

Report to Director of Education and Skills

September 2020

Award of contracts for the delivery of Alternative Provision

Report by Assistant Director Compliance and Pupil Entitlement

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

The County Council currently commissions Chichester College Group (CCG) to deliver education provision for pupils aged 14-16 whose needs are deemed better met by a more vocational curriculum.

Building on the success to date of this service in delivering improved outcomes for these pupils such that 88% of leavers are either attending college/other education or are in apprenticeships or employment, it is proposed to continue commissioning Chichester College Group to offer this provision for a further year.

In addition, it is proposed that the Council commissions an additional 20 places with Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GB Met) for the delivery of similar provision at Northbrook college Worthing. This is to ensure that there is a 14-16 appropriate provision offer across the County and to reduce the costs of travel for children in the Worthing (South) area.

Recommendation

- (1) That the Director of Education and Skills, approves the award of two 1 year contracts for the delivery of Alternative Provision for 14-16 year old pupils to Chichester College Group and to Greater Brighton Metropolitan College both commencing in September 2020.
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Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 In 2013 the County Council commissioned CCG to offer a service delivering education provision for pupils aged 14-16 whose needs are deemed better met by a more vocational curriculum.
- 1.2 The demand for a more vocational curriculum offer became evident when addressing concerns raised by schools in relation to children whose engagement in their education was affected by the impact of a demanding academic timetable. It was recognised that some of these children would be

better suited to a more vocational curriculum whilst retaining the core subjects as part of the programme. Often these children may otherwise have been excluded from school and this approach is considered an effective strategy in reducing the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions.

- 1.3 Since then the service has been recommissioned year on year in the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with CCG.
- 1.4 The cost of the service is shared between the schools who have children on roll and the Council. Schools retain the children on their roll and liaise regularly with the college in regard to safeguarding, attendance and progress, as prescribed through the SLA. By retaining responsibility for the children the school provide a match funded amount which is roughly in line with the school age-weighted pupil unit. The local authority match funds the amount to avoid permanent exclusion and a much more costly provision at the Pupil Referral Unit.
- 1.5 The service offered by CCG has proved successful in that 88% of those completing the courses are either attending college/other education or are in apprenticeship or employment. Therefore, the County Council proposes to continue commissioning Chichester College Group to offer this provision for a further year.
- 1.6 CCG is the only provider in West Sussex with a range of campuses across the county. However, there is currently a gap in provision in the South East of the county in the Worthing area. Negotiations have taken place with GB Met to offer similar provision at Northbrook College for pupils in this area.

2. Proposal Details

- 2.1 It is proposed that these arrangements should cease to operate as an SLA and that WSCC contract terms should be used.
- 2.2 It is proposed to award two 1-year contracts for the delivery of alternative provision for 14-16 years old pupils to Chichester College Group and Greater Brighton Metropolitan College.
- 2.3 CCG is the only Further Education (FE) College capable of delivering the service in West Sussex other than in Worthing. GB Met were able to demonstrate they could deliver a similar service in Worthing, where CCG currently cannot and at fees which reflect the actual costs. Therefore it is proposed to secure a similar contract with them.
- 2.4 During the coming year other options will be considered, based on funding and long-term needs, to enable the continuation of an alternative provision offer for 14-16 year olds beyond the life of these proposed contracts.

Factors taken into account

3. Consultation

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3.1 No formal consultation has taken place with parents and carers. However, there is a high demand for the service as parents and carers welcome the opportunity for their children to access a curriculum that better suits their needs.

4. Financial (revenue and capital) and Resource Implications

4.1. The current cost of the Chichester College Group (CCG) contract is £10k per pupil per year which is funded 50% out of the High Needs DSG block and 50% by the secondary school making the provision. This price has remained the same since 2013 whilst costs have risen, and therefore the college is looking to increase the rate for the new contract to £11k per annum. The number of pupils attending the college will be up to 89.

4.2. Since the contract with GB Met is a new one the college has agreed to operate at the historic value previously paid to Chichester College of £10k per pupil. The number of pupils attending the college will be up to 20.

4.3. Under the terms of the contracts, 7/12th funding will be invoiced by the colleges by 1st October 2020, and 5/12th funding will be invoiced by 1st May 2021.

	Current Year 2020/21 £m	Year 2 2021/22 £m	Year 3 2022/23 £m	Year 4 2023/24 £m
CCG 89 pupils @ £11k p.a.	0.571	0.408	0	0
GB Met 20 pupils @ £10k p.a.	0.117	0.083	0	0
Total	0.688	0.491	0	0

4.4. Capital consequences – None

4.5. Future transformation, savings/efficiencies being delivered – None

4.6. Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact – None

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The services are “light touch” schedule 3 services under Procurement and Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015, and the provisions of the Regulations have been considered when planning the route to procurement and engagement with the market within which provision is very limited. The proposal seeks to secure the engagement of the two main providers available to deliver the service and future options will be considered during the life of the proposed contracts.

6. Risk Implications and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Insufficient capacity to meet need	The extension to the CCG contract and the introduction of the GB Met contract should meet demand. Future demand levels will inform future commissioning plans.
Financial risk if either College cannot meet the requirement.	CCG meet the Council's Financial Standing test CCG can also provide additional capacity should the pilot with GB Met fail, however this would involve increased transport costs.

7. Other Options Considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 7.1 Do not continue with the service. This would result in a loss of the benefits of the service outcomes for eligible pupils and a likely increase in demand for the pupil referral unit at additional service cost.
- 7.2 A fuller market test and engagement could have been undertaken. CCG is the only FE College capable of delivering the service in West Sussex other than in Worthing. GB Met were able to demonstrate they could deliver a similar service in Worthing, where CCG currently cannot.

8. Equality and Human Rights Assessment

- 8.1 The service supports the Council's duty under the Equality Act to give due regard to the need to:
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

by ensuring that children with protected characteristics have the opportunity to access this provision.

9. Social Value and Sustainability Assessment

- 9.1 Not applicable

10. Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessment

- 10.1 None.

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Background papers - None