

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 9 June 2016

**Subject:** Response to the Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's report "Widening Student Opportunities in the City"

**Report by:** Dr Janet Maxwell, Director of Public Health

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** Yes/No

**Full Council decision:** Yes/No

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#### **1. Summary**

The Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel conducted a review into widening student opportunities in the city.

#### **2. Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report is to respond to the Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel - "Widening Student Opportunities in the City"

#### **3. Recommendations**

That the Panel is thanked for its work in undertaking the review:

That the Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's recommendations be approved in line with the responses noted in item 4 below.

#### **4. Response to panel recommendations**

- I. Efforts must be made to ensure the co-ordination of volunteering opportunities in the city for students, regardless of background, by continuing the work of Portsmouth Together to ensure a single point of contact and use of suitable branding and a single banner for volunteering in the city.

Response: The Portsmouth Together partnership was created in 2014 when the city received a grant from the Cabinet Office to join the Cities of Service UK pilot. The grant funding, which provided the post of Chief Service Officer and administration for the Portsmouth Together website, comes to an end in June 2016. However, the programme has now been extended until March

2018 as a result of funding drawn from the Public Health Grant held in the corporate reserve.

This funding ensures the continuation of Portsmouth Together to continue to develop as a central network for promoting and extending social action, including volunteering, in Portsmouth.

The Chief Service Officer will continue to work with University of Portsmouth (UoP) Purple Door, University of Portsmouth Students Union (UPSU), colleges and schools to co-develop an infrastructure which encourages young people to be motivated to seek out opportunities and actively take part in social action.

- II. The positive contribution of students to community life should be celebrated and publicised and there should be publicity for the National Citizen Service (NCS) scheme to encourage more volunteers to take part, with the use of PCC publications such as Flagship and Term Times and the use of social media (looking at a Facebook page and hashtag # for Portsmouth Volunteering which could be monitored by a student volunteer) and local community stations, hospital radio and Portsmouth Football Club.

Response: Portsmouth Together regularly promotes the value of the National Citizens Service (NCS) programme and the NCS lead in Portsmouth, Pompey in the Community (PICT), are represented on the membership of the Portsmouth Together Steering Group.

The Chief Service Officer will continue work with PITC to support communications strategy which seeks to:

- Increase the number of young people taking part in NCS
- Increase the number of NCS graduates continuing to participate in social action
- Promote NCS graduates as a resources to the voluntary and community sector

- III. Councillors should help promote the role of young volunteers (including the university's VIP participants) in community events to extend the geographical areas covered. Councillors should also actively promote volunteering opportunities in their area city-wide to maximise attendance. Councillors should encourage engagement via attendance at college aspiration-raising events and by acting as mentors.

Response: The Chief Service Officer can provide a point of contact to Councillors wishing to engage with the colleges and schools.

- IV. To encourage younger participants to join in volunteer schemes as part of the social responsibility agenda, best practice elsewhere should be looked at, to get younger people into schemes such as the NCS. There should also be exploration of non-monetary incentives and a Portsmouth Young

Volunteer of the Year Award organised in conjunction with partner organisations in the city.

Response: The Chief Service Officer (CSO) is engaged with 'Step Up To Serve', a national youth social action organisation, to identify good practice and guidance. The CSO will also be leading a small working group, involving UoP and colleges and youth organisations, to develop improved ways of promoting the benefits of social action to young people.

The Portsmouth Inspiring Volunteers Awards, which are organised jointly by Portsmouth Together and Pompey in the Community, recognised a 'Young Volunteer of the Year' in 2015 and will do so again in 2016. The Awards organisers seek to increase the number of nominations that recognise the volunteering efforts of young people. It is believed that the active support of Councillors in promoting the awards to voluntary and community organisations in their wards, and in particular with those supported by young people, could help in see an increase in nominations.

- V. To further explore ways to encourage student placements in key areas of the council (where future customer demand will be high) such as in social care and public health, with the offering of training/qualifications/career enhancement as part of the experience, and monitoring of the pathways into employment at PCC.

Response: The Chief Service Officer, with the support of UoP, Colleges and relevant PCC services, will arrange, encourage attendance and host a stakeholder event aimed at developing an action plan to 'Encouraging Youth Volunteering in Health a Social Care' an area where the involvement of young people is considered to be a particular challenge.

In addition, the Chief Service Officer will also work with the Director of HR to consider options for increasing the number of work placements that are available to young people within PCC services to promote employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, within the council.

- VI. PCC departments to have a presence at Volunteers Fairs held for students by the university, colleges and partner organisations and encourage their expansion around the city.

Response: Portsmouth Together team has since its launch attended volunteer fairs at colleges and partner organisations across the city to promote the benefits and opportunities of volunteering. It is proposed that this would continue and, in addition, the Portsmouth Together branding and staff could be also be used to support a coordinated marketing of volunteering opportunities with PCC Services.

## 5. Background

The Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel set the objectives noted below.

Objective 1 - To understand the existing student base in further education and at the University of Portsmouth as part of the city's population

Objective 2 - To gather evidence on the positive contributions of students to community life in Portsmouth, not only in a voluntary capacity but in other ways such as participating in arts and community projects

Objective 3 - To be informed of the work of the council and other bodies in the city with students which are mutually beneficial economically and academically

The EDCL scrutiny panel decided to have one large evidence gathering event, which took place on 24 November 2015. Verbal and written responses were received from a number of bodies including University of Portsmouth (UoP), UoP Students Union, three colleges (Portsmouth, Highbury and South Downs), Pompey in the Community, Portsmouth Together and a number of PCC Services (including Museums, Libraries, Public Health, Business Enterprise, Human Resources, Social care).

The panel's recommendations are noted in item 4 of the Economic Development Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's report and the responses to the recommendations noted in item 4 above.

## **6. Reasons for recommendations**

The Panel's recommendations are supported and will be put into action by a number of Council officers, in the main from within existing budgets.

## **7. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

This is covered in the main report.

## **8. Legal implications**

This is covered in the main report.

## **9. Finance comments**

The responses to the panel's recommendations mainly require staff resources to attend and manage partnership meetings and events. These are not expected to require a significant amount of additional officer time and should be able to be

absorbed within existing resources and cash limits, particularly with partnership support.

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Signed by:

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: