

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES****PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE COUNCIL'S NEW GRADUATE
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Personnel Committee concerning the introduction of the Council's new Graduate Development Programme and seek agreement to continue to develop the in-house programme.

Information**Background**

2. Personnel Committee on 7 March 2018 agreed to the introduction of a new Graduate Development Programme (GDP) bespoke to the County Council to replace the existing national graduate development programme (NGDP). The new programme has enabled the Council to:
 - develop a programme that is more flexible to meet the changing needs of its workforce
 - better attract and recruit talented, local graduates to its workforce
 - better align its graduate development activities to other organisational development initiatives as part of a wider talent management proposition
 - make use of the Apprenticeship Levy to fund graduate development opportunities.

Introduction of the new programme

3. The recruitment and marketing campaign for the new programme started on Wednesday 11 April 2018 and utilised social media and other digital routes to direct potential internal and external applicants to a dedicated webpage (www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/graduates) where more information about the Programme and a link to the Council's job section were available. Activity was also co-ordinated with the Nottingham and Sheffield universities to attract local students and recent graduates. The application deadline was Wednesday 9 May and resulted in 198 applications being submitted of which 176 met the eligibility criteria.
4. Following shortlisting, 44 candidates attended four assessment centres on 20 and 21 June. The assessment centres were developed and run in conjunction with East Midlands Councils and utilised a range of activities (including a group exercise and individual presentation) to test and assess the relevant skills, attributes and behaviours needed for the Programme.

5. Further to the assessment centres, 14 candidates were invited to final interviews at County Hall from which six were offered positions as graduate trainees on the two-year programme to commence on Wednesday 26 September 2018.

Recruitment and Marketing Activity

6. A key criteria of the new Programme was to attract local graduates into the workforce. Of the 176 eligible applications 71 were from Nottinghamshire while a further 93 were from Nottingham City. Of the six graduates who have been recruited to the programme three have home addresses in Rushcliffe, one in Newark and Sherwood with two in Nottingham City.

District/Location	Applicants	Assessment Centre	Interviewees	Appointed
Ashfield	9	4	0	0
Bassetlaw	4	0	0	0
Broxtowe	19	2	2	0
Gedling	3	1	0	0
Mansfield	9	2	0	0
Newark and Sherwood	8	3	1	1
Rushcliffe	19	5	3	3
Nottingham City	93	25	8	2
Non-Nottinghamshire	10	1	0	0
Unknown	2	1	0	0
Total	176	44	14	6

7. Another key element of the Programme was to attract students from local universities to the County Council. While 108 applications were received from those who were studying/recent graduates of the two Nottingham universities none were successful at obtaining a place on to the programme.

University	Applicants	Assessment Centre	Interviewees	Appointed
Nottingham Trent	63	14	1	0
Nottingham	45	11	3	0
Sheffield Hallam	7	0	0	0
Sheffield	2	0	0	0
Other	53	18	10	6
Unknown	6	1	0	0
Total	176	44	14	6

8. One aspect of the recruitment and marketing strategy that requires further development is how to attract a more diverse set of applicants. Of the 44 applicants invited to the assessment centre:

BME	LGBT	Gender	Disability
4	4	27 Female 15 Male 1 non-disclosure	2

Further work will be undertaken with the employee support networks to identify opportunities for marketing the programme amongst under represented groups and ensuring any specific support needs are identified and met.

Review of the Programme Implementation

9. A review of the programme implementation has been conducted including analysis of the recruitment figures, feedback from candidates as well as feedback from partners including EMC, the two Nottingham universities and the internal marketing/communications team. The review has highlighted a number of positives concerning the implementation of the programme including:

- High levels of engagement and interest from the local graduate workforce – the number of applicants (198) was far in excess of what was anticipated
- Engagement and partnership working with local universities to attract local graduates – 108 of the 176 eligible applicants were from the two Nottingham universities
- High levels of candidate satisfaction with the recruitment process
- Development of a programme that enables applications from both internal and external candidates – one trainee recruited to the Programme was an internal candidate
- Use of social media to generate high levels of interest in a cost-effective manner
- Utilisation of the apprenticeship levy through integration of the Programme with a relevant apprenticeship standard leading to a management qualification
- Successful introduction of a bespoke graduate programme within specified timescales

10. All recruitment and marketing activity of any further iteration of the programme will be revised to take into account the findings from the review outlined above.

11. There were also some aspects of the programme implementation that will require further investigation to identify whether improvements can be made for future years. These will primarily focus on addressing a lack of diversity in those candidates recruited to the programme and understanding why no applicants from local universities were successful in obtaining a place on the programme.

Next steps for those recruited to the September 2018 co-hort

12. After a three-day induction the graduates will start their first placement on Monday 1 October. Further work will take place over the coming months to embed the programme within the Council including attendance at committee meetings, commencement of their management and leadership learning activities and access to support mechanisms including an internal mentor and learning provider support.

Future Development of the graduate programme

13. Due to the success of the introduction of the new Programme it is anticipated a new cohort of trainees will be recruited to the programme for September 2019. However, due to the requirement of the scheme to be able to 'flex' according to the Council's workforce requirements there are a number of options being considered that may build on the current scheme including how graduate development opportunities can be further integrated into a co-ordinated approach to talent management within the Council including recruiting students from specific disciplines on to a scheme which develops them in areas of work where there

are skills shortages, hard-to-fill positions or growth areas within the Council. Consideration is also being given to how local university students might be offered opportunities for a 'year in industry' placement with the Council to help develop their skills and experience and enable them to be more 'job-ready' by the end of their degree.

Other Options Considered

14. The Council could revert to participation in the National scheme, however given the calibre of applicants to the in-house scheme this would appear a retrograde step.
15. It is therefore proposed to continue with the current iteration of the Programme and recruit local graduates for September 2019 while exploring the feasibility of other graduate initiatives that can build on and/or complement the existing programme.

Reasons for Recommendation

16. To seek approval for continuing to run an in-house graduate development programme that takes account of the learning from initial implementation and remains responsive to the needs of the business.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

18. The requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations were considered as part of the recruitment process and will be taken account of as part of the induction of new starters on the graduate scheme.

Financial Implications

19. The costs associated with the new scheme are comparable to that of the previous national scheme and no additional budget has been requested. Some departments have funded additional places on the programme which has allowed the Council to recruit to 6 posts rather than the original aim of 3. The learning provider costs will be covered by the apprenticeship levy.

Human Resource Implications

20. The graduate trainees will continue to be managed internally under the existing arrangements.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

21. The proposals in this report meet the Council's existing commitment to meeting, and where possible exceeding, the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Approve the continuation of an in-house graduate scheme building on the success of this year's programme.
- 2) Receive a further update report in 6 months' time.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 12/09/18)

22. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 12/09/18)

23. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 19 of the report.

HR Comments (GME 17/09/18)

24. The Human Resources implications are set out within the body of the report. The importance of continuing to develop our relationships with the local universities is critical to enabling the Council to attract talent across a range of hard to recruit to professional roles. The positive experience applicants reflected in their feedback contributes to our ambition of becoming an employer of choice and in retaining and developing the talent of local graduates.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All