

CABINET - 21 JULY 2015

National Citizen Service Contract 2015-18

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. The National Citizen Service (NCS) is a national programme with aspirations to include one million young people (16/17 years) across the country by 2020. The programme provides support and progression for young people in the transition from compulsory education. Delivery of the contract is through contracts let in eleven areas across England to a number of prime contractors. The contractor covering Oxfordshire is The Challenge Network who wish to contract with Oxfordshire County Council to provide the programme in Oxfordshire. A decision is required in order to agree the contract and delivery by the county council in Oxfordshire.

National Citizen Service Oxfordshire

2. The National Citizen Service has a proven track record in Oxfordshire of providing an effective programme, meeting needs of young people, and particularly vulnerable young people, at the important stage of transition from compulsory education. The programme uses nationally agreed format with local interpretation. The framework is governed by the National Citizen Service Trust and allows for local delivery partners to utilise existing provisions, services and professional partnerships to best benefit young people and communities. Oxfordshire County Council National Citizen Service has been highlighted nationally for its ability to capitalise on internal services and professionals, ability to support vulnerable young people and deliver a high quality programme embedding programme delivery within its Early Intervention Service and utilising Oxfordshire County Council outdoor education centres.
3. The contract to run the programme for 2015-2018 provides funding as follows:

2015 - £778,070

2016 - £1,155,576

2017 - £1,580,670

2018 - £1,696, 977

Total Contract £5,211,293

The contract operates on external funding and includes payment by results incentives - target numbers for each year are as follows:

2015 - 652

2016 - 1080

2017 - 1587

2018 - 1754

Total number of young people benefiting - 5073

Young people attending the programme must be 16/17 and come from the diversity of the community in Oxfordshire. The Oxfordshire County Council programme emphasises the particular value of the programme for our more vulnerable young people and 70% of the participants are planned to be from vulnerable groups, backgrounds and areas of highest need.

4. Outcomes from the participation in the National Citizen Service are good for both young people and the local community. National Citizen Service brings together young people from socially mixed backgrounds and national and local reports showcase that by doing this National Citizen Service produces outcomes that widen social networks, build social cohesion and increase levels of social trust.
5. In addition to the core programme National Citizen Service provides a graduate programme encouraging all those young people who have taken part in the programme to stay engaged with both their communities and charitable bodies continuing to put in volunteering hours. Initiatives both on a local and national scale ensure that graduates of the programme have continued opportunities to make a positive impact within their communities and for their own futures.

Financial and Staff Implications

6. The programme is run entirely from external funding with an aim to fully cover all costs. 50% of the funding is 'base payment' and 50% received on a payment by results basis. Funding is received on the basis of 50% against the allocated number of participants in advance and 50% on successful completion (there is a payment by results formula by which this 50% is made up). The council is required to charge £50 per place and this funding is calculated as part of the overall payment. Three full-time staff are employed from the external funds and these staff work year round solely to manage the National Citizen Service programme. Casual staff are employed for the three key delivery phases each year (Spring, Summer and Autumn). The programme is currently managed through the Youth, Engagement and Opportunities team within the Early Intervention Service. The new contract runs for four years until the end of 2018. There is potential for the programme to continue after this date but in the event that this does not happen the staff would need to be redeployed or made redundant. Potential redundancy costs are expected to be met by holding any surplus arising from delivery of

the programme in a reserve pending conclusion of the contract. The contract places a requirement on Oxfordshire County Council to operate the contract until 2018 – there is currently negotiation with The Challenge Network to include a break clause of five months' notice should the council wish to terminate at any stage.

Equalities Implications

7. Participants are recruited across the diversity of the population, in compliance with Equality Act legislation, through mainstream schools and academies, independent schools, colleges, referrals from the Virtual School, Children's Social Care and Early Intervention.

Legal Implications

8. The council must ensure that the charging for this service is on a cost recovery basis only. It will not be possible to recover a profit as this will be deemed to be trading for a commercial purpose and must be carried out using a trading company (under s 95 Local Government Act 2003).

RECOMMENDATION

9. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the contract for delivery of National Citizen Service by Oxfordshire County Council for the period 2015-18.**

JIM LEIVERS
Director for Children's Services

Background papers:
NCS Contract, schedules and annexes
Oxfordshire report 2014
NCS report 2014

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