



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Work experience for the young unemployed
Date:	22 January 2010
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Purpose of report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to engage with the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and Bryson Charitable Group in the provision of work experience to disadvantaged young people from across the city.

Relevant background information:

In February and May 2008, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to widen the scope of the Council's Community Outreach Programme and engage with the Citywide Employability Consortium (CEC) to develop pre-employment training for the long term unemployed on a pilot basis for one year. To date the council has facilitated five site visits and 10 work experience placements. An evaluation of this year's programme will be carried out before moving into the next year of the programme.

The Council has recently been approached by DEL and Bryson Charitable Group to engage in another programme for the long term unemployed. This programme provides disadvantaged young people (aged 18-24), who have been unemployed for more than one year, temporary waged work experience lasting up to 26 weeks. The Council has been asked to facilitate up to 60 placements and 10 graduate placements. The proposal is based on employing disadvantaged young people from across the city in projects of public value which will have a social impact across all Belfast City Council wards. It will potentially provide a pathway into the labour market by offering paid work experience, employability, training and personal development.

Key Issues:

Potential benefits for participants

The key benefits of this programme for the participants will be:

- Access to 26 weeks paid work experience at a time when one in three people in Northern Ireland under the age of 25 is unemployed
- Access to at least one accredited training course and other training and development
- A focus on key growth employment areas such as environmental services, waste management and leisure.

- Access to broad experience in the day to day activities in areas such as street cleansing, waste collection, waste management and parks.
- A personal benefit assessment, carried out by the lead contractor to ensure clients are financially better off in employment
- Assistance with job search and provision of ongoing support
- Securing permanent employment is the main focus of the programme, not just training

Potential benefits for Belfast City Council

The benefits for the council include:

- Civic leadership and corporate social responsibility - addressing unemployment in the city in the economic downturn
- A direct link between the proposed project and the council's strategic themes.
- Projects, not currently financially viable could be delivered with no cost to the Council.
- The Council is not required to provide any funding

Potential Belfast City Council projects

Discussions have taken place with departments and the following potential projects have been identified:

- Green butlers- to encourage householders to consider re-using and recycling as opposed to disposal
- Replanting in parks
- Policy development- carrying out background research on topics such as waste collection, health and wellbeing
- Projects to enhance the Council's response to the blights of graffiti and fly-posting
- Neighbourhood inspections to investigate environmental problems

To date departments/sections have agreed to facilitate the following:

Leisure	three graduate placements
Cleansing	up to 10 operative placements and two graduate placements
Waste	up to 16 operative placements and one graduate
Parks	up to 12 operatives and four graduate placements.

The flexibility of the project is such that the Council can determine working patterns and conditions to meet our needs.

Proposed partners for the delivery of the project

The funding body for this proposal is the Department for Employment and Learning who will also have overall responsibility for the programme. Bryson Charitable Group, through its strategic business unit North City Training (NCT) will be responsible for employing the participants, paying wages, delivering employment training, providing ongoing support and managing the administrative elements of the programme. Belfast City Council will be required to identify and provide opportunities across a range of services that will provide real work experience and employability skills to participants.

ⁱⁱResearch has shown that employability schemes not directly marketed as government schemes tend to be more successful and DEL, while providing full funding, is keen that Belfast City Council and Bryson Charitable Group take the lead on the public relations and marketing of this project.

Paid work experience for a period of 26 weeks.

The programme proposes to provide young people with paid work experience of 30 hours per week over a 26 week period. Any necessary training and ongoing monitoring and support will be provided by NCT. The hourly rate of pay will be £6.17 per hour, higher than national minimum wage rates (currently £4.83 for under 22 and £5.80 for over 22).

Equality

The managing agents, Bryson House and NCT, will have responsibility for ensuring fair selection of the participants on a city- wide and equal basis and the normal equality screening procedure has already been carried out.

Resource Implications:**Financial**

No additional resources would be required to participate in this programme.

Human Resources

Given the scope and scale of this project, initial communication and consultation has taken place with relevant council sections and the trade unions. If engagement in the project is agreed, this will continue in order to ensure its effective planning, project management and communication.

No offer of permanent employment will follow at the end of the 26 week placement, without adherence to normal council recruitment and selection processes.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no assets and/or other implications contained within this report.

Decisions required:

Members are asked to agree to the Council's engagement with DEL and Bryson Charitable Group in the delivery of this long term unemployed project on a pilot basis. Future participation would be dependent on a successful evaluation which will be carried out after the pilot.

ⁱ Long term unemployed are those who have been without work for over 1 year

ⁱⁱ *Does subsidised temporary employment get the unemployed back to work?* An econometric analysis of two different schemes (Gerfin, Lerner & Steiger: Universities of Bern and St Gallen, Jan 2002)



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