

# Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

Reference Number:

2869

Author:

Elaine Mitchell

Department:

Children and Families

Contact:

Elaine Mitchell

(Job Title: Integrated Workforce Development Manager, Email: elaine.mitchell@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 0115 8764819)

Subject:

Grow Our Own Social Worker Scheme

Total Value:

£392,365.00 (Type: Capital)

Decision Being Taken:

1. Approve the Grow Our Own Social Worker Scheme, for a fast track BA Hons Social Work Degree as set out in detail in Appendix 2.
2. Approve a dispensation in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 from Contract Procedure Rule 5.1.2 to award the Contract to Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) for up to 28 city council colleagues
3. To delegate authority to the Director of Integrated Children Services to enter into Learner and Career Development Loan agreements on behalf of Nottingham City Council with individual employees.
4. To delegate authority to the Director of Integrated Children's Services to enter into contract with Manchester Metropolitan University for provision and delivery of the degree programme
5. Authorise Director of Integrated Children's Services for Nottingham City Council (NCC) to act as Lead Authority and enter into a contract with Derbyshire County Council to join in the contractual arrangements with Manchester Metropolitan University .

**Reasons for the Decision(s)**

The Council currently spends a significant amount on social worker agency staff. At the end of the fast track two year degree course, the vision is to have between 25-28 newly qualified Social Workers who having been supported by the Council who are likely to stay loyal to the Council thereby resulting in less agency spend.

Local Universities do not offer a fast track option and stopped their part time Social Work Degree option some years ago. This left the Council's workforce unable to access a Social Work Degree whilst in employment and the Council could no longer financially support Degree level qualification. Partnerships nationally and have a good track record in delivering the fast track two year option, which is suitable for individuals who are in employment and who have relevant work experience and aptitude. MMU was one of the two universities commissioned by the Department for Education to develop and quality assure the initial Step Up to Social Work Programme Pilot which ran for the first time in 2010. MMU are the only viable option as the provider of a bespoke Fast Track Social Work Degree which can be offered to people in work and at the person's place of work. MMU are able to deliver within the timescales desired by the Council so as to lessen agency spend as soon as practicably possible. The formal degree will commence in September 2017.

**Briefing notes documents:**

HR Comments Lynn Robinson.docx, Appendix 2 - Grow our own Scheme.docx, Appendix 1 - Background Information.docx

**Other Options Considered:**

- 1.Do Nothing. This is not a favoured option as the crisis within social work recruitment and retention nationally has resulted in significant use of agency staff which has a destabilising effect on the child protection service which in turn increases costs.
- 2.A "Return to Social Work" Scheme. This scheme can run in tandem with the proposed scheme but previous experience of running a similar return to work programme resulted in only a small cohort of Social Workers converting back.
- 3.Wait for the local universities to develop a similar fast track programme whilst also waiting for the option of paying for the training through the Apprenticeship Levy. This option was rejected because it could be up to two years before this provision is available and the Council has the opportunity to support enthusiastic employees to complete their qualification before this option could even be commenced. If the local option becomes available, then procurement options would be explored at that point.
- 4.Using the Open University to provide the course. This option was rejected as the part time course takes over 6 years to complete.

**Background Papers:**

**Published Works:**

**Affected Wards:**

Citywide

**Colleague / Councillor Interests:**

Any Information Exempt from publication:

Yes

Dispensation from Financial Regulations:

Yes

Exempt Information:

Description of what is exempt:

The tuition fee amount agreed with MMU is considered to be commercially sensitive therefore the financial implications of this decision have been put into a separate exempt appendix.

An appendix (or appendices) to this decision is exempt from publication under the following paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because it will reveal competitive pricing information that Manchester Metropolitan University consider to be commercially sensitive given that the package has been put together on a bespoke, fast track basis for the City Council.

5 - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the information contains legally privileged advice concerning legal matters which the decision maker is entitled to consider without the Council's position being affected and or prejudiced simply by the consideration of those issues.

Documents exempt from publication:

DDM - Employment Issues - 23.05.2017.docx, Financial Implications -exempt.docx

Consultations:

Date: 01/12/2016

Unions: Unison, GMB

JCNC have been fully informed and the Unions are supportive of the Scheme and how we support our colleagues who aspire to become Social Workers is one of the issues that have been raised by staff side since funding was withdrawn for SW traineeships in 2012.

Date: 01/12/2016

Other: Councillor Mellen

Lead Portfolio Holder for the service who supports the Scheme fully.

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

**Crime and Disorder Implications:**

This decision will have a neutral impact

**Equality:**

Please login to the system to view the EIA document: EIA and Workforce profile.pdf

**Social Value Considerations:**

NA

**Relates to staffing:**

Yes

**Decision Type:**

Portfolio Holder

**Subject to Call In:**

Yes

**Call In Expiry date:**

07/07/2017

**Advice Sought:**

Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Equality and Diversity

**Legal Advice:**

This advice is exempt from publication and is contained within an exempt appendix

**Finance Advice:**

Due to the resource shortage of Social Workers, the Grown Your Own Social Worker' Scheme is aimed at investing in our workforce to develop our own qualified Social Workers. Other benefits will include enhancing the quality of our services and reducing agency spends.

The course is provided by MMU at a reduced rate for a cohort of no less than 25.

Partnership Organisations have expressed an interest which will reduce the risk of falling beyond the required cohort of 25.

The maximum total cost associated with the programme is £0.392m over 2 years based on a cohort of 28. The Council will be required to fund the course from the outset.

£0.092m will be funded by the Council as a contribution to course fees. Residual costs will be recovered from colleagues via a career development loan repaid over a 5 year period. Management will need to monitor and manage any implications arising from any changes to individual circumstances over the course of the loan period.

Finance understands there is no additional funding required to backfill individuals that are enrolled on the course.

This proposal seeks dispensation from Contract Procedure Rules (5.1.2) in accordance with Financial Regulations 3.29, and is appropriate in these circumstances as detailed above.

The funding of the course and loan repayment are set out in the table which is attached as an appendix.

**Christine Green**

Senior Commercial Business Partner - Children's & Educations

Advice provided by Christine Green (Senior Commercial Business Partner) on 12/04/2017.

Advice documents: Financial Implications -GYO v2.docx

**Procurement Advice:**

This report seeks approval, using clause 3.29 of the financial procedure rules to dispense with the requirement under clause 5.1.2 under the contract procedure rules to seek tenders. If dispensation is granted, then the requirements of the contract procedure rules will be satisfied and there will be no procurement concerns. Given that the marketplace only offers one provider currently who can meet the timescales for a fast track provision of this course, (and this solution is temporary until the new apprenticeship standards have been developed) procurement supports this proposal on this basis. Advice provided by Rosalie Parkin (Category Manager) on 08/05/2017.

**HR Advice:**

See Appendix with HR comments.

**Lynn Robinson**

HR Business Partner

9 May 2017 Advice provided by Lynn Robinson (HR Business Partner) on 09/05/2017.

**Equality and Diversity  
Advice:**

The proposal offers opportunities to enable the Authority to develop talent from within. However it will be important to monitor how each of the protected groups are able to take advantage of the opportunity and careful consideration should be made to ensure equality of opportunity. Advice provided by Adisa Djan (Equalities and Diversity Consultant) on 13/04/2017.

**Signatures**

<b>Graham Chapman (PH for Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration)</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 28/06/2017</b>
<b>Helen Blackman (Director of Children's Social Care)</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 28/06/2017</b>
<b>Geoff Walker (Strategic Director Finance/CFO) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations</b>
<b>SIGNED and Dated: 22/06/2017</b>
<b>Chief Finance Officer's Comments:</b>