:

- One full working day
- Two half days, or
- Hourly increments, up to a maximum of:
  7 hours for employees working 35 hours per week,
  7.4 hours for employees working 37 hours per week
- Pro-rata for part-time employees.

This leave is paid and subject to approval. Line managers may authorise time off after considering the operational needs of the business and any cover arrangements required

If the employee's working day is longer than the standard 7 hours, the leave for volunteering will be based on your normal contractual working hours in a day. Equally for those who work part-time, the volunteering leave will be calculated on a pro-rata basis i.e. if an employee works 50% of full-time hours, they will get 50% of a working day as volunteer leave.

If the manager is unable to accommodate a request, the employee will be provided with an explanation and if appropriate provided with an alternative period that is more suitable to the operation of the service. There will be no right of appeal where an application has been refused.

Recording Paid Volunteering Leave

To ensure accurate monitoring and review, all instances of paid volunteering leave taken by Council employees must be properly recorded. Employees should log this on iTrent by selecting Leave (Other) and choosing the 'Volunteering Paid' option from the dropdown menu. The corresponding number of hours taken should be entered to reflect the actual duration of the leave.

Training Requirements

The organisation for which you volunteer is responsible for providing any necessary training required to undertake the volunteering activity safely and correctly. Employees should ensure that they fully participate in any induction or training offered by the organisation, however this may require to be undertaken in the employee's own time.

Subsistence and Travel Expenses

Any expenses occurred because of volunteering activities should be claimed through the organisation in line with their policies, procedures and volunteering agreement with the employee. The Council will not be liable for any expenses incurred during a period of volunteering activity.

12. Monitoring & Review of Policy

The Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and Procedure will be implemented in accordance with general provisions contained within this document and through application of the relevant processes. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose and is benefiting the Council, its employees and the community in which it operates.

This policy shall be subject to review as deemed necessary, including but not limited to instances of legislative change, the introduction of new internal or external strategies or plans, or to ensure continued alignment with recognised best practice. Outcomes of such reviews will be formally reported to management teams, relevant governance bodies, working groups, committees, and scrutiny panels, as appropriate.

Appendix 1

EMPLOYEE APPLICATION FORM

VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY

The following form should be completed by employees who wish to volunteer for a registered charity or non-profitable organisation either based or operating within the area of North Lanarkshire Council.

EMPLOYEE DETAILS	
Name	
Job Title	
Employee Number	
Location	
Hours worked per week	
Line Manager Name	

VOLUNTEERING DETAILS	
Name of Organisation	
Type of Organisation (Charity, non-profit or other – please advise)	
Brief Description of organisations purpose and aims	
Nature of Volunteering Activity	
Location of Volunteering Activity	
Dates and times requested for Volunteering activity	

JUSTIFICATION AND IMPACT	
Explain why you want to volunteer for this organisation?	
How does volunteering with this organisation align with the Council's values and objectives including The Plan for North Lanarkshire Council	
Signed by Employee	
Date	

APPROVAL	
Status of Application (Approved, Declined, Further information required)	
Managers Comments	
Signed by Manager	
Date	

Please advise employee of outcome within 14 days of submission and ensure that any period of leave is recorded on iTrent.

Please note that there is no appeals process for applications that have been rejected.