



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

**OSMB
Cabinet**

**16th April 2009
20th April 2009**

Developing Work Experience and Employment Opportunities for Children and Young People in Leicester City Council

Report of the Interim Service Director, Social Care and Safeguarding

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To summarise the work and proposals of the task and finish group established to develop work experience and employment opportunities for children and young people, including looked after children, across Leicester City Council.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Whilst there are examples of positive initiatives across the council in relation to work experience and apprenticeships for young people, including looked after children, overall there is an absence of a strategic, coordinated approach to developing any form of work experience or apprenticeship opportunities for young people. This situation is unacceptable given the city council is the biggest employer in the city and compares poorly to other authorities across the country.
- 2.2 The aims, objectives and aspirations of this work directly links to *One Leicester*, the ambitious strategy that forms the foundation for the changes Leicester City Council want to see in Leicester over the next 25 years. A key aspect of this strategy is a priority to invest in our children and by making this the top priority the city council is demonstrating its commitment to supporting, developing, and offering a range of experiences to enhance the learning of children and young people. This is not only achieved by placing education at the heart of the city, but also by ensuring that young people are given every opportunity to develop interest, skills and talent in the world of work.
- 2.3 A review of existing provision across the council identifies a number of gaps including the lack of any strategic coordination in relation to work experience placements, inconsistent lead officers across the council taking a lead for work experience or in

coordinating apprenticeships, lack of support and training for managers providing such placements and no identified role for Human Resources.

- 2.4 A proposed core offer for all young people is outlined in Appendix I, which summarises what the council should be in a position to deliver for young people, including looked after children and those leaving care. This includes six key elements: work shadowing; work experience for pre 16 students; Young Apprenticeships; Flying Fish placements for looked after children; Corporate Apprenticeships and ring fencing certain posts for looked after young people and those leaving care.

3. Recommendations (or OPTIONS)

- 3.1 For Cabinet to note the work of the Task and Finish group completed to date.
- 3.2 For Cabinet to agree to the council developing the core offer as outlined in section 4.4 of the report and Appendix I in order to strategically plan and coordinate opportunities for young people across the council.
- 3.3 For Cabinet to note the continued requirement for meetings with key officers in order to implement, monitor and review the Core Offer.
- 3.4 For Cabinet to agree to the city council adopting a scheme for ring fencing identified vacancies for looked after young people as part of the council's commitment to corporate parenting and note the newly developed team manager post in Social Care & Safeguarding with the lead on implementation.
- 3.5 For Cabinet to note that this informs part of the wider work on developing a council wide workforce strategy and preventing NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) for young people across the city.
- 3.6 For Cabinet to receive a further report in 12 months time outlining progress.

4. Report

4.1 Background to developing the task and finish group

- 4.1.1 Whilst there are examples of positive initiatives across the council in relation to work experience and apprenticeships for young people, including looked after children, overall there is an absence of a strategic, coordinated approach to developing any form of work experience or apprenticeship opportunities for young people. This situation is unacceptable given the city council is the biggest employer in the city and compares poorly to other authorities across the country.
- 4.1.2 The key reason for developing this task and finish group was to pull key senior officers from across the council together in order to develop and agree a 'core offer' for young people, including one which recognises the council's corporate parenting responsibilities for children in care and those leaving care. The work forms part of the wider council

workforce development strategy. The task group has been running since July 2008 and has been well attended. It also has the full support of the Corporate Parenting Forum chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services.

- 4.1.3 The aims, objectives and aspirations of this work directly links to *One Leicester*, the ambitious strategy that forms the foundation for the changes Leicester City Council want to see in Leicester over the next 25 years. A key aspect of this strategy is a priority to invest in our children and by making this the top priority the city council is demonstrating its commitment to supporting, developing, and offering a range of experiences to enhance the learning of children and young people. This is not only achieved by placing education at the heart of the city, but also by ensuring that young people are given every opportunity to develop interest, skills and talent in the world of work.
- 4.1.4 Moreover, the recommendations in this report will contribute to the development of the Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) in relation to reducing NEET (Not in Education, Training or Employment). MAAs are designed to be cross boundary Local Area Agreements, bringing together key players in the region to tackle issues that can only be addressed by partnership working: NEET is a good example of this.
- 4.1.5 Indeed, this links directly to PSA 16 in relation to increasing the proportion of at risk individuals, including care leavers, in employment, education and training. It is also of significance that a recent study commissioned by Human Resources by DeMontfort University highlighted the real dearth of young people applying for posts in the city council. For example, in 2007/08 only 69 applications were from under 18s, compared to nearly 2000 from those aged 25-29 (out of a total of 10,355 applications from across the whole council). This strongly suggests that young people do not perceive the local authority as an attractive employer and given the aging workforce in the organisation, this images needs to change.

4.2 Review of existing provision across Leicester City Council

4.2.1 Work Experience for students in years 10 and 11 (coordinated by WEXA) and the Young Apprenticeship Scheme

- a. WEXA places all city school years 10 and 11 students in work experience placements (approximately 4,000 per academic year). The city schools agreed to a staggered approach to placements in order to maximise opportunities for young people - ensuring fair access - with placements generally lasting for two weeks. During 07/08 Leicester City Council offered approximately 70 places; the majority were in Regeneration and Culture. WEXA is seeking to increase its provision of both block and extended placement opportunities across a broad range of vocational areas in order to meet the demand. In particular, the demands of those city school young people whose parents are only prepared to allow them to travel into the City Centre.
- b. The number of placements offered by the council has been reducing over the past five years and it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure placements in the council. Placements tend to be offered by the same service areas which, whilst

positive, overall placements are not well coordinated in the council and tend to be ad hoc and based on grace and favour. There is no council policy on providing such placements and Children and Young People's Services provide few opportunities.

- c. In addition, WEXA works with the Leicestershire Education Business Company on the Young Apprenticeship Scheme for young people under 16, placing young people in placements lasting 50 days over a two year period. There are similar difficulties in securing placements across the city council for young people.
- d. The advent of city wide Diplomas in 2009/10 in a range of different subjects will also require a level of work experience and whilst the details are not yet known, will present further challenges for the city council.

Flying Fish Project

- a. This is a scheme run by Leicestershire Cares offering mentored work experience placements for looked after young people and those leaving care. The placements last for 2 – 4 weeks with referrals accepted from the 16+ Service and Connexions. Each workplace identifies an onsite mentor who provides support/guidance to the young person and is the link with the project worker from Leicestershire Cares.
- b. The majority of placements to date have been with the private sector, with only a handful of placements – no more than 5-6 – provided across the council. It has proved difficult to secure placements across the council and this has essentially been dependent upon the good will of managers.

4.2.3 Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme

- a. Good apprenticeships have the potential to transform lives. They introduce young people to the norms and practices of a workplace and provide a structured experience with goals of performance, so young people learn about accountability.
- b. Whilst some areas within the council have been providing apprenticeships to young people and adults for some time, competition has traditionally been tough and it is not unusual for the council to receive up to 500 applications for no more than 20 places for apprenticeships run by the Housing section. There has also been no guarantee of employment at the end of the apprenticeship.
- c. In August 2008 Corporate Directors Board agreed to the council running a corporate apprenticeship scheme for young people. This scheme is based on the council offering 16 apprenticeship placements a year which translates to 4 places from each area within the Council. This would necessitate converting existing vacancies into apprenticeship schemes. The difference with this scheme is that subject to satisfactory performance the young person would be guaranteed a job at the end of the apprenticeship. There are already pockets of excellent practice taking place across the city council. For example, there are a range of apprenticeship opportunities on offer within Regeneration and Culture, which have been very positive experiences and led to jobs for some young people.

- d. Children and Young People's Services are keen to ensure that a minimum 4 places are earmarked for looked after children, with the option of up to 8 placements at any one time. There has been effective collaboration and work between CYPS, Learning and Skills Council, Connexions and the council's Learning and Development centre to ensure that looked after young people and those leaving care have access to the scheme.
- e. Currently 10 young people make up the first cohort of apprentices working across the city council. Of these 10, 7 were previously recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and two are former looked after children. This is a very positive start to a programme which is focused on developing the future workforce of the council.

4.2.4 Youth Service

- a. The Youth Service runs NVQ Level 2 and 3 programmes for young people for young people aged 16 – 25. Those undertaking the course complete a range of voluntary work placements with young people. The majority of these placements take place in youth projects and youth centres within the city.
- b. As a result of this programme young people have secured permanent employment within the city Youth Service and other organisations working with young people, whilst others have progressed to DeMontfort University to undertake the Diploma and Degree in Youth and Community Work. This programme has proved to be a very positive route into further education and paid employment for some young people, as well as giving them a recognised qualification.

4.2.5 Opportunities at the Construction Training Centre

- a. The Construction Training Centre within the city council offers a range of tailored packages for young people covering all areas of the building trade. The focus is on those young people who are not academic, have little or not formal qualifications but plenty of vocational ability.
- b. There are no entry or age requirements and the initial programmes set out to engage young people who want to access a career pathway into employment in the construction industry regardless of their lack of qualifications, which come later once they are engaged in the process. The programme does not aspire to get candidates beyond Level 1 NVQ in a construction skill and there is a real focus on getting candidates ready for employment.
- c. The programmes offered by the centre are a welcome addition to the package of opportunities for young people subject to the identification of an appropriate funding stream.

4.3 Gap Analysis

- 4.3.1 A review of the provision provided by Leicester City Council identified the following gaps:

- 4.3.2 **Lack of identified lead officers/divisional lead for work experience:** One of the consequences of the lack of any strategic approach or coordination is that there is no lead officer within HR with overall responsibility for work experience placements, or divisional leads across the council. Identification of appropriate lead officers would make the process less cumbersome and more equitable, and not just reliant on the same managers and service areas providing placements.
- 4.3.3 **Lack of strategic coordination:** The council lacks any kind of strategic approach to the identification, coordination and development of work experience opportunities for young people, relying instead on the good will of managers and in some cases luck in the provision of placements. This is borne out by the falling number of placements in the council facilitate by WEXA and the difficulties in securing Flying Fish placements for looked after children. Better links between WEXA, RALAC, 16 + Service and Flying Fish would ensure that looked after children and care leavers do not miss out.
- 4.3.4 **Lack of support/training for managers providing placements:** This may be an issue and potentially a barrier for managers providing placements. However, resources are available to fill this gap which are not being utilised. For example, LEBC and WEXA would be available to provide training and support for lead managers and Flying Fish would also provide targeted support to onsite mentors.
- 4.3.5 **Lack of management information regarding placement numbers and availability:** One of the consequences of this lack of strategic coordination is poor management information and analysis regarding placements provided across the council, which makes planning difficult. Suggested numbers of placements required across the council is listed in Appendix I based on the information that is available, but is subject to review.
- 4.3.6 **No identified role for Human Resources/Employment Service Centre:** Whilst this report will recommend that there should be a link senior officer(s) identified by Strategic Directors across the council to assume some responsibility for coordinating work experience/apprenticeship placements, there is also a role for Human Resources/Employment Service Centre in helping initially to project manage this process, but in the long term to assist in the identification and coordination of placements/apprenticeship schemes.
- 4.3.7 **No opportunities for recruitment to paid jobs for looked after children/those leaving care:**
- 4.3.7.1 There are no opportunities currently in the council for supporting looked after children and young people and those leaving care in moving into paid employment. There are a number of authorities across the country that has developed schemes, such as South Gloucestershire and The London Borough of Islington. A fieldtrip was undertaken as part of this work to the latter authority. This paper will recommend that Leicester City Council should develop its own scheme, which is in the spirit of corporate parenting for our children in care and those leaving care with the city council being viewed as the 'family firm'. This philosophy underpinned Children and Young People's Services successful bid for Beacon Status for Care Matters: Improving the Outcomes for Children in Care.

4.3.7.2 Discussions have already taken place with legal services and Human Resources regarding how to develop this for looked after children and care leavers in the city. This new requirement will be included in the revised recruitment policies and procedures currently being developed by HR, and the group being chaired by the Service Director will ensure that all necessary actions are taken to implement this arrangement. In terms of how this will be implemented in practice, a newly developed team manager post within Social Care & Safeguarding, located within the 16+ Service will have responsibility for working across the Council with HR in identifying suitable posts, supporting young people in the application and interview process and ensuring that young people are given every opportunity to succeed.

4.4 Proposed Core Offer for Young People across Leicester City Council

4.4.1 The table in Appendix I summarises the core offer it is proposed the council should be in a position to deliver for young people, including looked after children and those leaving care. Support will be tailored for all young people to ensure that the core offer is totally inclusive – e.g. in terms of offering opportunities to disabled children and those with learning difficulties.

4.4.2 This includes the following six elements:

- i) Work Shadowing
- ii) Work Experience for pre 16 students in years 10 and 11
- iii) Young Apprenticeships (pre 16)
- iv) Flying Fish placements (LAC only)
- v) Corporate Apprenticeships
- vi) Ring fenced job vacancies (LAC only)

4.4.3 This core offer will only be possible to deliver if there is agreement and ownership at the highest level, ideally with elected members and all Chief Officers. This will be necessary in order to ensure that resources in terms of key officer time are identified in order to operationalise the core offer, and that each area across the council commits to providing identified numbers of opportunities for young people.

4.4.4 Each area across the council to identify as a minimum one officer ideally in each division to take the lead for work experience/apprenticeship placements. Whilst further detailed guidance would be written to outline these roles and responsibilities, this would essentially be around taking responsibility on behalf of each Strategic Director in identifying work experience placements through liaison with WEXA, Flying Fish etc., and annual apprenticeship placements. Whilst it is acknowledged that this would be additional responsibilities for officers, this would be planned activity, without which it will be difficult to implement the core offer equitably across the council. However, in some areas, particularly the 'Plan for People' service area, similar arrangements already exist and these proposals formalise arrangements across the whole council.

4.4.5 Human Resources to identify a lead officer(s) to initially assist in establishing arrangements, mapping existing placement provision across the council, and ultimately to assume responsibility for taking a lead in strategically coordinating work experience

placements through contact with the lead officers in each council area and with WEXA/LEBC. Paul McCrystal's section has responsibility for coordinating apprenticeships across the council. Ideally, a database should be developed which captures information on work experience placements such as placement type, on site manager details and dates placements have taken place. This would help ensure that placements are spread out equitably across the council.

- 4.4.6 The core offer ensures that the needs of looked after children are prioritised and includes the council developing a scheme for ring fencing certain vacancies for looked after children and legal advice has already been taken regarding how to do this.
- 4.4.7 Regular meetings will continue to take place with HR and lead officers to initially ensure that implementation of the core offer, and then to monitor progress. This includes input from adult social care where there is a great deal to learn in terms of the innovative initiatives implemented to secure young adults with learning disabilities into work experience, training and paid employment, both within the council and present and future High Cross developments.
- 4.4.8 In addition, in a further attempt to address the council's ageing population, officers to establish stronger links with Leicester University and De Montfort University in relation to promoting the council to graduates. It should be noted that this approach already forms part of the HR strategic business plan.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

Work shadowing, work experience and similar placements do not generally incur any significant additional costs. Apprenticeship schemes usually require the young person / employee to be paid and therefore would incur a cost. The extent to which these costs would be additional would depend upon wider staffing arrangements within the particular services. There would be indirect costs in that HR officers and other managers and staff would devote time to developing and running the schemes and supervising the young people. The Council would potentially reap future financial and service delivery benefits, as there would be a pool of young people who have gained training and experience and who could then move into substantive posts. Positive impacts on wider regeneration and employment targets in the City could also be expected.

(Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance and Efficiency, CYPS, ext. 29 7750)

5.2 Legal Implications

There are issues arising from the report regarding the limitation of employment opportunities to young people only. The legal issue potentially is that such action could constitute age discrimination. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 make it unlawful for an employer, in relation to employment, to discriminate against a person on the grounds of age.

However, where an age restriction is imposed, if it can be shown that it is objectively justified or that there is a genuine occupational requirement for that restriction, this will be lawful. In order to be objectively justified it must be shown that the age restriction is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Where the aim is to benefit disadvantaged young people that is likely to be a legitimate aim. I do not believe that there is an issue in relation to looked after young people or children leaving care but where arrangements relate broadly to young people.

Having established that there is a legitimate aim it will then be necessary to consider whether the measures taken to achieve that aim are proportionate. A question to ask to assist with this is whether the aim could be achieved by other means.

It is fair to say that due to the infancy of the Regulations, perhaps amongst other things, there is a dearth of decided case law on what might constitute a legitimate aim and on proportionality and it is therefore difficult to advise with any degree of certainty. (Paul Atreides, Solicitor, Legal/Environment and Employment Team, Ext 6368)

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

6.1 None

7. Consultations

7.2 All members of the Work Experience and Employment Opportunities for Children and Young People Task and Finish Group.

8. Report Author

8.1 Andrew Bunyan, Interim Director of Children and Young People’s Services

8.2 Andy Smith, Interim Service Director, Social Care and Safeguarding

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

Appendix I

Leicester City Council Core Offer for Young People

Type of opportunity	Duration	Access to Opportunity by	Purpose	Numbers	LAC entitlement
Work Shadowing	1 or 2 days	Central officer(s) in HR liaising with identified officers across each council area.	To provide a brief taster to gain a better understanding of a particular field of work for young people aged 16+.	Minimum 36 per year (18 LAC/18 non-LAC) – based on each area facilitating 2 x young people	50% should be LAC
Work Experience – pre 16 students in years 10 & 11	2 week blocks; day per week placements for up to 12 months in some cases	WEXA coordinate and place all young people	To provide students in year 10 & 11 with a range of work experience opportunities in LCC. Placements are staggered in order to maximise availability.	Approx 10% of the cohort on placement at any one time. (20-40 x 9 periods spread across range of areas)	LAC in years 10 & 11 have the same entitlement as non-LAC
Young Apprenticeship Scheme (pre 16)	50 days over 2 years.	WEXA coordinate, working with the LEBC to place young people	To provide vocational experience and training in a range of different work places.	TBC - Approx 10% of the cohort on placement at any one time	LAC to be prioritised
Flying Fish Project (LAC only)	1-3 months	Flying Fish co-ordinator identifies placement in LCC and private/business sector outside the Council	To provide 16+ LAC and care leavers with taster opportunities and experience in a range of work place settings. Each placement expected to provide onsite monitoring and support.	Between 6-10 placements per year.	This scheme is only open to LAC

Corporate Apprenticeships	Initially 18 months, leading to permanent job upon satisfactory performance	Each area in LCC will need to identify places. Scheme co-ordinated by HoS Learning & Development NB: Entry requirement 5 A* - G at GCSE or equivalent.	Aim of the scheme is to attract and retain 'trainees' to LCC in order to support the national apprenticeship strategy and employment/up-skilling of 16-19 year olds (programme initially targeted 16-18 yr olds – 19+ for LAC)	Each area to offer 4 places/total 16 (up to 20) per year.	Minimum 4 places. However, CYPS view is that 8 places should be identified in CYPS for LAC
Jobs – inside LCC – for LAC (Corporate Parenting responsibility; 'family business')	Temp or perm depending on the opportunity.	Consider work trials of up to 4 weeks via Flying Fish. Specific job vacancies (level/grade/type to be agreed) to be ring-fenced for LAC. Potential candidates identified and competitive interview held.	Offers either short or long term fully paid experience of the world of work, with appropriate access to staff development and training opportunities, etc.	Numbers need to be determined.	Numbers need to be determined.