

Cabinet - 11 October 2012

Report of the Chief Executive

Electoral Division affected:

All

Mentoring in Schools Programme

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Executive Summary

Lancashire County Council has made a £3 million commitment over 5 years to establish a mentoring programme in Schools. This will:

- provide mentoring opportunities to identified young people in secondary education Yrs 9, 10 and 11 who are struggling in school;
- recruit, train and support members from the ex-service community in Lancashire to mentor young people and gain the skills needed to progress after the programme to find work outside of the forces; and
- provide a valuable staffing resource for Lancashire schools.

The Mentoring in Schools Steering Group, chaired by County Councillor Mark Perks, Cabinet Member for Young People, convened in order to determine how best the County Council could support young people by accessing mentoring by ex service personnel. The aim being early intervention and support measures which would raise attainment, reduce exclusions and increase attendance in year groups 9, 10 and 11. After careful consideration of a range of factors presented by the Directorate for Children and Young People, the Steering Group recommended that year one of the programme should operate as a pilot and that the 2 districts of Pendle and Hyndburn would be offered access to this programme within the initial pilot period. Pendle is involved with the National Exclusion pilot. It is considered that the inclusion of a pilot year will significantly enhance the programme delivery over the 5 years due to lessons learned being incorporated going forward.

The data used to inform the steering groups decision to select the 2 pilot districts was based on 3 data sets, which are:

- Key Stage 2-4 Performance data attainment
- Exclusions data comparisons by district
- Attendance data

This proposal will have a positive impact on the County Council's role as an employer by making a significant and direct contribution to supporting ex service personnel retrain and obtain employment.

This proposal will also contribute to supporting the young people of Lancashire via the Youth Employment strategy. The purpose of the Youth Employment strategy is to set out the case for the County Council's investment and arrangement of services and resources to achieve a reduction in the number of young people not in education and training (NEET) in Lancashire.

The Youth Employment strategy has two key aims;

- Reducing the number of young people who are and who become NEET;
- Embedding a focus on sustainability and progression within service delivery to lead ultimately onto employment.

The Mentoring in Schools programme will focus on the themes of prevention, intervention and progression. This mentoring programme will contribute towards the delivery of the Youth Employment strategy. A detailed outline of the proposal is set out in this report.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and Standing Order 26 has been complied with.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended:

- (i) To approve the proposals for investing a total of £3m between 2012/17 to fund a five year programme to recruit ex service personnel to deliver mentoring opportunities in schools;
- (ii) To agree to waive the requirements of paragraph 6.2 of the County Council's Procurement Rules to allow the award of a contract to Skill Force pending the carrying out of a procurement exercise for years 2 – 5 of the programme.

Background and Advice

1. The Mentoring in Schools Steering Group, chaired by County Councillor Perks, Cabinet Member for Young People, after considering a range of options has determined that One Connect Limited be requested to submit a delivery proposal. This is due to the previous record of the Communities and Citizens Talent Management Service, now within One Connect Limited, in the delivery and development of the WorkStart 4 Armed Forces programme.
2. As this will be a five year plan with year one of the proposed programme model being operated as a pilot, the benefits of the lessons learned will be incorporated into Years 2-5. During the pilot measures such as recruitment and retention of ex service personnel alongside progress of young people will be assessed and evaluated. After consideration of the most effective way

forward it has been agreed by the Steering Group that a partnership approach between One Connect Limited and an identified specialist training provider is the most appropriate model to be adopted. The pilot will inform a tender process for the provision of specialist provider services to a 4 year mentoring programme (years 2-5) covering the whole of Lancashire.

3. After careful consideration it has been determined by the Steering Group, that for the pilot period, Skill Force, a specialist provider of training ex service personnel to work within schools should be commissioned to deliver the assessment and training of the ex service personnel element of the programme.
4. Skill Force is a recognised long standing education charity working with young people in Great Britain who are in danger of leaving school without the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life. Its programmes aim to prevent exclusions by reducing both truancy and the numbers of young people falling into NEET at 16. Skill Force via independent evaluation over the last 7 years can demonstrate continued successful programme delivery.
5. The County Council through its Directorate for Children and Young People currently has awarded Skill Force a contract to the value of £22,000 for 1 year (November 2011- November 2012). A planned renewal of this contract is due to be discussed via the Chorley Children and Young People's Trust Board in the autumn of 2012. This contract aims to focus on providing group and 1:1 support in four of the six secondary schools in the Chorley district for Yr7 and Yr8. The outcomes aim to achieve improving self esteem, motivation, confidence, attendance and achievement of pupils in schools within Yr7 and Yr8. This is a focused approach to Early Support and Intervention, with the Key Worker from Skill Force being co-located within the Pastoral Care Team of each school and referrals to the initiative being coordinated by the Pastoral Care Manager. It is considered appropriate to advise that the planned renewal of this existing contract for Yr7 and Yr8 is for only one further year to allow consideration of future joint procurement. It is also appropriate to advise that any other potential contracts with Skill Force during this pilot period are referenced to the programme to ensure consistent procurement.
6. Whilst the Early Support and Intervention Strategy Mentoring initiative concentrates on mentoring Yr7 and Yr8, this mentoring programme will deliver the three areas outlined in the Executive Summary. It will begin as a pilot to then be rolled out over the next 5 years to all Lancashire districts. It is expected that the data and evaluations of the Early Support and Intervention Strategy will be shared with One Connect Limited, so that experiences and outcomes can be compared, developed and progressed for the merit of the future of this mentoring programme.
7. The County Council has made a commitment to work more closely with organisations that support ex service personnel and their families to receive support. County Councillor Mike France, in his role as Champion for Armed Forces Veterans has committed to promote these opportunities to the ex service personnel organisations within Lancashire.

Programme Delivery

Overall management of the Mentoring in Schools programme would be undertaken by One Connect Limited. Delivery of the programme would be in partnership with the specialist provider, for the purposes of the pilot (Year 1) that would be Skill Force.

Benefits to Ex Service Personnel

This proposal will provide a minimum of 50 ex service personnel within Lancashire to gain access to paid employment and good quality training to be a mentor in schools. In addition via the Workstart4Armed Forces model, mentors will also be talent managed to subsequent employment opportunities within the County Council and its partners.

Recruitment

One Connect Limited will recruit a minimum of 50 ex-service personnel over 5 years via the WorkStart 4 Armed Forces networks and Ex Service Personnel organisations. Rigorous selection, assessments and employment checks will be carried out. It is expected that the specialist provider would be involved in the recruitment and assessment process.

Following successful recruitment the ex service personnel would be employed by Lancashire County Council and have a placement match at Head teacher level and then be placed in school to commence employment via a term time temporary training contract. The placement and training will work in parallel for the mentor to gain experience to be able to achieve the accredited qualifications. The term time salary for the mentor will reflect a difference in salary scale point during training and achievement of qualifications. The trainee mentors will be employed by Lancashire County Council managed by One Connect Limited but placed with the identified schools. After considering the equal pay review grading structures for Mentors it has been determined that the appropriate grade should be Grade 5.

Placement Roles and Responsibilities

One Connect Limited will have overall responsibility for the delivery of the programme. The school in which the mentor is placed will assume the day to day management role. One Connect Limited and the specialist provider will have a shared role for the wider management of the mentor to address any employment, performance or procedural concerns.

Training

The specialist provider will be commissioned as a minimum to train the mentors in the following areas:

- Institute of Leadership and Management - Mentoring for young learners level 2;
- City and Guilds - Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector;
- Adult Literacy and Numeracy - level 2;

- Behaviour management;
- Child protection/safeguarding;
- First Aid and Health and Safety - level 2;
- Equality and Diversity.

Due to the specific requirements of ex service personnel, alongside the fundamental need to ensure the highest level of appropriate mentoring is provided within Lancashire schools, it is considered appropriate to commission the training from a specialist provider of ex service personnel.

Exit Strategies (Mentors)

Towards the end of the placement, One Connect Limited will deliver on an individual basis:

- Access to career progression routes and support in application form writing and interview techniques to the mentor;
- Support to the school in recruiting the Mentor via the programme and/or advising of the County Council's other work force planning solutions.

Benefits to Young People

The Mentoring Programme will provide an opportunity of early intervention for young people in secondary education. If a young person is in receipt of mentoring whilst in secondary education and then transfers to a short stay or special school, the mentor will continue to individually mentor that young person and maintain continuity. In addition the Steering Group determined that during the pilot period the provision of such mentors in short stay and special schools would be specifically considered as part of the evaluation process.

Within the first pilot year, it is estimated that a minimum of 300 young people will gain access to customised mentoring within the school environment. The target subject to consideration of the lessons learned in the pilot year is projected to be in the region of 1,500 young people and a minimum of 50 ex service personnel. The focus of the mentor will be to support young people to reach their potential in school by building confidence, self esteem and encouraging progression and aspirations to influence good attendance, behaviour and attainment.

Enrolment of Young People to the Mentoring Programme

The School will identify and enrol young people to have the opportunity to be supported by the Mentor. The referral to the mentor will be facilitated by their respected school pastoral care leads.

Training/Wellbeing

Any identified learning and development needs of the young person will be fed back by the Mentor to the pastoral care leads who should take the appropriate action.

Exit Strategies (Young People Receiving Mentoring)

The professional relationship between Mentors and Pastoral Care Managers will facilitate the enrolment and dialogue needed to identify the needs of the young person and this will continue through to the end of the Mentors placement and/or programme where a safe handover from mentor to pastoral care manager takes place.

All young people will be made aware of the options of accessing Future Horizons and Apprenticeships with customised one to one interventions for those young people identified.

Finance

The County Council's Revenue Budget 2012/13 to 2013/14 included investment resources of £3m to support a 5 year Armed Forces Veterans mentoring programme. The tables that follow show the delivery costs of the year 1 pilot and the wider programme to be rolled out in years 2-5.

Pilot Year (Year 1)	(£m)
OCL Management Cost	0.050
Commissioned Services of Specialist Provider x 15* mentors per year (to manage the potential risk of ex-service personnel leaving the programme prior to completion)	0.080 (max)
Programme Delivery (Salaries/recruitment/travel etc of mentors)	0.325
Total	0.455

*Number of mentors to be recruited restricted to ensure careful analysis of lessons learned and best use of resources.

Years 2-5	£m
OCL Management Cost	0.200
Commissioned procurement	2.345
Programme delivery	Allocation to be determined post pilot / procurement exercise*
Total	2.545

*During the pilot year any savings via the planned procurement process to be redirected into additional appointment of ex service personnel which will then have an impact on the target number of young people.

Summary of Total Programme Costs

Years 1-5	£m
OCL Management Cost	0.250
Commissioned Procurement	
Programme Delivery	2.750
Total	3.000

Evaluation

The evaluation and analysis of the programme will be managed by One Connect Limited with input from the specialist provider, mentor, schools, the Early Support and Intervention Strategy comparisons as the analysis will report on the progress of pupils and mentors.

The success of the Programme will be defined and measured in a number of ways including:

Mentors

- Number of mentors recruited/retained
- Number that complete training package
- Number of young people the Mentor supports
- Mentor costs (salaries/training/expenses)
- Management of Mentors

Young People

- Number of young people enrolled and supported
- Progress of young people i.e. their attainment
- Improved attendance
- Reduction in exclusions/suspension
- Number of young people made aware of progression onto Apprentices and Future Horizons

Timeline

Recruitment (pilot group)	October/November 2012
Commence Future Procurement Exercise for 2013	October/November 2012
School Placement Match (pilot group)	December 2012
Employment Contract starts/Induction (pilot group)	07 January 2013

Training (pilot group)	07 January – 10 June 2013
Recruitment (group 2)	July/September 2013
Summer Work Experience Opportunities (pilot group)	24 July – 05 September 2013
Contract End Date (pilot group)	20 December 2013

Consultation and Risk Management

This item has considered the following implications, as indicated.

Procurement

The Lancashire Procurement Centre of Excellence has been consulted and supports the proposed procurement strategy. Given the requirement for the County Council to fully understand the complexities of operating the scheme with a partner, it is considered necessary to permit the appointment of a partner for the pilot year by requesting a waiver of Procurement Rule 6.2 as part of this proposal. The proposed partner is a specialist provider in its field without equal being identified nationally, therefore it is considered that the risk of challenge to this decision is slim, especially since a formal procurement exercise for years 2-5 will be initiated in April 2013 enabling the wider supply market (who may by then have developed into this field) the opportunity to apply.

Normally the Leader of the County Council would be required to approve the waiver of Procurement Rule 6.2 with details of the decision being reported to the Cabinet. However, it is suggested that on this occasion and for administrative efficiency the Cabinet should be asked to approve the waiver of Procurement Rule 6 as part of its consideration of this report.

Human Resources

Communities and Citizens Talent Management service will ensure all appropriate employment policies are followed.

Legal

As set out in the report.

Financial

As set out in the report.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
None		