

**Report to the City of
Nottingham and
Nottinghamshire Economic
Prosperity Committee**

25th November 2016

Agenda Item: 7

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, GEDLING BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

ERAMSUS+ APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT

Purpose of the Report

1. At the last meeting of the EPC, arising from discussions about apprenticeships, Gedling Borough Council was asked to report back on a European funded project that it is delivering to increase SME engagement in apprenticeships.

Background and information

2. In March 2015 Gedling Borough Council submitted an application direct to the European Commission for Erasmus+ funding. 373,000 Euros were awarded to progress a project aimed at sharing learning and generating increased small business involvement in the delivery of apprenticeships. The three year project commenced on 1st September 2015 and will finish on 31st August 2018.
3. Along with Gedling, four international partners are involved. - Germany (an Education Research Institution), Canada (Apprenticeship Forum), Bulgaria (Chamber of Commerce & Industry), and Poland (Technical College)
4. The opening year has focused on identifying the barriers to apprenticeship uptake by SMEs in all partner countries.
5. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of common barriers emerged across the partners including a lack of awareness and understanding of apprenticeships and the benefits they can bring amongst SMEs; the size of SMEs being insufficient to support an apprenticeship; lack of a dedicated HR resource; SME perceptions/experience that young people are not work ready; lack of available funding and training provider inflexibility in apprenticeship delivery to suit the business needs of an SME.
6. The year one sharing of current practice also confirmed that 'general perception' of apprenticeships remained an issue. Specifically, that apprenticeships are still not viewed as an equivalent to other further and higher education routes. This is being addressed in the next phase of the project, part of which will focus on raising awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships to young people, parents and schools.

7. Following on from the identification of barriers, German and Canadian partners provided information on apprenticeship projects and initiatives that had been implemented within their countries to help breakdown the identified barriers. Case study examples were shared with partners.
8. Bulgaria, Poland and the UK reviewed the case studies to see what learning could be taken from the best practice examples and implemented in their country as part of a two year pilot programme. Some of the examples of best practice would be extremely beneficial to the UK but would need to be implemented on a national or regional level to provide the scale to deliver.
9. After consultation with local and regional stakeholders, Gedling is focusing the next phase on two particular aspects. Mentoring for employers of apprentices and provision of a dedicated SME support service.
10. Gedling's in house training service is an accredited training centre and therefore able to provide, in partnership with an external company mentoring training for participating SMEs.
11. The training is targeted at employees who support apprentices in the workplace on a day-to-day basis. The training will be delivered via three two hour twilight workshops. The first workshop will take place on Thursday 24th November.
12. In addition to the mentoring training, a support service for SMEs is also being offered that takes them through the steps to recruiting an apprentice. Information on each step in the process is covered within a dedicated microsite along with one-to-one support for the SME.

Project Outputs

13. Over the duration of the programme, Gedling is committed to:-
 - a) Supporting 90 SMEs to recruit an apprentice for the first time or support those that have tried in the past and had a bad experience.
 - b) Securing 120 apprenticeship starts (aim that 1 in 3 businesses recruits a second apprentice).
 - c) Engaging with 10 secondary schools
 - d) Engaging with 5 community groups
 - e) Engaging with 7 key stakeholders – National Apprenticeship Service, colleges, training providers, DWP, business networks, apprenticeship forums/ambassadors
 - f) Delivering a multiplier event to support project dissemination to 500 attendees to share the outcomes and best practice from the project (June 2018)

Recommendations

The Economic Prosperity Committee is recommended to note the report and to request Gedling Borough Council to share any learning and best practice with partners.

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Julie Beresford
Economic Development Officer
Gedling Borough Council
0115 901 3736