

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee

Cabinet

Date of Committee

28 January 2010

Report Title

Tendering for Information, Advice and Guidance for Young People and Education Business Links

Summary

In October 2009 Cabinet agreed an extension to the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) contract, and requested a further report on the proposals for beyond this one year extension.

The proposal is to proceed immediately to jointly tender with Coventry City Council, not only for IAG but also for Education Business Links (EBL). This allows for the preferred provider(s) to be identified 6 months prior to the commencement of the contract(s) 1 April 2011, maximising the potential for young people and schools to experience a smooth transition to the new contract arrangements.

Contract Standing Orders require approval from Cabinet due to the size of the contracts.

For further information please contact:

Geoff King
Head of Service –
Commissioning, Planning &
Partnerships
Tel: 01926 742389
geoffking@warwickshire.gov.uk

Nicola Lomas
Children’s Joint
Commissioning Manager
Tel: 01926 742338
nicolalomas@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy

No

Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]

Background papers

Cabinet Reports 07.12.06 & 15.10.09

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:

Details to be specified

Other Committees

.....

Local Member(s)

Not applicable

Other Elected Members CYP&F O&S Chair and Vice-Chair for information:
Cllr John Ross
Cllr Carolyn Robbins

CYP&F O&S Spokespersons for information:
Cllr Jerry Roodhouse on behalf of Cllr Balaam
Cllr Tim Naylor
Cllr Carolyn Robbins

Cabinet Member Cllr Izzi Seccombe

Other Cabinet Members consulted Cllr Martin Heatley

Chief Executive

Legal Sian Stroud *"no comments"*
Fay Ford *"comments incorporated into report"*

Finance David Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources

Other Strategic Directors David Carter, Strategic Director of Customers,
Workforce and Governance
Paul Galland, Strategic Director of Environment
and Economy *"comments incorporated into report"*

District Councils

Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS: Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

To Council

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation



Cabinet – 28 January 2010

Tendering for Information, Advice and Guidance for Young People and Education Business Links

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approves proceeding with a tender for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) along with Education Business Links (EBL) with effect from 1 April 2011.
2. That Cabinet approves and authorises the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families to enter into all relevant contracts for the provision of IAG and EBL on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director of Resources and the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Service, often referred to as Connexions, is provided for young people 13 -19 years inclusive (and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities or both up to their 25th birthday), so that they enter and remain in education, training and employment. In conjunction with Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) this service encourages young people to have a healthy lifestyle and to develop and achieve their aspirations.
- 1.2 The IAG/Connexions Service is currently provided by the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP). Cabinet received a report on 15 October 2009 and agreed to extend the IAG contract for one year to 31 March 2011 to allow adequate time for re-commissioning arrangements to be made jointly with Coventry City Council. Cabinet requested a further report on the final proposals. Contract Standing Orders require approval from Cabinet due to the size of the investment.
- 1.3 In addition to IAG, Education Business Links (EBL) also needs to be re-commissioned at this time. Well developed links between schools and businesses, 'Education Business Links', are necessary to support 'work related learning' which has been statutory for 14-16 year olds since September 2004.

It covers a wide variety of activities such as work experience, work place visits, projects based on real work situations, and talks from employers. An EBL service encourages businesses to develop strong links with education so that:

- young people, particularly in Key Stage 4, have work placements;
- school staff have recent and relevant experience from business and industry;
- the curriculum as a whole reflects current business needs.

- 1.4 Elements of the EBL Service are also currently provided by CSWP across Coventry and Warwickshire. The opportunity has been taken to put potential providers within the same field through just one tender process for IAG and EBL, with the option to bid for the services together and separately.
- 1.5 All Coventry's EBL services are delivered through CSWP.
- 1.6 Warwickshire differs from Coventry, mainly in relation to brokerage of work experience placements for students. Warwickshire schools set up their own work experience placements, rather than them being arranged by CSWP. Consultation with schools suggested that they preferred for this not to be altered in any new contract so that they could retain this control within schools, working in collaboration with their own students, parents, carers and local businesses. An element of EBL support is therefore delivered within Warwickshire by Warwickshire Education Business Partnership, within the Environment and Economy Directorate. The main purpose of this work is to reduce the risk of schools setting up work experience placements without adequate risk assessments and quality checks. In addition the Education Business Partnership provides information, advice and guidance to schools in support of the statutory work related learning curriculum, employer engagement and the delivery of work related learning programmes.
- 1.7 IAG and EBL services are major contributors to young people achieving economic well being. The services have a great influence on 16 -18 year olds who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training,' (NEET), which is National Indicator 117, Local Area Agreement Indicator 17.

2 Tender Arrangements

- 2.1 The approach is to tender for separate contracts, one for IAG and one for EBL, covering Coventry and Warwickshire. The contracts are being offered for five years from 1 April 2011, with an option for the Local Authorities to extend by one year i.e. up to 31 March 2017. One competitive tender process will cover both contracts, with the possible outcome that a single provider may be identified as the most economically advantageous provider(s) for both services. The rationale for a possible 6 year contract, potentially for a single provider, is that it will be valuable enough to attract the best provider(s) and long enough for providers to be expected to demonstrate sustained value for money improvements.

- 2.2 The value of the contract depends on confirmation of the grant funding available from central government, but based on 2010/11 levels the annual value of Warwickshire's contribution will be in the region of £4million for IAG and £400k for EBL. Cabinet's approval is sought for this level of investment.
- 2.3 The procurement timetable and documentation has been devised by a Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Project Board based on the experiences of other Local Authorities that have just tendered in 2009/10 and advised by a number of key documents published in Autumn 2009.
- 2.4 Sub-regional commissioning with Coventry is being pursued because of the potential to achieve greater value for money through economies of scale. Sharing a common service provider with Coventry also increases the chances of service users knowing who their provider is, regardless of where they live or which school they attend. Grabbing the attention of young people and keeping them interested is an important element of the challenge to raise aspirations and educate about the world of work.
- 2.5 Running a combined tender process for IAG and EBL will save time and therefore money for both purchasers and providers. It also gives providers an opportunity to demonstrate any improvements or savings that they can offer if they are awarded contracts for both IAG and EBL services.
- 2.6 The justification for creating a situation where a single provider could potentially be awarded both EBL and IAG contracts is the closeness and significance of them both in the development of policies impacting upon young people in England over the last three years. The 14-19 reforms, combined with the raising of the participation in learning age following the implementation of the Education and Skills Act 2008, represent one of the most radical set of changes in secondary education since the 1944 Education Act. In *'Quality, Choice and Aspiration'* (DCSF October 2009) the government highlights how high quality work experience and work related learning in schools can help to embed IAG across the curriculum, informing the choices that young people make. The strategy stresses how essential it is to reduce the number of young people who undertake work experience that does not offer them a sufficiently meaningful insight into what the work place is really like.
- 2.7 Separate 'service specifications' that explain what is required have been drawn up for IAG and EBL services and circulated for consultation with key stakeholders across Coventry and Warwickshire. Evaluation will be done by a range of individuals representing the young people themselves, Head Teachers, Integrated Youth Support Services, 14-19 Partnerships, and other key stakeholders.
- 2.8 The timetable has been brought forward as much as possible so that evaluation takes place before the end of the summer term while young people and school staff have capacity to be involved. In addition it means the preferred provider(s) can be identified 6 months before the new contracts are due to start, allowing for any change of provider(s) and giving the best chance of a smooth transition.

- 2.9 Providers have been invited to 'express an interest' as part of a two stage procurement process, and submit a pre-qualification questionnaire. Those that demonstrate they have sufficient capacity and experience will become a 'short list' for the second stage of the process when they will be invited to submit a full response addressing how they will deliver what is required.
- 2.10 Potential providers have been advised that Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) may require them to take on certain employment and pension responsibilities for staff currently providing IAG and EBL services. Current providers of services, including Warwickshire Education Business Partnership, have supplied information on staffing who may be eligible to transfer to the successful provider(s). This relates to two members of staff within Warwickshire Education Business Partnership, 1.5 whole time equivalent.
- 2.11 Arrangements for ongoing performance management and monitoring are an integral part of the service specifications. In addition, provider(s) will be expected to demonstrate continuous improvement in response to feedback from young people, schools, businesses and other stakeholders.

MARION DAVIS
Strategic Director for Children,
Young People and Families

Saltisford Office Park
Ansell Way
Warwick

14 January 2010