

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

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Personnel Committee concerning the continued development of the Council's in-house Graduate Development Programme.

**Information****Background**

2. Personnel Committee on 7 March 2018 agreed to the introduction of a new in-house Graduate Development Programme (GDP) bespoke to the County Council to replace the previous national graduate development programme (NGDP). In summary this enables the Council to:
  - develop a programme that is more flexible in meeting the changing needs of the Council's workforce
  - better attract and recruit talented, local graduates
  - better align the 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.

An update report was presented to Personnel Committee on 3 October 2018 at which it was agreed that further recruitment to the Programme should continue in 2019.

**Update for Cohort 1 (2018) trainees**

3. Six trainees were recruited to what is now referred to as Cohort 1 (2018) of the new scheme, starting their two-year traineeship in late September 2018. Since then trainees have rotated across different placements within the organisation usually at 6-month intervals. All trainees are now in their third placements. Examples of placements have included: Adults Transformation; HS2 and the Council's Office Accommodation Project. Placements are identified via departments submitting placement bids which are then assessed and allocated according to how best they meet corporate and departmental priorities as well as the development needs of trainees. As well as working towards their managerial apprenticeship standard, trainees are also studying towards the level 5 ILM diploma in Leadership and Management thereby enabling them to gain both a practical and academic understanding of

management and leadership. All those recruited in 2018 remain on the programme and work has now begun to identify appropriate career opportunities within the Council to facilitate their retention within the organisation.

## **Recruitment of Cohort 2 (2019) trainees**

4. The recruitment and marketing campaign for the new programme started on Wednesday 3rd April 2019 and utilised social media and other digital routes to direct potential internal and external applicants to a dedicated webpage ([www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/graduates](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/graduates)) where more information about the programme and a link to the Council's job section were available. Social media activity was also co-ordinated with the Nottingham and Sheffield universities to attract local students and recent graduates. This year saw the Council work more closely with the Nottingham universities to promote the programme through campus-based activities such as: attendance at jobs and career fairs; presentations to students (including Q&A sessions); running of 'pop up' stands in areas of high footfall on campus; support for the running of mock assessment centres and running practice interviews. The deadline for applications was 30 April and resulted in 288 applications being submitted. This was a 45% increase on the 198 applications received in 2018.
5. Following shortlisting, 41 candidates were selected to attend the assessment centres held in June 2019. As with 2018 the assessment centres were developed and run in conjunction with East Midlands Councils (EMC) and utilised a range of activities (including a group exercise and individual presentation) to test and assess candidates for the relevant skills, attributes and behaviours required for the programme.
6. Further to the assessment centres, 14 candidates were invited to final interviews at County Hall from which five were offered positions as graduate trainees. All five accepted their offers and commenced their two-year traineeship as part of Cohort 2 (2019) on 25 September 2019.

## **Recruitment and Marketing Activity**

7. A key criterion of the programme is to attract local graduates into the Council's workforce. Of the 288 applicants, 55 were from Nottinghamshire whilst a further 199 were from Nottingham City. The high level of interest from those with a Nottingham City address is not unusual given that most students will live in city-based accommodation. Note that data has been extracted from the submitted on-line application forms to identify the 'town'. In several cases applicants may have inserted 'Nottingham' in this field when they in fact live in nearby places such as Beeston, West Bridgford and Arnold and which will have therefore distorted these results. Of the five graduates recruited to the programme in 2019 one has a home address in Nottinghamshire while three have their home addresses within Nottingham City. Across the two cohorts, of the 11 trainees that have been recruited, five have been resident in Nottinghamshire, five in Nottingham city and one external to Nottinghamshire but who was a current student at the University of Nottingham.

District/Location	Applicants	Assessment Centre	Interviewees	Appointed
Ashfield	14	0	0	0
Bassetlaw	4	0	0	0
Broxtowe	1	1	0	0
Gedling	0	0	0	0
Mansfield	11	4	0	0
Newark and Sherwood	11	2	2	1
Rushcliffe	5	1	1	0
Nottingham City	199	30	10	3
Nottinghamshire (not specified)	9	1	0	0
Non-Nottinghamshire	34	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>

8. Another key element of the programme was to attract students from local universities to the County Council. 167 applications were received from those who were studying/recent graduates of the two Nottingham universities of which three were eventually recruited - two from the University of Nottingham and one from NTU. Furthermore, one other trainee was working at the University of Nottingham at the time of their application. These results compare favourably to last year where none of the recruited trainees came from either of the Nottingham universities.

University	Applicants	Assessment Centre	Interviewees	Appointed
Nottingham Trent	94	9	2	1
Nottingham	73	17	4	2
Sheffield Hallam	7	0	0	0
Sheffield	6	2	1	1
Other	81	13	7	1
Unknown/Ineligible	27	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>

9. The review of last year's recruitment and marketing strategy highlighted a need to attract a more diverse group of applicants to the scheme. The following activities were undertaken during 2019 to encourage greater diversity in applicants:

- Engagement with the Council's three employee support networks either through attendance at meetings or providing reports in order to ask for ideas and suggestions with a subsequent promotion of the programme through, for example, Network newsletters
- Updating promotional material to reflect the recent ranking of the council as a top 30 employer in the Stonewall Workplace Index
- Advert placed on the website of 'The Voice' magazine during the application period in order to attract more BaME applicants
- Direct links established with the Student Union BME Officer at the University of Nottingham to promote the scheme to BaME students within the university
- Advert and scheme promoted to students with a disability within the University of Nottingham via their Disability Support Team

- Links developed and the programme advertised to Nottingham Trent University students as part of their 'Rise' programme – a scheme to encourage widening participation which includes students from BaME backgrounds and those with a disability.

10. As a result of this activity there appears to have been an increase in the diversity of applicants selected for the assessment centres (Note: where known non-disclosures are shown in brackets):

Year	Attendees	BME	LGBT	Gender		Disability
				Female	Male	
2018	44	4	4	27	15	2
2019	41	5(3)	5(4)	24	17	7(2)

## Review of the Programme Implementation

11. As with 2018 a review of the programme implementation has been conducted including analysis of recruitment figures and feedback from candidates, partners including EMC, the two Nottingham universities and the internal marketing/communications team. In 2018 two aspects of the programme implementation were identified that required further investigation: 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. The review for 2019 has highlighted the following:

- Three trainees from the Nottingham universities were recruited to this year's programme. This may have been as a result of the Council attending several campus-based activities such as career fairs, presentations to students, running of mock assessment centres and interviews at the two Nottingham universities
- There appears to have been a greater diversity in candidates invited to this year's assessment centres (both in numbers and as a percentage). This may have been a result of increased work with the three employee support networks and the HR WOD team will continue to liaise with the employee networks going forward.

12. The review for 2019 has also highlighted the continuation of several positives concerning the programme including:

- Increased levels of engagement and interest from the local graduate workforce – the number of applicants (288) saw an increase of 45% from the previous year (198 applicants)
- Continued engagement and partnership working with local universities to attract local graduates – 167 applicants were from the two Nottingham universities
- Continued high levels of candidate satisfaction with the recruitment process
- Use of social media continues to generate high levels of interest in a cost-effective manner
- Continued utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy through integration of the Programme with a relevant apprenticeship standard and management qualification
- Increased diversity of applicants resulting in a more diverse cohort recruited in 2019.

## **Next steps for trainees**

13. Cohort 1 (2018) trainees are now in their penultimate placements and being supported to work towards their management qualification as well as preparation for their final End Point Assessment (EPA) for summer 2020 which forms part of their apprenticeship standard. There is now an increased focus on identifying appropriate job opportunities with a view to retaining the graduates within the organisation after completion of their traineeship in late September 2020.
14. Cohort 2 (2019) trainees started their first placements on 30 September and have commenced their apprenticeship standard and ILM management qualification.
15. The placement planning process for both cohorts will commence before Christmas to enable the identification of suitable placements for all trainees from April 2020.

## **Future Development of the graduate programme**

16. Due to the continued success of the programme as it enters its second year it is anticipated that a new cohort of trainees will again be recruited for September 2020. A number of options are being considered that complement the programme to form part of a wider approach to talent management and promoting the organisation as an employer of choice to local graduates. This includes how students can access 'year in industry' placements with the Council and the development of extended work placements over 10 weeks that will offer students the opportunity to develop their skills and experience within the organisation and which will hopefully encourage a greater number of skilled local graduates to apply for the Graduate Development Programme as well as other positions within the organisation.

## **Other Options Considered**

17. The Council could revert to participation in the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). However, given the increased interest in the scheme this year, the work that has already taken place with developing links with local universities and the continued high calibre of local graduates to the in-house scheme this would appear to be a retrograde step.
18. It is therefore proposed to continue with the current iteration of the programme and to once again recruit local graduates for September 2020 while continuing to incorporate other activities that can build on and/or complement the existing programme to form an overall graduate recruitment proposition.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

19. To seek approval for continuing to run an in-house graduate development programme that takes account of the learning from the previous two recruitment processes and remains responsive to the needs of the business.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

20. 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**

21. The requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations have been considered as part of the induction of new starters on the graduate scheme and throughout the recruitment process.

## **Financial Implications**

22. 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 five posts rather than the original aim of three. Learning provider costs are covered by the Apprenticeship Levy. If the programme is to continue to offer a similar number of places from 2021, funding from departments will be required as the current available budget for the programme will be insufficient to continue to support 5 or more trainees.

## **Human Resource Implications**

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

## **Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

24. 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.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Approve the continuation of the in-house graduate scheme.
- 2) Agree to receive a further update report in 12 months' time.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**  
**Chief Executive's Department**

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### **Constitutional Comments (KK 05/11/19)**

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

### **Financial Comments (SES 05/11/19)**

26. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 22 of the report. The Graduate Trainees budget in 2019/20 is £238,697 and an additional £75,800 is recharged to departments to fund the cost of the additional Graduate Trainee posts.

### **Human Resources Comments (JP 07/11/19)**

27. The Human Resources implications are set out within the body of the report. The programme assists the Council to attract talent across a range of hard to recruit to professional roles.

### **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