

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	18 April 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Employment opportunities for vulnerable young people; Progress Report
<b>Reference:</b>	2867
<b>Report From:</b>	Gavin Wright, Director of Human Resources

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### 1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update Cabinet on progress made following the Cabinet decision taken on 24 January 2011 to give further employment related support to young people, especially those from the most vulnerable groups for whom the County Council has corporate parent responsibilities. At that meeting approval was given to;

- a) *'the approach of consolidating existing schemes with a view to exploring further opportunities when the changes in departmental structures have been implemented and new ways of working embedded'*, and it was noted;
- b) *'that action will be taken to support employment opportunities for school leavers, with a focus on care leavers both through existing schemes such as Apprentices and also through developing a new programme for 40 young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) formerly in the care of the County Council. A report on the criteria for the new scheme will be presented at a future Cabinet'*.

The Leader made available up to £600k for the new scheme with the intention that it be used primarily for wages/employment costs for the young people with a proportion of it to be used to meet the costs of pastoral support that may be required for this vulnerable group.

1.2 The main thrust of our solution as an employer to the current national employment situation for young people is the further development of a robust, consistent and ongoing apprenticeship strategy; continuing to ring fence a percentage of those roles for young people in vulnerable groups and working to embed apprenticeships as a way of life in the County Council. In addition to that a new initiative designed principally for young care leavers who are likely to need far greater levels of intervention to join the job market

successfully will be piloted. This new scheme is called ***Internships Plus*** and the intention is that successful completion of this programme will either be an alternative to entry onto an apprenticeship or will prepare the intern for a full apprenticeship or indeed another entry level role with the County Council.

## **2. Contextual information**

- 2.1 Analysis of numbers of people aged 16 - 24 who are Care leavers from 2010/2011 cohorts gives a potential target group of circa 40 young people who may wish to take up some form of employment related opportunity with the Council. In practice the number is likely to be much smaller. This is due to two main factors: Firstly, NEET numbers are not definitive. People slip in and out of the NEET category as their aspirations and circumstances can change rapidly. Secondly, experts advise that while some will seize an opportunity for work and flourish, significant numbers of NEETs are likely to be unwilling or simply unable to sustain a commitment to regular work due to personal history/circumstances. It is estimated that fewer than half of the potential 40 young people in this category may in fact be available to, or wish to, take up either an apprenticeship or an *Internships Plus* placement
- 2.2 The need for workplace preparation and ongoing pastoral support amongst this group is extremely important. Many of the young people will need considerable help to become employable. Aspirations and capabilities vary widely between individuals and a 'mixed economy' of opportunities will be more successful than a one size fits all approach. This mixed economy will be provided by HCC apprenticeships and *Internships Plus* as well as existing provision from the County Council and other agencies
- 2.3 Whatever the County Council offers as an employer will be congruent with the Hampshire wide support already in place from the County Council and partner agencies. It will increase the options available to the young people and present them with pathways into work at gentle and sustainable gradients.

## **3. Finance**

- 3.1 Of the potential £600k allocated to the pilot of this scheme – to be used principally to fund employment costs and pastoral care - circa £400k would be required for a possible 27 interns.

## **4. Outline of the Scheme; *Internships Plus* 2011/12**

- 4.1 This scheme is being created in partnership with the University of Winchester
- 4.1.1 It is a 12 month paid internship during which the intern is an employee of Hampshire County Council working in a supernumerary role on a training contract with pastoral support.
- 4.2. Employment costs and some work related expenses are funded centrally
- 4.3. All interns will work towards a level 2 qualification in customer care.

- 4.4. The internship includes a 4 day preparatory programme taught by the Lifelong Learning team at Winchester University prior to the work placement. This programme is funded by the University through AimHigher monies. The University funding is dependent on the preparatory course being delivered before the start of August. A July start date helps reduce the risk of end of term 'drift' and difficulties recruiting young people to the scheme.
- 4.5. The target group is 16 – 18 year old care leavers. There is a maximum number of 16 places on the full programme and potential for a further 11 to take up the work placement only, as the latter will also be open to young people who have completed the Property, Business and Regulatory Services (PBRs) work experience for Care leavers scheme (currently underway). They would not therefore require the preparatory course but would need extra pastoral support running alongside their work placement.
- 4.6. Expert advice is that the number of completions for the first running of a programme such as this may be low, despite actions to mitigate.
- 4.7. Recruitment to the scheme will be handled through Children's Services colleagues, the University of Winchester and with close links to the National Apprenticeship Scheme to facilitate movement between the two types of offering.
- 4.8. The preparatory course will begin week commencing 18 July 2011 and will consist of 4 consecutive days 10.30 – 3pm. It will include;
  - a) skills analysis and career planning.
  - b) setting expectations about appropriate workplace behaviours
  - c) an introduction to the work of the County Council.
  - d) commitment to a 'contract' of learning and behaviour for the duration of the placement.
  - e) A University certificate for participating on the course.
- 4.9. There will be a phased approach to full time hours. The aim is to begin placements within a month of the preparatory course finishing. In practice, choice of placement for the intern may depend on what is available within easy travelling distance of their homes.
- 4.10. Work is underway to set up the infrastructure to support *Internships Plus*. There is considerable work to do to put the recruitment process in place, identify the placements, set up the pastoral arrangements and create the appropriate links between this scheme and apprenticeships. All of this will need to be in place before 18 July 2011.

## **5. Performance**

- 5.1 Now that the outline of the scheme has been designed, the work falls into 5 broad categories and, although deadlines are extremely tight, good progress is being made in all. This is carried out by a small action group of Children's Services and HR staff. This group works closely with Terri Sandison, Director of Lifelong Learning at the University of Winchester on the activity below;

<b>Activity Overview</b>	<b>Univ</b>	<b>CSD</b>	<b>HR</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
<b>Underpinning HR &amp; finance structure</b> e.g.; contracts, statement of particulars; consistency with other schemes & transition to apprenticeships; equalities; pay; allocation of funding to depts. etc			X	By end May
<b>Design and delivery of the preparatory course;</b> the university content and the introduction to careers in the council	X		X	By end June. Delivery July 18th
<b>Recruitment to <i>Internships Plus</i>;</b> liaising with key workers/schools to identify potential interns; building interest in the scheme, encouraging visits to HCC; keeping young people engaged; linking PBRs WX scheme to this		X		By end June
<b>Setting up appropriate pastoral care;</b> ensuring all aspects of the scheme are accessible; systems in place for good links between care workers and managers of interns.		X		By end June
<b>Developing work placements with depts.;</b> create a max of 50 potential placements taking account of appropriate work & likely geographical location of interns to match an estimated group of 27 (16 on full Internships Plus and 11 PBRsIT WX moving onto this). Select training provider(s) for Customer Care level 2.			X	By July 18th
<b>Programme management;</b> includes plan for the scheme throughout 11/12 with updates to sponsors (Cabinet/CMT/Univ); inductions, celebrations of achievement and mid/end point evaluation of outcomes	X	X	X	End date estimated as Sept/Oct 2012

## 6. Other key issues

6.1. Matching the needs, aspirations and capabilities of the potential interns with an appropriate and stable placement in the right location will be particularly challenging in a time of unprecedented organisational change

- 6.2 Successfully setting up and running this type of programme, with external partners and a vulnerable and often hard to reach target group, is labour intensive and requires specific expertise – sometimes for quite low returns in terms of numbers, as drop out rates are likely to be high. Evaluation of the successful outcome of the programme would need to give higher priority to the impact on individuals rather than weight of numbers.
- 6.2. It will be vital to evaluate all aspects of the pilot scheme and to use the learning from that to inform future developments in the Council's offering of employment opportunities to vulnerable young people.

## **7. Recommendation(s)**

- 7.1. That Cabinet endorse the progress made on the design and implementation of the new scheme *Internships Plus*

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>OR</b>	
<b>This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:</b>	

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- 1.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been published and is available on the County Council website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/as-equality-ia-archive.htm>.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 2.1. The County Council has a legal obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the impact of all decisions it makes on the prevention of crime. No impact has been identified.

### **3. Climate Change:**

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? – N/A
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? – N/A