
Report to: Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** 12th September 2013

Subject: Future arrangements for the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Post 16 data tracking Services in Sefton

Report of: Director of Young People and Families **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan** Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

1. To update the Cabinet on the current position regarding the delivery of Information Advice and Guidance/Post 16 data tracking services in Sefton.
2. To inform Cabinet of the need to serve notice on the termination of contract with the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) by 31st March 2014.
3. To seek the approval of the Cabinet for officers to begin the process of issuing an Invitation to Tender to award the Information Advice and Guidance contract and Post 16 Data tracking.
4. To inform the Cabinet that current options under consideration include procuring elements of the Post 16 data tracking service in conjunction with the other 5 Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Authorities.

Recommendation(s)

That

- (1) the developments regarding Information Advice and Guidance /Post 16 data tracking provision in Sefton be noted
- (2) notice be issued to Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership to terminate the current contract with effect from 31st March 2014; and
- (3) the evaluation criteria for tenders to provide the Information Advice and Guidance and post 16 data tracking activity post April 2014 be approved.
- (4) the option of procuring elements of the Post 16 Data Tracking Services in conjunction with the other 5 LCR Local Authorities be noted.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	/		
2	Jobs and Prosperity	/		
3	Environmental Sustainability		/	
4	Health and Well-Being		/	
5	Children and Young People	/		
6	Creating Safe Communities		/	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		/	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		/	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The provide an Information, Advice and Guidance/ Post 16 Data Tracking service post April 2014.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The current budget for 2013/14 is £1,290,000 but this will reduce to £890,000 in 2014/15. The commissioning process will be undertaken within the context of the 2014/15 budget of £890,000.

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal

It is assumed that the statutory duties for providing Information Advice and Guidance, preventing and eradicating NEET (Not in education, Employment or training) will remain for the foreseeable future. Therefore we have a legal duty as a council to provide these services to young people. The current contract held on behalf of the six boroughs of Merseyside and Halton, by the borough of Halton, will formally cease on 31st March 2014.

Human Resources

The contract is managed by the Senior Officer for 14-19 Strategy and Management from the Schools & Settings Improvement Service

Equality

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. | No Equality Implication | <input type="text" value="1"/> |
| 2. | Equality Implications identified and mitigated | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. | Equality Implication identified and risk remains | <input type="text"/> |

Impact on Service Delivery:

The recommendations will enable the delivery of a more responsive, flexible service.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT has been consulted and would advise that the budget provision for advice and guidance and post 16 data tracking services, has been reduced by £400k as part of the 2014/15 budget savings process, and it is therefore hoped that a renewed contract can be maintained within this lower level of available resources. (FD2453/13)

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted (LD1758/2013) and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Cabinet/

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Background Papers:

None

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

- 1.1 Sefton Council is required to commission a service to fulfil its statutory duties as set out in the Education Act 1996 (as amended) and the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- 1.2 The current targeted Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) contract and service commenced 1st April 2010 and was commissioned by Halton Borough Council, in partnership with the other Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Authorities (LA).
- 1.3 The current service is a targeted careers and IAG service, specifically for those young people who are not in education, employment and/or training (NEET) or those who are at risk of becoming NEET, together with young people identified as vulnerable. This current contract with GMCP expires 31st March 2014.
- 1.4 The contract value has gradually decreased per borough over the years, reflecting budget pressures, whilst at the same time the statutory duties to Raise the Participation Age (RPA) to 18 by 2015, reduce NEET for all 16-18 year olds and to give special focus on vulnerable groups has become more rigorous than ever.
- 1.5 Sefton has developed a Raising Participation Strategy, with its 14-19 partners, and a key element to enable this strategy to work has been the deployment of the Connexions service as executors of the Local Authority's statutory duties and accountabilities.
- 1.6 The National policy landscape has changed significantly, during the life of this contract, and this is reflected by the current service. The 2013/14 service delivery is more flexible, delivered from two bases in Southport and Bootle, and operates around key function blocks designed and agreed between the Sefton 14-19 Manager and the local Connexions service.
- 1.7 GMCP has also operated a Post 16 Tracking and Data service which is a national requirement, with monthly reports to Department for Education (DfE).

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training, with a particular focus on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and vulnerable young people. To understand and demonstrate the impact of funding and resources, there must be strong mechanisms in place for recording and reporting post-16 learning destinations of young people aged 16-19.
- 2.2 Under the Education Act 2011, Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to record and report the education, training and employment status of their 16-18 year old residents (national curriculum academic years 12, 13 and 14) to the DfE on a monthly basis. Local Authorities also need to undertake further surveys to record the

intended destinations of those in Year 11 and a follow-up survey with these young people in the autumn term.

2.3 The same Act determined that from September 2012 schools/colleges/providers have responsibility to deliver careers IAG to their learners, and local authorities have had no duty to deliver a Post 16 IAG service from that date.

2.4 Local Authorities Raising Participation Age (RPA) plans will now be inspected by OFSTED, as part of reviewing Local Authority arrangements for supporting school improvements.

3.0 **IAG AND POST 16 DATA TRACKING FROM 1 APRIL 2014**

3.1 The recent arrangements with this contract as part of a Liverpool City Region offer have had the advantages of good cross border working, with Connexions able to deploy resources and personnel in an efficient way, and the contract management high level arrangements being done through a single borough on behalf of the rest.

3.2 However, as each borough has been responding to changes in the national landscape, there have been emerging differences in the way each of the LCR boroughs want to take this agenda forward. Developments have often been slower than necessary as each borough has been at the mercy of other Local Authority's demands and nuances. Also, as each borough has undergone its own transformation agenda, the shape of services to help young people have become individualised.

3.3. As a consequence, following extensive consultation between senior leadership teams, each Local Authority has opted to commission its own individualised IAG activity from 2014 onwards. Following a review of the current service, Sefton has decided to commission activity as a stand alone borough, enabling the Authority to have more control of its services and removing the reliance on other Local Authorities in delivering IAG.

3.4 The budget for targeted Information Advice and Guidance and Post 16 data tracking services, and discharge of the other statutory duties for 2014 onwards has been set already by council, and represents approximately two thirds of the budget available for the similar activity in 2012/13.

The successful organisation will:

- work with schools and colleges to deliver the “**September Guarantee**”. This is a legal requirement ensuring that all 16- and 17-year-olds are offered (and agree) a suitable place in education or training, including in schools, colleges or work-based training. for the years following their 16th and 17th birthdays respectively.
- establish an ongoing NEET and at risk of NEET register
- provide quality impartial advice and guidance to vulnerable groups and individuals

- provide timely risk assessments and interventions with young people
- operate the Post 16 Tracking and Data service which is a national requirement, with monthly reports to DfE
- target specialist provision working with Sefton YOS and LAC/Care Leaver teams and learners with Special Needs to the age of 25.
- provide 450 (average) Learning Disability Assessments (section 139A reports)
- undertake area Based working covering all parts of the borough
- provide generic support services to the council and its 14-19 partners regarding Careers Information Advice and Guidance
- assist in the procurement of new training and education provision where there are gaps.

3.5 It is proposed that the Commissioning process will include a Tender exercise, managed by the Council's Procurement Unit and will be published and managed electronically within the North West Opportunities Portal, 'The Chest'. The contract will be for a 3 year period in the first instance, with an option for 2 one year extensions subject to satisfactory performance.

4.0 **SELECTION CRITERIA**

4.1 The contract will be awarded utilising a weighted scoring system of:

- Price - 30%
- Quality – 60%
- Interview – 10%

The quality indicators will include a successful track record of delivering excellent services in this field, knowledge and understanding of the holistic needs of young people in Sefton, excellent knowledge of the education and training opportunities in and around Sefton and access to other sources of additional support, beyond council resources.

4.2 The procurement process will be completed by December 2013, with the contract to be awarded on 1st January 2014, with a start date of 1st April 2014.