

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Communities Committee

Does this report require to be approved?  Yes  No

Ref LR/HL

Date 28/04/25

## Brighter Futures – Volunteer NL Update and Progress April 2025

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### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the Volunteer NL project, established in May 2023 with the support of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and outlines future planned actions as a key theme under the Brighter Futures programme of work.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Communities Committee

- (1) Acknowledge the work of the Volunteer NL Programme under the remit of Brighter Futures and the work undertaken to date to support the development of volunteering pathways in North Lanarkshire.
- (2) Otherwise, acknowledge the contents of the report.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
Ambition statement	(19) Improve engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves
Programme of Work	Brighter Futures

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Volunteer NL programme was established in May 2023 with support from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and aims to provide support to help expand volunteering opportunities across North Lanarkshire. Led by Active & Creative Communities, the project seeks to engage volunteers to operate across a range of roles within North Lanarkshire Council and offer wider support to volunteers operating in community groups and sporting clubs across North Lanarkshire.

1.2 Under the remit of Brighter Futures, the programme supports the council's wider ambitions around improving educational attainment, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and volunteering.

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## 2. Report

2.1 Volunteer NL was originally established with the aim of supporting the following broad objectives:

- Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
- Building resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment innovative approaches to crime prevention.

2.2 Volunteering helps to break down social barriers and offer people an opportunity to socialise with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. For some, volunteering is a steppingstone in career development, for others simply an opportunity to give something back to their community. The council already engages a range of volunteers to support and enhance service delivery. Our work with local groups and clubs highlights the need to support the critical work of volunteers as the lifeblood of local groups. This project will support the role of volunteers in the council and with local groups and clubs, building a clear pathway for young people developing key skills and supporting the work of groups operating in our communities.

2.3 Under the direction of Brighter Futures, initial key deliverables with the project have achieved the following:

	<b>Action Taken</b>
Establish volunteer baseline, covering current activity, training received, and availability for broader opportunities.	We have worked with Services across the council to ensure a clear picture of existing volunteers and the opportunities available to them.
Map community partnerships who offer volunteering opportunities and the current offer (baseline).	We work closely with VANL as the council's Third Sector Interface (TSI) to work on overall support to the voluntary sector and in supporting and coordinating activity that enhances the involvement and capacity of the community and voluntary sector in the Plan for North Lanarkshire (TPFNL). Information on the project and Challenge Fund opportunities were recently shared with all Community Boards.
Implement and maintain a system capable of capturing volunteers, skills, training and opportunities available. This will include a front-end website (one stop shop) for volunteering in North Lanarkshire.	We launched a new volunteer management system (Rosterfy). The system will hold a range of information on volunteer opportunities, training available and provide a means to support development and recognise contribution. For example, after 90

	days/50 hours of volunteering, volunteers will be supported to gain qualifications which will help with career development eg. sports coaching badges.
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- 2.4 A total of 225 volunteers have been recruited since inception of the programme, with around 300 already working in various areas across the council. We have worked with 12 external organisations to offer Employer Supported Volunteering projects, with another six keen to participate once suitable projects are found. An unexpected aspect of the programme has been our ability to offer support to ASN young people transitioning from education to employment. To date, we have offered three work placements, with one young person now in employment and two continuing to gain work experience and additional qualifications while working. A fourth placement will be supported following the Easter break.
- 2.5 A key achievement in the first two years of the programme was the launch of the Volunteer NL Challenge Fund which operated in both 2023 and 2024. With an overall aim of supporting the development of volunteer pathways, applicants were asked to outline the expected impact on the community, with a particular reference on how the proposed project will strengthen social fabric and lead to demonstrable community benefits. Although not specifically used as an assessment criteria, the strongest applications were able to reinforce the council's commitment to the Plan for North Lanarkshire. The Challenge Fund 2024 opened in September and closed in early November 2024. As in the previous year, information was provided to all Community Boards to encourage as broad a range of applicants as possible. A social media campaign was supported by Corporate Communications.
- 2.5 A total of 39 applications were received, with funding granted to 36 – detailed in Appendix One. A scoring panel of council officers, including Community Partnership and UKSPF Project team was convened, with support from VANL, to consider applications. Two of the three applicants not supported were signposted to other funding options available to them. The third failed to respond to repeated request for further details and could not be supported.
- 2.6 In line with the overall ambitions of Brighter Futures, progress was made within the overall themes of supporting learning and capacity building:
- During Volunteer Week 2024, we worked with Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire to provide information and support to voluntary organisations on the Volunteer Friendly award. The Volunteer Friendly Award is a Scottish quality standard for volunteer programmes to support, recognise and reward groups who are good at involving volunteers. We were able to support 3 local groups to achieve this award.
  - To further support our commitment to quality, the Volunteer NL programme began working towards the Invest in Volunteering Award. Invest in Volunteering the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. We hope to have the outcome of this comprehensive assessment in March 2025.
  - Twenty volunteers and council mentors were enrolled in the Get Ahead in Volunteering award delivered via the Open University.
  - We worked with colleagues in Community Learning and Development to support 15 volunteers to enrol in the adult learning programme.

- To further support the delivery of these valuable qualifications, we are currently working with the SQA to establish Volunteer NL as an accredited qualification centre to deliver the Volunteering Skills awards to our volunteers.
  - We continue to work with colleagues in Active & Creative Communities to support achievement of coaching qualifications which allow participants to access casual work opportunities in both Sports Development and Active Schools.
- 2.7 We continue to work with employers who are keen to access Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) projects for their staff. This includes working closely with Hochtief to design and develop their plans for their *Connecting Communities* programme in support of their commitment to delivering on community benefit and social value.
- 2.8 Our challenge remains in finding sufficient projects across the community or within the council for volunteers or volunteer groups to undertake. We have recently gone back to Community Boards to make them aware of the potential of Volunteer NL and continue to work closely with VANL and Volunteer Scotland to maximise community benefit. Funding for 2025/26 has now been agreed and we will work with colleagues to further build on programme success.

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### 3. Measures of success

- 3.1 A sustainable and responsive approach to supporting volunteering and voluntary organisations in North Lanarkshire, which supports the strengthening of our social fabric, fosters a sense of local pride and belonging, and access to support for community-led projects.

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### 4. Supporting documentation

- 4.1 Appendix 1 Challenge Fund Application 2024/25



**Lyall Rennie**  
**Chief Officer (Community Operations)**

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## 5. Impacts

<b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? The project is subject to strict monitoring under UKSPF guidelines and with the support of Financial Solutions.
<b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk">dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.6 Technology / Digital impact</b> 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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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?

**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

**Challenge Fund Application 2024/25**

Appendix 1

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>	<b>Purpose of Funding</b>
Airdrie Citizens Advice Bureau	£2000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers
Airdrie Community School Uniform Bank	£2000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Auchinloch Community Council	£1754.40	Training for Volunteers
CABIA	£2030	Volunteer Uniforms/Travel Expenses
Cumbernauld Action on Care of the Elderly	£1300	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers
Caldercruix Community Council	£800	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Cliftonville & Coatdyke Community Group	£1305	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Coatbridge Citizens Advice Bureau	£1038.52	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers
Community Action Newarthill	£800	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Cumbernauld & Carbrain Community Hub	£1505.50	Training for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms
Diamonds in the Community	£1000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Friends of Gartcosh	£1095	Outdoor Clothing for Volunteers
Getting Better Together	£1750	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers
Glenboig Development Trust	£700	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers
Homestart	£987	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers
HOPE for Autism	£1950	Events/Uniforms/Recruitment of Volunteers

Jackson Youth Group	£1000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Kildrum Regeneration Trust	£341.60	Training for Volunteers
Kirkshaws NBHC	£1225	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Lanarkshire Rape Crisis Centre	£1643.08	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Made4UinML2	£800	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Moira Anderson Foundation	£2000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Motherwell FC Community Trust	£2300	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
NCT Centre	£3000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
NLEMA	£2114	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers.
North Lanarkshire Muslim Women & Family Alliance	£850	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers.
Northern Corridor Community Volunteers	£2000	Events; Training for Volunteers; Travel Expenses for Volunteers
Pet Pantry	£1217	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Saint Lucy's Youth Zone	£255	Training for Volunteers; Uniforms
Shotts Bon Accord Football Academy	£1000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Events; Volunteer Uniforms.
St Andrew's Hospice	£2060	Volunteer Uniforms
St Ignatius PTFA	£140.40	Events; Training for Volunteers; Travel Expenses for Volunteers



The Haven	£678.85	Promotion/Training of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers; Volunteer Uniforms.
Tony's Safe Place	£1500	Training of Volunteers; Uniforms; Travel Expenses for Volunteers
Victim Support Scotland	£1000	Promotion/Training/Recruitment of Volunteers; Travel expenses for Volunteers.
Volunteering Matters	£1500	Travel Expenses for Volunteers
Well Foundation	£3075	Training for Volunteers; Uniforms; Travel Expenses for Volunteers
<b>Total Awards</b>	<b>£51,715.35</b>	

**Applications Not Supported – Redirected to Other Opportunities as Appropriate**

Braehead Tenants and Residents Association – did not meet funding criteria.

Chapelhall Community Development Group – did not meet funding criteria.

Danceworks – queries over submission could not be resolved.