

Scoping Document for Scrutiny Committee

Name of Review/Project:

Environmental Volunteering (linked to South Derbyshire Environmental Forum and South Derbyshire Partnership Sustainable Development group)

Terms of reference:

To strengthen links between business and the local community, with the council acting as the initial interface / facilitator

To enable practical environmental improvements in towns and villages by identifying ways of linking business volunteers with local voluntary environmental groups

To identify the potential for businesses to provide environmental volunteers and what the business needs would be for the project to be a success

To work with voluntary community groups to highlight their desired environmental improvements (eg 'stiles to gates'; create wildflower meadow) and make these into projects that are suitable for corporate volunteer teams

To identify barriers to this process and potential solutions and trial the process

To identify training needs within the voluntary environmental village groups to enable them to lead on attracting volunteer corporate teams to their projects in future

To review business opportunities for this project to form part of an apprenticeship scheme or other work opportunity by accessing external funding

Please provide details of relevant Corporate Plan Themes and Priorities:

Sustainable growth and opportunity
Lifestyle choices
Value for Money

Key Issues and Aim(s) of the Review

Issues

Managing expectations of the voluntary groups
Identifying the barriers e.g. risk assessment, paperwork and training needs

within the voluntary groups and providing solutions in a timely manner
Attracting businesses to the scheme and managing their expectations

Aims

To improve biodiversity and the visual attractiveness of South Derbyshire
To enable more environmental volunteering to take place in South Derbyshire
To provide support to voluntary community environmental groups
To support businesses in their Community Investment and 'Business in the Community' (BiTC) work
To plan long term outputs to be SDDC cost-neutral (include inputs from partners and external funders)
To provide a project template which can be shared with neighbouring authorities and partner organisations

Why should the review take place now?

Voluntary groups have identified this as a priority through consultation as part of the South Derbyshire Environmental Forum group.
In the last 4 months, 4 local businesses who are major employers have approached the Environmental Education Project team with offers of environmental and community volunteering, including some multiple opportunities
This would be a positive example of using resources offered by the South Derbyshire Partnership to benefit a range of organisations by putting them in touch with one another and providing some basic training and support.
Derbyshire County Council are also reviewing their work with volunteer groups with reference to improving public space owned by the County and Public Rights of Way. It is a good opportunity for joint working and sharing resources.

Potential outcome/s

- New environmental projects would be made possible across the District
- Potentially the voluntary groups could attract new members to help them with long term sustainability of their group and their projects
- Pool of resources and expertise which can be shared with other councils and community groups; could be an example of good practice / innovation
- Opportunity for volunteering on SDDC-owned land and potential to contribute to SDDC environmental projects
- Cross-over links with Heritage Lottery Projects in the Heart of the Forest and Eureka Park
- May attract external funding
- May be opportunity for apprenticeship or other workplace opportunities

What will not be included: N/A

Risks:

Cost of materials needs to be factored in so it is clear who is responsible
Need to be clear about insurance responsibilities
Risk that groups might need more sustained support than can be provided
Economic changes could reverse the business sector support

Members undertaking the Review (if a sub-group is to be used):

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Possible co-options:

None requested

Which policy committee(s) does it relate to?

Housing and Community Services

Key stakeholders/ consultees:

South Derbyshire Environmental Forum
South Derbyshire Partnership (Sustainable Development Group)
Individual business: Bison, Toyota, Rolls-Royce and potentially Nestle (initial enquiry)
South Derbyshire CVS (volunteering and training)
South Derbyshire Voluntary sector Forum
Derbyshire Biodiversity Project Officer (hosted by Derbyshire County Council)
Derbyshire County Council (Countryside Service) Volunteers Project Officer
South Derbyshire District Council – Ian Hey
Parish Councils

Potential contributors and research required:

Discuss possibilities with grounds maintenance team, Housing services and within the Community and Planning teams.
Similar Programmes in other areas
Other landowners (particularly with public access sites eg Forestry Commission)

Potential visits: to Rosliston Forestry Centre Environmental Education Project team - which has benefitted from long term volunteering by teams from Rolls-Royce plc and is about to begin a regular volunteer programme with Bison.

Are there any Budgetary Implications?

None at this point of time

Officer support required:

Kate Allies / Alan Bates
Malcolm Roseburgh
Zoe Sewter

Period for Review:

Start date: June 18th 2013

Approximate meeting dates: June 18th, July 18th, 24th Sept 2013, 5th Nov 2013, 4th March 2014 (to co-incide with Climate week action)

Trail activities from March 2014

Proposed completion date: Oct/Nov 2014 –

Review the process developed June 2013- March 2014 and the pilot activities and training provided

Review volunteering activities that have taken place from March to Sept 2014 with the volunteer community groups and business working together.

Report date(s) to committees:

Publicity (e.g. of recommendations)

Date Scoping Document Completed: 11th June 2013

Prioritising Topics For Scrutiny

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

The Peer Review included a recommendation to assess potential scrutiny review areas against the corporate priorities. Further information on these priorities is available in the Corporate Plan, which can be accessed via the following link:

http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/corporate_plan/corporate_plan0914

The Corporate Plan themes and priorities are:

- Sustainable Growth and Opportunity - Theme 1
- Safe and Secure - Theme 2
- Lifestyle Choices - Theme 3
- Value for Money - Theme 4

Other issues to be considered when selecting reviews:

1. General questions at the outset:

- Does the review meet any of the Council's priorities?
- does this issue have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the population?
- is the issue strategic and significant?
- is there a clear objective for scrutinising this topic?
- is there evidence to support the need for scrutiny?
- what do we hope to achieve?
- what are the likely benefits to the council and its customers?
- are you likely to achieve a desired outcome?
- what are the potential risks?
- are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?
- is the Scrutiny activity timely?

2. Public interest

- issue identified by Members through surgeries and other contact with constituents
- user dissatisfaction with service (e.g. complaints)
- market surveys/citizens panels
- issue covered in local media

3. Internal council priority

- council corporate priority area
- high level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
- pattern of budgetary overspends
- poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking)

4. External Factors

- central government priority area
- new government guidance or legislation
- issues raised by External Audit Management Letters/External audit reports
- key reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue

5. Criteria to reject items

- review area does not meet any of the Council's priorities
- being examined elsewhere - e.g. by a policy committee, working group, officer group, other body
- issue dealt with less than 2 years ago
- new legislation or guidance expected within the next year
- no scope for scrutiny to add value/ make a difference, or
- the objective cannot be achieved in the specified timescale.