

To: City Executive Board

Date: 10 September 2014

Report of: Scrutiny Committee

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

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To present comments from the Scrutiny Committee on the Business in the Community – Working in Partnership report

Key decision? No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Simmons

Executive lead member: Councillor Price

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

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Committee considered the Business in the Community – Working in Partnership report at their public meeting in September. Members were supported in their debate by Simon Howick, and by Chris Price from Cherwell School. The Committee would like to thank them for their time and advice, especially Chris Price for attending on the eve of the new school term.
2. The Committee fully endorsed the Business in the Community scheme and the City Council's involvement in it, and welcomed the progress made to date.
3. Members made and agreed the following substantive comments during their discussion. The Committee received assurances that these points have been considered as part of the scheme.

Substantive comments

4. It is vital to build sustainable links particularly with vulnerable pupils and suggested that pupils should be able to change their mentor if the arrangement is not working for them.

5. High quality careers advice is vital and there should be a strong emphasis on equipping pupils with advice and skills tailored to their needs and the needs of employers before they embark on the world of work. A member also commented that a pupil's talents are varied and they should be channelled towards skills that they can achieve. Academia is not for all.
6. The Committee noted the importance of setting measurable and realisable targets, where possible, from this programme in order to monitor outcomes and ensure value for money.
7. Members sought and received assurances that safeguarding practices are in place and that mentors have been appropriately CRB checked.
8. The Committee received assurances that the benefits of this scheme will spread and that other schools will not be disadvantaged because of it.
9. The developing programme is defining best practice in some areas. Members were keen that this should be shared between mentors and at local cluster meetings.
10. The Committee welcomed assurances that work placements at the different employers involved in this scheme can be arranged for pupils through these cluster meetings.

Director and Board Member Comments

The Board thanks the Committee for these helpful comments; they will be borne in mind as the programme evolves, and will form part of the discussions with the School aimed at ensuring that the aims and objectives of the initiative are achieved.

Name and contact details of author:-

Andrew Brown on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Officer
Law and Governance
Tel: 01865 252230 e-mail: abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers: None
Version number: 1