

Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Vary the Prospects contract for Havering's Supported Internship Programme to include an additional service for 10 students for a period of up to 24 months, following the approval of the Competition Financial Thresholds Exceptions Form.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Robert Benham – Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families.
SLT Lead:	Robert South – Director of Children's Services.
Report Author and contact details:	Suzanne West, Commissioning Manager, T: 01708 434670 E: suzanne.west@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	This service supports the Council's obligations as outlined in the Department for Education (2017), Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents. This strategy sets out how the government intends to transform careers provision across England with an emphasis on education, business and careers communities coming together to work in partnership.
Financial summary:	<p>The proposed variation of the contract (for up to 24 months) will cost a total of £329,980 based on all 10 places being filled for each full year.</p> <p>The service will be funded from the existing Post-16 High Needs Education budget.</p>

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Relevant OSC:	Children & Learning
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	It is a non-key decision by a member of staff.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This paper aims to seek authorisation to:

- 1) Vary the Prospects contract for Havering's Supported Internship Programme for the additional service of supported internship for 10 students with an EHCP for a period of up to 24 months, at a total cost of £329,980 with an option to give 3 or 6 months' notice for termination, following the approval of the Competition Financial Thresholds Exceptions form.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

For a variation (or variations) which is near to or exceeds an Executive Director's financial limits as set out in the Chief Officer Scheme of Delegation or a specific delegation of the Executive a report should be prepared initially for Checkpoint with an intention to submit the same to a member of SLT.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Impact of COVID-19

Due to re assignment of Joint Commissioning Unit (JCU) resources as the 'Provider Emergency Contact Centre' and Vaccination rollout programme, during the outbreak of COVID19 and subsequent lockdowns during wave one and wave two, a number of recommissioning exercises had to be put on hold. This included the Supported Internship Programme.

In normal circumstances, a full review of options would have been undertaken but this has not been possible. As a result, this is a request for a variation of the contract with a view to re-commissioning as soon as possible.

Background

The original service was commissioned by London Borough of Havering (LBH) to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations as outlined in the Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Children's and Families Act 2014.

The Council commissioned Prospects (the Provider) to supply a targeted Information, Advice & Guidance service (IAG). The contract commenced 1st September 2019 until 31st August 2024 with option to extend for a further two years. The service has a specific remit to work with young people in targeted groups aged 15-18 years old (14-25 year olds in the case of those with special educational needs), in order to support those students who are identified as being at high risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). This

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includes working with young people leaving care, teenage mothers and young offenders who require additional and more intensive support to access education and training opportunities among others.

Supported Internship - Modification to Contract

One such education and training opportunity is a supported internship. The internship is specifically aimed at young people aged 17 to 24 who have a statement of special educational need or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so. It is also intended to enable young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace.

As with most education and training opportunities, the places needed outweigh the places available and the Special Educational Needs Team identified a gap in the supported employment offer. With Prospects already working within Havering and already having Supported Internship schemes in Harrow, Hillingdon and Kensington, Prospects were approached to come up with a proposal of a Supported Internship Scheme for Havering to help fill the gap.

By a Deed of Variation, the Supported Internship Programme was added to the Prospects contract as an additional service from 1st September 2020. This was initially for one year with a view to extending further upon review of the service, which was due to take place early 2021. The additional element of the service increased the contract by £164,990 per annum based on all 10 places being filled.

Monitoring meetings for this service have taken place and the service is performing well. There are 11 interns from Havering currently on the programme, Havering is funding only 10 of these placements.

The following Annual KPIs were agreed:

	Key Performance Indicator (KPI): Description of the KPI / volumes, outcomes	Target
1	Interns complete the Pearson's Work skills EL3 employability award (6 units)	100% of interns
2	Interns complete 3 work placements, one per term	100% of those attending
3	Interns move into paid employment	60%
4	Source employers willing to offer work placements in excess of the number of interns on the programme	3 employers in addition to the number of interns
5	One observation of practice per year of the supported internship tutor and job coach carried out by Ixion Holdings nominated staff	1 each per year

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Prospects have provided the following update on performance:

	Key Performance Indicator (KPI): Description of the KPI / volumes, outcomes
1	<p>Interns complete the Pearson's Work skills EL3 employability award (6 units)</p> <p><i>Qtr. 1 - 100% of interns have registered with Ixion Holdings (STG) as a learner and have so far completed unit 5: Preparing for work.</i></p> <p><i>Qtr. 2 - All interns by the end of quarter 2 completed units 14 and 15: Numeracy (15) and Literacy (14) in the Workplace. They are continuing with their other 3 units and all are on track to complete these by the end of the summer term.</i></p>
2	<p>Interns complete 3 work placements, one per term</p> <p><i>Qtr. 1 - All 11 interns have been on work placement when Covid restrictions have allowed.</i></p> <p><i>Qtr. 2 - All 11 interns received on line job coaching during lockdown between January 2021 and March 2021. Job coaching during this period involved allocating tasks they could do at home that developed transferable skills that could then be applied to their term 3 placement e.g. organising cupboards; stacking the weekly shop in the kitchen; checking use by dates in the fridge; tidying/cleaning the bathroom.</i></p>
4	<p>Source employers willing to offer work placements in excess of the number of interns on the programme.</p> <p><i>Qtr. 1 - Prospects sourced more employer placements than is required. These will be utilised in term 2.</i></p> <p><i>Qtr. 2 - Prospects have sourced more employer placements than is currently needed. These will be utilised in term 3.</i></p>

Prospects have reported that all interns are attending regularly. They have adapted with Covid restrictions. They split the interns into two socially distanced classroom groups. The two groups have gotten to know each other well and continuing to learn new skills every day. Some interns are even asking to do additional hours as they are enjoying the placements. The young people are engaged, feel supported and have made great progress in developing their resilience, confidence and their skills in a working environment.

Feedback has been received as follows:

Interns

- "This is more fun than I thought"
- "We get treated like adults"
- "I finally feel part of the team and included" (after being invited to a staff meal)

Parent

- "He has been really enjoying his work and the responsibility he has been given (working on the till)."

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- “H has finally been understood and he finally gets the support here that he needs.”

Tutor

- “Seeing the group work together, grow in confidence and become friends - N has excelled and shown us a different character to what we anticipated due to his parent’s email.”
- “It has been great watching the group develop their IT skills and I have noticed I am helping them less with instructions for sending, opening and receiving files.”

Employers

- British Heart Foundation: “The interns have been doing so well and working hard.”
- Tea-tots: ‘B stayed behind and helped out.”
- Della Continental: “E is such a hard worker.”
- Hope Café: “It is wonderful to have someone who is providing opportunities to underprivileged students when there is a stigma attached with them. I'm happy to be a part of your program as an employer. I like my time with D. He is a fine young guy.”
- Haven House: “E was amazing, she is a really good girl and just getting to know her and spending time with her on the day she came in was a pleasure.”
- Hope 4Havering Charity Shop: “The boys are really amazing. J and N are really hard working, polite and professional. We would love to offer them a job if we were able.”

The current variation is due to expire on 31st August 2021. A tender exercise was planned for spring 2020 but due to other work around Covid this was delayed.

In normal circumstances, a full review and tender would have been undertaken but this has not been possible. As a result, this is a request to vary the contract with a view to re-commissioning during the next 24 months.

The Council requires continuity of services pending commencement of the new long term contract in order that it may continue to discharge its statutory duties.

The contract will be funded from the existing budget.

The reasons for requesting an extension to the variation for up to 24 months are as follows;

- a) It will enable the Council sufficient time to review the current service and develop a new specification drawing on the findings and recommendations from the review.
- b) It will provide the Council sufficient time to complete an open competitive tender. The documentation for the tender and contract will be produced jointly by a tender board to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.
- c) It will ensure there’s a formal agreement in place between the Council and Provider to continue services whilst avoiding instability and uncertainty for the Provider and service users.
- d) An extension will ensure that there is sufficient time to mobilise the contract which will ensure consistency and maintain a quality service for service users.

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The incumbent contractor has provided a successful and effective service. Extension of the contract will provide continuity of service and thus avoid instability and uncertainty for the Provider and service users. There will be no change of cost and it is considered the optimum and most cost effective interim solution.

A full review of the service and tender exercise for a long-term contract for Supported Internship Programme is planned in 2023 with the intention that a new contract commences on 1st September 2023.

Variation Period and Costs

Variation of the contract for up to 24 months will cost a total of £329,980 based on all 10 places being filled each year. The service will be funded from the existing Post-16 High Needs Education budget.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Retender the Supported Internship Service Immediately

- 1) Given the timescales and the impact of COVID-19, this would prove a challenge. Furthermore, the proposed extension of up to 24 months will enable the Council sufficient time to review the current service, develop a new specification drawing on the findings and recommendations from the project board. The documentation for the tender and contract will be produced jointly by a tender board to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.

Do nothing and let the contract expire

- 2) To do nothing would mean the service would expire on 31st August 2021. This is not an option as the Council has a statutory duty to provide these services. The Council does not have capacity to bring the service in house and there is no live framework for this type of service within the Council.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Consultation with a range of internal and external stakeholders. These include;

- Commissioning Programme Manager, Children & Young People
- Procurement
- Legal
- Service Supplier

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NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: John Green

Designation: Head of Joint Commissioning

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Green', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Date: 17.06.2021

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has a general power of competence under s1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual generally may do subject to other statutory provisions limiting or restricting its use. The recommendations in this report are compatible with this statutory power.

This report seeks approval to vary the Supported Internship Service Contract with Prospects to include the additional service of supported internship for 10 students with an EHCP for a period of 2 years by relying on Regulation 72(5) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

To modify the Contract in this way, the value of the modification must be below £406,000 (10% of the initial contract value). The value of this variation from 2021 to 2023 is £329,980. However, including the value of the previous variation of this contract, the total value of the variations is £494,970.

The Council's Contract Procedure Rules state that the reasons and authority to vary, modify or extend a contract shall be recorded in writing and loaded onto the Council's preferred e-tendering suite.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This proposed extension is two-year funding from existing budgets of £1.3m held on A33585 Post-16 High Needs Top-up DSG cost centre within the Children's Directorate.

The service for supported internship is a study programme for 10 students with additional support needs, costing £164,990 per year or £329,980 for the 2 year contract, circa £16.5k per student per year. In most circumstances is delivered using core funding from the local Authority.

The extension to the Supported Internship Programme is an invest- to-save opportunity for the young people supported, leading towards future lifelong employment. In the absence of this service, each young person would be placed in out of borough provision with a financial burden of £0.060m to £0.070m per provision, the costs of which would have been met from within the Children's Directorate service budgets.

Assuming no material change to the Children's service budget over the next two years, there will be no financial risk to the Local Authority.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

If the recommendation to award an extension to the contract for the provision of a Supported Internship Programme is agreed it should have a positive impact on equality groups. It will enable the provider to continue to provide the service ensuring consistency and the ability to maintain a quality service for service users.

The service will continue to meet the needs of all eligible service users, including those from minority community groups and those 'protected' under Equality Act 2010 legislation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Robert South

Member title: Director of Children's Services

Date: 23.07.21

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Committee Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____