

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 2nd May 2017

Title of report: Kirklees Partnership with National Citizen Service (NCS)

Purpose of report:

To provide Cabinet with information relating to the establishment of a pioneering partnership with the NCS. The proposed partnership would be the first of its kind in the UK offering the depth and breadth of Local Authority engagement with NCS.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	N/A
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?	No – the report is for information only. The partnership will have a positive effect upon all wards but this is not significant in terms of spend, service change or impact upon all residents.
The Decision - Is it eligible for “call in” by Scrutiny?	N/A no decision being requested.
Date signed off by Director & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance, Professional and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Governance and Commissioning Support?	Gill Ellis, Director for Children’s Services 19 April 2017 Debbie Hogg, 19 April 2017 Julie Muscroft, 19 April 2017
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Masood Ahmed – Community Cohesion and Schools

Electoral wards affected: All
Ward councillors consulted: Cabinet members

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

1.1 NCS is a national institution for all young people with a permanent statutory footing granted in 2016. It started life as pilot project founded by a small group of social entrepreneurs who had a vision “that young people can change the world around them if given the right tools, opportunities and respect”. NCS seeks to advance three key social challenges.

1. Social Cohesion - To bring our country together by building stronger, more integrated communities and fostering understanding between young people from different backgrounds

2. Social Mobility - To build essential skills for life and work, investing in our country’s future talent.

3. Social Engagement - To engage young people in social action in their communities and the democratic process, building their understanding of their responsibilities as citizens.

- 1.2 All young people aged 15-17 are currently eligible to take part in an NCS programme which typically lasts 2-4 weeks and takes place during the spring, summer, and autumn holiday periods. Young people participate in groups of between 12 -15 and are usually placed with people they have previously not met. A Programme is made up of the following phases:

Adventure - A residential week involving exciting and challenging outdoor activities.

Discover - Participants develop life skills, confidence, leadership and communication and meet a diverse range of businesses, local leaders and community organisations.

Social Action - Participants plan, develop and deliver a social action project to make a difference in their community.

Graduation - A celebration of participation but also the next phase of the programme whereby young people are encouraged to continue their volunteering and support for other young people as an NCS Ambassador or paid seasonal worker.

- 1.3 Over 200,000 young people have become NCS graduates since 2010 with over 75,000 taking part in 2016. The aim is for over 1m young people to have taken part by 2020. Evaluations of the programme show it is having a considerable impact in the three areas of Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Social Engagement.
- 1.4 In Kirklees, participation is growing but is not as high as other areas – approx. 700 young people took part in 2016 and over 800 will participate in the 2017 summer programme. NCS approached the Chief Executive and Interim Director of Children’s Services to consider how, working in partnership with NCS, the Council could maximise the NCS investment in its young people and ensure that those young people are able to contribute positively to the social challenges we face as a district.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 The following headline activities have been discussed with Leadership and Management Team (LMT) and agreed with NCS and the local NCS delivery partners.
- The Council Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Schools will become the NCS Champion in the Council’s Cabinet and will bring the influence of his office to the programme in the district.
 - We will appoint an NCS Programme Leader within Children’s Services team who will report directly to the Deputy Assistant Director – Skills, Enterprise and Progression. The NCS Programme Leader will work directly with colleagues in the local delivery teams and with Schools, Colleges, Looked After Children / Care Leaving teams, Youth Offending Team, Careers Education, Community Cohesion, Early Help etc. to embed and promote the programme.

It is vital that there is a truly inclusive approach in Kirklees which supports the Council's priorities around early help, community cohesion and active citizenship and is fully integrated with the work of the democracy commission.

- An NCS Strategy Group will be chaired by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder with cross-party representation and key senior officers. The Group will champion the development of the programme in Kirklees ensuring that the programme delivers on key strategic outcomes. The group will also include senior representation from partners across the district including Kirklees Association of Secondary Heads, Sixth Form and Further Education Colleges, University of Huddersfield, Calderdale and Kirklees Careers, Third and Faith Sector Leaders, Communications Team and NCS local delivery providers.
- A lead communications professional from the Council's communications team will ensure develop an effective communication plan to: raise awareness of the programme at the highest level in the Council across elected members and officers; increase awareness of the programme across the district providing visible demonstration of its benefits to young people and their communities; and drive increased referrals to the programme particularly for young people from vulnerable groups. Young people will be heavily involved in the communications planning in order that it gets across the right messages to potential participants.
- We will arrange for NCS local delivery partners to have input at key meetings / events involving leaders of learning in Kirklees. This includes school curriculum leaders, Careers network, Post 16 Progression Board and PSHE Network.
- We will establish a programme of democratic engagement, based upon the work of the democracy commission. This will provide the opportunity for all elected members to engage with young people on an NCS programme providing the basis for Social Action projects which are informed by and shared with ward members.
- We will work with partners and NCS local delivery teams to address challenges where an NCS referral / programme could have a positive and beneficial impact. For example, this could be where young people are at risk of dropping out of provision or underachieving due to motivational / personal issues. Post 16 (year 12) dropout rates peak in the period following the Autumn half-term and timely intervention via NCS could help address underlying reasons (confidence, friendships, low level mental health issues etc.).
- We will ensure that the assets and facilities of the Council and partners are at the disposal of the programme where it helps to facilitate delivery and increased participation. In a promotional sense this could be through attendance at Careers events both in Schools and at the annual Choices event at the John Smiths Stadium. We will also work with local delivery teams to directly mail NCS postcards to parents and guardians who have not received NCS marketing literature via other marketing channels. In terms of delivery, this could be through community venues, Council and partner buildings like the town halls in Dewsbury, Batley and Huddersfield and the vast venues of Kirklees College and University of Huddersfield.

Charges may apply in some cases but we will seek to ensure that NCS benefits from support in-kind where possible.

- The NCS Senior Leadership Team has approved the headline actions and will provide the Council with £65,000 of funding to support the activity proposed.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

The partnership with NCS will support proactive interventions both for people who may be at risk or vulnerable and for whom participation may address the underlying issue e.g. low level mental health issues. The Social Action projects themselves, designed and run by participants, often address issues within communities that deliver EIP benefits e.g. promoting active lifestyles, developing befriending schemes bringing people together across age ranges and faiths.

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

The NCS programme has been evaluated and shown to have a very positive impact upon economic resilience factors including: work readiness; enterprise skills; confidence in presenting business ideas; creating a resilient third sector and volunteer economy and through the NCS investment – providing jobs and income for local people and organisations.

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

The partnership with NCS will support the outcome for all children to have the best start in life. In particular, it will support them to make positive decisions for themselves, their families and their communities and to make a positive contribution to their family, their school and their community (and so to) Kirklees and society and we will be promoting NCS rigorously with our vulnerable youngsters. NCS participation has shown to have a positive impact upon self-esteem and confidence and reduces anxiety and supports the development of skills and aspirations that leads to greater confidence in securing employment and skills.

3.4 Reducing demand of services

The increased participation of young people in NCS should have a positive effect upon NEET figures in the long-term and reduce the need for services which support young people who are NEET.

3.5 Legal / Financial or Human Resources

The Council will need to enter into an 18 month funding agreement with NCS. Colleagues in Legal and Finance will be involved in approving and finalising that agreement. Colleagues in Human Resources will advise on the recruitment and appointment of the lead officer following current vacancy management protocols.

4. Consultees and their opinions

- 4.1 LMT have been consulted on the proposals and their feedback on the work of the democracy commission, effective communications and the involvement of young people, and the need for the programme to align with the work around early help.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 An implementation plan is being developed with NCS and local delivery partners. A wider strategic document, linked to the Kirklees Outcomes will be developed with the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Schools and the Strategy Group.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

- 6.1 There is no specific decision to be taken regarding the report. It is recommended that Cabinet note the report and endorse the positive opportunities the partnership with NCS presents for the citizens of Kirklees.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation

- 7.1 The portfolio holder recommends that Cabinet note the report and endorses the positive opportunities the partnership with NCS presents.

8. Contact officer

- 8.1 Martin Green Deputy Assistant Director Learning and Skills

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

- 9.1 Not applicable

10. Assistant Director responsible

- 10.1 Jo-Anne Sanders, Interim Service Director for Early Help & Learning