



Meeting **You Make the Difference Board**

Final

Date 16 December 2009

agenda item number

Apprenticeships in Nottinghamshire County Council

1 Purpose of the Report

To inform the You Make the Difference Programme Board about the current range of apprenticeships, within the County Council and provide proposals to consider for the future.

2 Background

2.1 The National Apprenticeship Service was launched in April 2009 and is responsible for driving forward the Government's initiative for apprenticeships. The Service aims to deliver a significant growth in the number of employers offering apprenticeships as a way of addressing their skills shortages and future workforce planning.

2.2 Apprenticeships are considered to be an effective way of addressing both current and future workforce issues and the benefits of offering apprenticeships are seen to be :

- Developing the skills of local people
- Bringing young people into the workforce
- Involving the local community in the delivery of services
- Training the organisations current workforce and growing the workforce of the future
- Supporting older people who are out of work to retrain which in turn may help the local economy

Apprenticeships have generally been associated with young people but they are now being used increasingly to enable experienced employees to retrain for reasons such as redeployment, changing careers etc

2.3 At present the public sector accounts for less than 10% of all apprentices. The Government proposals are for 21,000 apprenticeships to be offered in the public sector, of which it would like 7,500 places to be delivered across local government organisations. Although there are currently no set targets for the

number of apprentices each local authority should take this may be something considered for the future.

2.4 The Government is determined that the public sector should take the lead in offering apprenticeships to address skills gaps and future workforces. It will also need to play its part in providing greater choice to young people who will, by law from 2015 have to stay in full time education or training until they are 18. The intention is for apprenticeships to develop alongside other 14-19 provisions such as GCSEs, A levels, diplomas etc However the policy was drawn up before the Country was in a recession and therefore the targets are not being met at this stage.

2.5 It is well documented that the County Council has an ageing workforce profile and part of the solution to that could be the introduction of an apprenticeship scheme for young people which could start to form the basis of attracting more young people into the County Council. September 2008 figures showed that of the County Council's total work force only 13% appeared in the 16 – 25 age brackets.

2.6 Part of the issue of attracting more young people is also having a better work experience scheme which could provide young people with a useful short term exposure to the many and varied careers offered by the County Council. Many organisations in the area work closely with schools to support them with this necessary experience and the County Council could play a bigger part in this.

2.7 A framework for work experience could sit alongside an apprenticeship scheme and provide another possible route for young people to access the County Council. Work experience across the County Council is patchy and adhoc. A corporate framework with the aim of proactively engaging managers' support would also help with consistency.

2.5 There are 2 main types of apprenticeship schemes

Programme Led Apprenticeship Scheme

This type of apprenticeship is essentially a training scheme which offers training to at least a level 2 National Vocational Qualification(NVQ) standard in partnership with an approved training provider (such as local colleges etc.) and a work placement with an employer. The apprentice is not paid by the employer for the work they do but the apprentice can claim a means tested Education Maintenance Allowance.

Employer Led Apprenticeship Scheme

This type of apprenticeship offers the same type of directed learning and placement as above but the apprentice is paid for the work they do during their placement and is given the same level of support, supervision and professional development as other employees. Qualification is achieved through a programme consisting of 4 days 'on the job' and 1 day at a

college/approved training centre. Usually the apprentice is paid a training wage which is currently £95 per week.

4. Apprenticeship in the County Council

4.1 Although the County Council is the single largest employer in the area so far there has been a fairly limited level of engagement in apprenticeships per se. The County Council does however has a long history of supporting employees to do day release and other qualification bearing courses which although are not the same as apprenticeships are within the same spirit. In addition the County Council is supporting many employees through the Skills Pledge and Train to Gain.

4.2 Apprenticeships is also the focus of a Members Scrutiny Review. The review will seek to identify the current provision of apprenticeships available for young people in Nottinghamshire across all sectors. It will consider what can be done by the County Council to improve both the number and range of apprenticeships available.

4.2 As far as apprenticeships are concerned there are currently several small schemes operating as follows.

Department	Numbers
Chief Executive's	0
Adult Social Care & Health	3 (Programme led)
Communities	0
Corporate Services - (Build Direct)	5 (Employer led)
Children & Young People – (Dukeries Training Centre)	45 (Programme led)
Total	53

Details of these schemes are as follows:

4.3 Adult Social Care and Health

ASCH provides a Young Apprenticeship Scheme which has been offered under the Apprenticeship's Health and Social Care Framework for the last 2 years. They work in partnership with NEBA the Nottingham Education and Business Association (NEBA) who provide candidates between the ages of 14 -17.

To date there has been 3 apprentices at both the Dallas Street and Ashfield PD Day and Community Support services where a structured programme-led training activity for the apprentices is offered. This involves working for a maximum of 50 days over a 52 week period. The remaining days are spent at college, to continue with their studies and enhance their qualifications on the BTEC Social Care Course.

There is a strong relationship between Dallas Street and NEBA,. Dallas Street has provided a successful culture in which young apprentices have every opportunity to get a broad understanding of a Social Care environment during their year long placement.

4.4 Children & Young Peoples

The Dukeries Training Centre has been running an Apprenticeship Programme since 1984 and during this period has built up considerable experience and expertise. They are the main NCC link with the LSC through the Nottingham Training Partnership. They offer an Apprenticeship Programme in Childcare. Currently they have approximately 45 apprentices working on a programme-led scheme and of this number 20 are also involved in the Advanced Apprenticeship Programme.

For this scheme apprentices are recruited from local schools, colleges etc from the age of 16 - 18. The apprentices are found placements in a wide range of establishments such as nursery schools to gain experience in childcare.

The Dukeries Training Centre is an 'accredited' teaching centre which allows them to teach in the following areas; Numeracy, Literacy, IT, Childcare, and Horticulture. It costs approximately £2,900 a year to deliver a framework programme per student, of which NCC pays 50% of the funding.

The Dukeries Training Centre is subject to inspection by OFSTED every 3 years. There are a number of requirements that OFSTED would expect to have been met during their inspections:

- Service Level Agreements with the local schools and colleges
- Contact with the learners/trainers
- Monitoring of the Apprenticeship Programmes
- Setting of positive progressions targets on the Programme

The infrastructure is in place at the Dukeries Training Centre to deliver an accredited Apprenticeship Programme. They have experienced trainers who are accredited to deliver the training up to Advanced Apprenticeship Level 3 and Key Skills level 2 and Technical Qualifications.

They are knowledgeable about the funding processes through the LSC and the OFSTED inspections and associated assessments and they have a comprehensive working knowledge of apprenticeships and can offer guidance through the complex administration procedures..

Approximately 83% of the apprentices progress onto finding jobs or go onto higher education.

4.5 Corporate Services

There is a well established employer led apprenticeship programme offered by Build Direct based on recognised skills shortage. They have partnership links with a number of local colleges where the apprentices are generally recruited from.

The apprentices currently on the programme include joiners, plumbers and electricians. They receive a salary at the appropriate rate for the work they do.

During the first year this cost is met by the Department but usually by the second year the cost is offset against income for the work they do.

4.6 Communities

The Communities Department currently have an apprenticeship/graduate scheme under consideration

5. General Observations

5.1 NCC is one of the largest employers in the County and therefore should perhaps play a larger part in the apprenticeship scheme than it currently does. At the same time we need to ensure that it is realistic within the current budgetary situation.

5.2 So far the provision within the County Council has been based on departmental specialisms and perceived skills gaps. Where possible we should try and retain this provision and continue to build upon this.

5.3 Currently business administration is the most popular sector for potential apprenticeship applicants and this is one area where the County Council could consider introducing a corporate scheme albeit in the present climate on a small scale

6. External Research

6.1 As far as the neighbouring authorities are concerned the picture seems to be as follows:

- Derbyshire – they have a business administration scheme and currently have 24 apprentices who are recruited into substantive posts. This means that when they have finished their training they do have a job at the end.
- Lincolnshire – they have just implemented a scheme and have recruited 8 apprentices who will be with the organisation for 6 months. They will be paid during this period of ‘on the job training’ but there will be no guarantee of a job at the end of the placement.
- Northamptonshire – awaiting a response
- Leicestershire – each summer they recruit approximately 12 young people onto their business administration programme on the basis of a temporary one year contract. There is no guarantee of a job at the end of the placement but the success rate is quite high.
- Nottingham City - finding out info

6.2 Research for this report has also included visits to Coventry City Council and Nottingham City Homes, both organisations have been recommended for their successful apprenticeship schemes. Key learning points from the visits are the importance of:

- a stringent recruitment process and ongoing assessment and monitoring of apprentices

- adequate resource to manage and administer the apprenticeship programme

6.3 The Public Sector Compact is co-ordinating details of apprenticeships in the public sector in Nottinghamshire. The Compact is a partnership of public sector organisations in Nottinghamshire currently chaired by the Service Director (HR). The aim of this group is to develop a partnership for implementing workforce development initiatives and a particular focus at the present moment is apprenticeships. This group could potentially be a good forum for joint working in the apprenticeship field.

6. Recommendations:

6.1 Note the range of apprenticeship provision that already exists within the County Council

6.2 Ensure that where possible existing apprenticeship provision continues and is built upon.

6.3 Set up a corporate framework for apprenticeships and work experience to provide guidance, information, support and funding mechanisms to ensure consistency across the organisation. This would require some dedicated resource.

6.4 The present financial situation at the County Council does not particularly lend itself to launching a new initiative for apprenticeships. Having said this the County Council does have a wider role in supporting the community with schemes such as this. Therefore in the present climate the recommendation would be for the Council in the first instance to support a small number of say 20 apprentices in the areas of business administration, social care and highways. This would be on the basis of appointing them on an 18 month fixed term contract with no guarantee of a job at the end of the project. The proposal would be to pay the apprentices on the nationally recognised training rate of £95 per week.

6.5 It is recognised that this would be a limited scheme but it would demonstrate that the County Council is engaging in this area and the benefits to the apprentices would be:

- opportunity to work in a large diverse organisation and gain valuable work experience
- opportunity to gain recognised qualifications whilst receiving some remuneration.

6.6 The Board to agree this paper in principle and then for a report to go to CLT

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