

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL
DATE: 11 FEBRUARY 2009
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POSITION OF AIMHIGHER COORDINATOR

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide an overview of the Aimhigher programme in Manchester and to set out a proposal to establish the post of Aimhigher Coordinator which is a key position to contribute to delivering the Government's initiatives on the 14-19 agenda for all young people in Manchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree the establishment of the post of Aimhigher Coordinator at a salary of Grade 10 + 10% (£42,294 - £45,180).
2. Grant delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Head of Corporate Personnel to develop the job description and person specification for this post.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

The cost of this proposed new post will be £55,000 per annum inclusive of salary related on costs. Total funding will be provided by the DCSF through the Higher Education Funding Council.

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WARDS AFFECTED: All

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

Anti poverty
Yes

Equal Opportunities
Yes

Environment
No

Employment
Yes

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Aimhigher is a Government initiative (Formerly Excellence Challenge) which was launched in September 2001 to increase the numbers of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who apply for and enter higher education. It does this by raising aspiration and attainment levels of 13-19 year olds through improved links between universities, colleges and schools.
- 1.2 In August 2004 Aimhigher integrated with the HEFCE / LSC led university outreach programme - 'Partnerships for Progression'. The new unified programme is a national outreach programme with particular emphasis on young people from lower socio-economic groups with no higher education heritage, in schools and colleges, in vocational programmes and in the workplace
- 1.3 Delivery of the Aimhigher Greater Manchester programme is via a partnership approach across the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester, all of who are committed to realising the vision for widening participation. This will be achieved through a commitment to increase social inclusion by exploiting the wide range of educational opportunities in its local institutions and the varied histories and cultures of its boroughs to deliver a creative and exciting programme that meets local needs and uses area resources.
- 1.4 The partnership includes 6 Higher Education Institutions and 25 Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges. The Connexions service, the Learning and Skills Council, Association of Work Based Learning providers and Greater Manchester Open College Network are active partners. Employers' organisations, libraries, museums and art galleries also contribute to activities. Many projects are run in close cooperation with local schools
- 1.5 The programme operates through its partners, the Coordination Unit and through its Area Steering Group and Activity Working Groups and Borough Aimhigher Committees. There is an Aimhigher coordinator for each of the partner higher education institutions and each of the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The central function of Aimhigher in Manchester is to delegate resources to partner institutions and to promote innovative and collaborative working to meet the objectives of the programme. This is a practical programme which will design and deliver activities for learners and those who influence their opportunities.

2.2 Some of the activities delivered are as follows:-

- Visits to and from Higher Education Institutions
- Summer Schools and Advanced Learning Centres
- Masterclasses
- Teaching and Learning activities within the timetable
- Out of hours study support
- Activity across schools/FE supporting progression/transition
- Academic mentoring
- Staff Development
- Awareness raising and publicity

2.3 In addition there have been other successful diverse and comprehensive activities including:

- AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate) Conference which brings together Year 10 and Year 11 pupils from every secondary school in the city.
- Masterclasses with International experts most recently two Russian Cosmonauts shared their unique experiences with 300 young people.
- Stock Market Challenge a stock market simulation, which gives a real experience of the trading process, its highs and lows complete with the competitive edge.
- Regular sessions after school and on Saturdays aimed at developing personal, academic and team working skills.

2.4 Previously, responsibility for the coordination of all aspects of Aimhigher in Manchester was based within EIC and was covered within the remit of the Partnership Coordinator and the Aimhigher Manager. The salary for these positions was £57k, and £48 respectively. The latter post was held by a secondee, from a local college, who returned to her previous position on 1 August 2008

2.5 These positions were disestablished as part of the proposals for the new Education Services which were approved at Personnel Committee's held on 13 November and 19 December 2007.

2.6 Although there was a need to continue with this work, the finer details of the structural arrangements under the Head of Education Services 14-19 and the consolidation of Aimhigher within this area were not developed sufficiently at the time. Work is ongoing to bring this part of the structure to a conclusion.

2.7 In the interim the work is being covered via an external arrangement with one of our partner organisations. Unfortunately this arrangement cannot continue beyond the end of December 2008. Consequently the need to establish the position of Aimhigher Coordinator has become a

much more urgent issue. Without this position, Manchester would not be able to deliver on the Aimhigher programme and this will impact directly on the young people, for whom events have already been planned across Manchester. It will also affect our entitlement to funding.

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POST OF AIMHIGHER CO-ORDINATOR

- 3.1 To be the lead officer in developing a partnership approach to planning, delivering and monitoring the work of Aimhigher in the City of Manchester, making effective use of the 14-19 Partnership and the Collegiate structure.
- 3.2 To ensure that the work of Aimhigher is integrated into all other relevant local plans, policies and developments.
- 3.3 Of primary importance is the need to forge strong networks of support and harness commitment and responsibility of participants, including schools and colleges in delivering the widening participation agenda. This includes developing and maintaining a strong relationship with the Aimhigher link teacher in each institution.
- 3.4 Responsibility for developing a media and public relations strategy for Aimhigher in the City of Manchester.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The position of Aimhigher Coordinator is a crucial role to ensuring the development and delivery of the Government's initiatives on widening participation and will contribute to the expanding 14-19 agenda.
- 4.2 This post will be instrumental in ensuring that programmes are available across the partner institutions so that young people can access and pursue the educational/vocational route that is right for them and allow them to realise their full potential.
- 4.3 Due to the high level of knowledge and influence required for this post, it is vital to attract a field of candidates who have the skills, abilities, experience and attributes to deliver this programme. It is therefore proposed that a salary of Grade 10 + 10% (£41,283 - £44,100) is agreed in line with other positions within the Education Services with comparative responsibilities.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE PERSONNEL

- 5.1 I have discussed this new post with the Director of Children's Services and support the proposals set out in the report.

- 5.2 I believe the proposed salary of Grade 10 + 10% (£42,294 - £45,180) is appropriate and reasonable.
- 5.3 I will support the Director of Children's Services in the development of a job description and person specification for this post and with arrangements for the subsequent advertising and recruitment process.

6. COMMENTS FROM THE TRADE UNIONS

- 6.1 The comments of the trade union have been incorporated into this report to greater emphasise the relationship between Aimhigher and schools and colleges.