

20 March 2013**Agenda Item: 4**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR HR AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Personnel Committee with an update on the work related learning opportunities at the County Council and in particular the Apprenticeship Scheme.

Information and Advice

2. In June of last year Personnel Committee received a report informing them about the wide range of work related learning opportunities offered by the County Council through short term work experience, apprenticeships and graduate traineeships. The County Council also continues to offer a wide range of short term work experience opportunities to young people to give them their first taste of the working environment.
3. The graduate scheme has continued to develop and it is now being extended to include a further 8 graduate trainees employed specifically to study for their Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) qualification. CIPFA is the professional body for people in public finance and the County Council has traditionally supported CIPFA training. The current financial challenges facing the public sector generally, and local government specifically, have highlighted the need for high quality financial management support. The key considerations for local authorities are ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of suitably qualified finance managers in the future. The scheme is being developed in partnership with the County Council, 6 district councils, the Police Authority and the fire and rescue service. The County Council will manage the scheme with the other partners making a proportionate contribution.
4. The County Council's Apprenticeship Scheme has also developed since it was first established in 2011 with 25 placements. It was extended in 2012 to provide 50 opportunities for young people to access a variety of work related learning opportunities at Nottinghamshire County Council.
5. The apprenticeship scheme has enabled the County Council to offer a variety of opportunities to young people (generally 16-19 year olds) in a range of

service areas across the County. The number of placements is now 50 and the intention is to carry on with a similar sized scheme for the next financial year; offering a further 50 placements.

6. The apprentices are placed in a wide variety of service areas such as libraries, youth work, catering, highways, business administration, customer service etc. which demonstrates the extensive range of the County Council's work.
7. A work shadowing exercise is taking place, involving some of the current apprentices and senior managers, including members of the Corporate Leadership Team. This was launched week commencing 4th March to mark national apprenticeship week. The objective was to promote the scheme more widely to managers within the Council and provide an opportunity for apprentices to gain an insight into the leadership of the Council and senior leaders an opportunity to view the operation of the Council from a young person's perspective.
8. The County Council is under no obligation to offer employment to the apprentice at the end of the placement, however this would be the desired outcome if a suitable vacancy was available at the time and the apprentice met the appropriate requirements for the post. Of the 5 that have completed the scheme so far, 3 have been successful in obtaining temporary roles at the County Council and 2 have gone on to higher education. In addition 1 apprentice part way through the scheme has already secured themselves a permanent role with the County Council.
9. The cost of the scheme is £6210 per apprentice (16–18 year olds) per annum. The placement usually lasts for 52 weeks depending upon the type of apprenticeship. The amount payable increases slightly for 19–24 year olds. The scheme has been financed to date through existing budgets.
10. The feedback on the apprentice scheme has been very good and the following quotes from both apprentices and managers will give members an indication of this:

Apprentices:

- 'Loved placement and support. Manager gave me everything I needed to get my dream job'
- 'Placement built my confidence and has been excellent'
- 'Absolutely loving my apprenticeship at County Hall.'

Managers:

- 'We will really miss our apprentice, she has been excellent'

- 'It's hard work to begin with and you do have to put the hours in but it's worth it to see the apprentice progress'
- 'She is like a breath of fresh air.'

Other Options Considered

In addition to the apprenticeships and traineeship schemes already in place; the Council is exploring other opportunities such as extending work experience placements; internships and voluntary work with the Council. This would help support young people and the wider community gain valuable experience and develop knowledge and skills which would support access to employment opportunities with the Council and more widely.

Reasons for Recommendations

The apprenticeship scheme forms part of the County Council's overall Youth Employment and Employability strategy which focuses on increasing employment opportunities for the 16-24 age group and developing the skills and employability of this age range across the County. Increasing the take up of apprenticeships is a key strategy both locally and nationally and benefits both young people and employers.

The apprenticeship scheme is also a key aspect of the Council's Workforce Strategy to increase the number of young people employed by the County Council which will contribute to improving the age profile of the Council's workforce and encourage new ideas and innovation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Human Resources Implications (MS 12/02/13)

The human resource issues are identified in the report. Any recruitment processes will be in line with normal County Council processes. The trade unions have previously been consulted on this scheme and have commented on the Council's approach.

RECOMMENDATION

1) That Personnel Committee notes the progress that has been made in developing work related learning opportunities at the County Council and in particular the apprenticeship scheme.

2). That members note the positive comments made by those involved with the scheme.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 18/02/13)

The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (SEM 13/02/13)

There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report as placements will continue to be funded from existing budgets.

Background Papers

Trade union side comments.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All