

To: City Executive Board

Date: 10 September 2014

Report of: Head of Human Resources & Facilities

Title of Report: Business in the Community- Working in Partnership

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: This report provides the background to the development of the Business in the Community programme which seeks to foster business links with Oxford cluster schools.

Key decision No

Executive lead member: Councillor Bob Price, Board Member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan 2013-2017 Vibrant, Sustainable Economy

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board endorse the partnership connection with Cherwell School under the Business in the Community initiative.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Action plan: Agreed interventions for Year 1 of the programme 2014-2015

Appendix 2: Risk Register

Background

1. The Council is a partner in the Business in the Community (BiTC) 'Business Class' initiative and has been working directly with Cherwell School to develop a partnership. BiTC itself is a charitable organisation. The programme is focussed on working with students and specifically aims to:
 - Improve confidence;
 - Develop skills which improve employability;

- Increase awareness of career opportunities;
 - Raise young peoples' aspirations;
 - Prevent students ending their school careers not in education training or employment;
 - Help students realise their potential
2. The core philosophy of BiTC is that the school is the client and that school/ business partnerships are grouped together enabling them to share best practice, identify common challenges and accelerate improvement across an area. The Oxford business/ school cluster includes the following:
- Unipart - Oxford Academy
 - GI Group Recruitment – St. Gregory the Great
 - Sharp Laboratories of Europe – Oxford Spires
 - Oxford City Council – Cherwell School
 - Wiley & Sons – Cheney School
 - BG Business (Centrica) - Meadowbrook

Cherwell School

3. Cherwell School is a large oversubscribed mixed comprehensive Academy school serving a wide-ranging community in North Oxford. It has a large sixth form which admits a substantial number of external students in Year 12. It became an 11-18 school in 2003 following local reorganisation and has a split site. Although students are from above average socio-economic backgrounds, a significant number are from less advantaged backgrounds and eligibility for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average, around 30%, and the percentage of students who have English as an additional language is also higher at 15%. The number of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average but the percentage of students with statements of special educational need is higher'. The school achieved an excellent Ofsted rating.
4. The 6th form has 500 students and it has grown by 30% in the last 2 years. There is concern for those students who drop out at the end of the first year of 6th form as options are more limited than for those who leave at age 16.

Cherwell Data Dashboard 2012:

- **Disadvantaged Pupil Performance:** 25% of students are disadvantaged. Of these, 69% achieve expected progress in English, while 89% of other pupils achieved expected progress. In Maths, 47% of disadvantaged pupils achieved expected progress, while 82% of other pupils achieved expected progress.
- **Careers and Raising Aspirations:** After Key Stage 4, 75% pupils continue to Key Stage 5 (A levels) and 65% go into Higher

Education. However, the school would like a wider knowledge of the opportunities locally for those pupils who leave at 16 or post 16. They would like role models to inspire less aspirational students.

5. Cherwell School completed a needs assessment which helped to inform the structure of a wider programme of help and support they would like from the Council:
 - Leadership & Governance – leadership development, staff development, retention & motivation, operational & financial management
 - Employability & Enterprise – careers, apprenticeships, student leadership, role models
 - Curriculum – achievement, literacy/English, numeracy/maths, other STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering)
 - Wider issues – punctuality, health & well-being, targeting groups with specific needs

First year priorities

6. The Council's Corporate Management Team has agreed to a practical series of first year interventions specifically focussing on helping students make their respective transitions into apprenticeships, the local work market or higher education locally and nationally. The interventions are therefore centred on employability and enterprise priorities:
 - Mentoring for Year 10s and 12s;
 - A new work experience programme (October 2014 and June/ July 2015) with places to be open to all Oxford cluster schools);
 - Speed career workshops;
 - Employability skills development workshops (CV writing/ mock interviews/customer service)
 - Citizenship – discussions will be held with leading Members to consider what might be useful support from the Council to the school in this aspect
7. The interest from Council staff in providing mentoring support has been high, with 33 mentors trained and ready to commence the programme. A mentor matching afternoon took place on 11th July 2014 which created a real buzz amongst the students and staff. The mentoring sessions begin in October 2014 and will be a monthly commitment of 1 hour.
8. Wider support for the School's management team is set out at appendix 1.

Future ambitions

9. Cherwell School would also like assistance in the following areas and these will be considered as part of the forward plan:
 - Leadership: The school would welcome support from business leadership role models and strategic assistance with the big leadership challenges they are facing over the next 18 months, e.g. support on efficiency, value for money, branding and promotion;
 - Operational and financial management: Cherwell is a huge school (c.2000 students) but with a limited site on which to develop its growth aspirations and would like to discuss their 'master plan' for the development of the site with like-minded professionals;
 - Targeting groups with specific needs, e.g. role models in the community are needed for less aspirational students;
 - Achievement: Although GCSE achievement is at high levels, there is still growing concern with their Pupil Premium (Low Income) and Special Educational Needs students not gaining their Maths and English GCSE. Any support in this area would be welcomed;
 - Increasing their understanding about how the City 'ticks' identified as being valuable in niche areas such as business/ economics and science and linking these to the real world.

Level of Risk

10. A risk register is attached at appendix 2

Climate Change/ Environmental impact

11. Nothing significant to note although all mentors working with Cherwell School will be encouraged to co-share pool cars, use electric bikes, low emission buses, walk or cycle to travel to the school for their mentoring and other initiatives

Equalities Impact

12. The principles underlying the Business in the Community programme and the proposed Council interventions will have a positive equalities impact (in its widest sense i.e. assisting disadvantaged students) and clearly align with the Corporate Plan 2014-2017 objectives under a Vibrant, Sustainable Economy. The project undoubtedly adds value to the Council's Youth Ambition and Educational Attainment programmes and the initiative has already been recognised with a Customer Service Excellence compliance plus award for innovation
13. There are clear benefits to the Council in having more students with employability skills as this will help to reduce disadvantage in the City. There is a demonstrable need for increased information to students of the sort of local jobs available, advice on the pathways towards them and support to develop employability skills.

Financial implications

14. The Business in the Community partnership can be delivered through existing financial resources and partnership agreements. Business class is a three year partnership between the school and business. The UK Commission for Employment & Skills Growth & Innovation Funding covers the partnership for two out of the three years. Business partners have to cover £6000 + VAT to support the cost of the Partnership for the final year. The City Council was asked if it would contribute £3000 per school in matched funding to support two other schools in the cluster, making a total of £12k funding for a three year project; with funding previously identified from the Education Attainment Budget.

Legal implications

15. There are no anticipated current legal implications beyond an Oxfordshire County Council requirement for all Council mentors working with students on school premises to hold an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service

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Appendix 1 - Business in the Community Support Programme – Oxford City Council / Cherwell School

Theme	Initiative	Details	Info from Cherwell	Action / Next Steps
Enterprise and Employability	Mentoring <i>CSE recent reaccreditation received a compliance plus award for innovation for this Council initiative</i>	For students in year 10 and year 12 who are thought to be the most vulnerable.	Want up to 30 mentors DBS checks to be organised by OCC and run by Oxon County Council	We are providing 29 mentors with 5 on a reserve list. Our mentors have been trained and the programme began in July 2014 with the first mentor matching session. An internal mentors network has been set up which will meet quarterly and provide a forum to share experiences, etc. Mentoring for 17 students will go live from September 2014
	Work experience	October and June each year <i>NB: Work experience offer to include other Oxford cluster schools where these relationships currently exist</i>	Years 11 and 12, run in two cohorts twice a year	Work experience programme brief will be circulated to Heads of Service at the start of August 2014 (for feedback and indications of what placements they can support)
	Speed career workshops	Staff to meet students in quick succession to talk about their jobs. School need to be briefed about different roles / depts. in Council. Potentially two sessions	Students to pick one or two key areas of interest and research those. Recommend a smaller group format so that	From January 2015 JB to chase Chris Price in late September Joint co-ordination with school

Theme	Initiative	Details	Info from Cherwell	Action / Next Steps
	Skills development	CV writing, presentation skills, business studies, innovation Strong area of interest from the school with Economics A level and Business Studies very popular	January 2015 onwards. Also consider customer service excellence ethos/ social responsibility where we are strong and could put together a short workshop or a business process/ making a business case workshop	SMH / JB to meet new Head of Business Studies to determine content in September (Chris Price to provide contact details in September). January 2015 for CV writing and further liaison with Chris Price re running CV / mock interview session(s)
Curriculum	Citizenship			Possible involvement from Elected Members re: citizenship/democracy etc. JB to discuss with Cllr Bob Price initially & Chris Price in September
Leadership and Governance	Understanding Oxford	Valuable in niche areas such as business and science and linking to real world (environmental). Enriching knowledge of local area to impact quality	The school would like to increase their understanding about how the city 'ticks'. They are very keen on shadowing what we do, touring around, etc. but are conscious it needs careful timetabling e.g. June / July.	Discussion with Head of Environmental Development ref what this could look like – Chris Price to make connection to Cherwell lead. JB to chase Chris Price mid- September
	Business relationships/ business principles		Facing some leadership challenges and indicated a need for sharing leadership best practice	Anna Wright to meet the Head of School to better understand what their leadership issues are that might be met through existing education channels. JB to explore viability of contributing to a "peer review" or having a representative as a school governor

Appendix 2 – Risk Register

					Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Delivering the project	Ability of the Council to resource the programme	Threat	Not enough capacity to deliver the programme	The project isn't delivered in full or part and the Council's reputation is adversely impacted	14/08/14	Simon Howick	3	3	2	2	1	1		Deploy enough mentors to meet the agreed programme	August 2014	Completed	100%	Simon Howick
														Use BiTC resource to assist in agreeing / delivering the programme	August 2014	In progress	40%	Simon Howick
														Include management of the programme in the HR workplan	August 2014	Completed	100%	Simon Howick
														Agree the remainder of the programme in the context of available capacity	August 2014	In progress	10%	Simon Howick