



REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS AND HUMAN RESOURCES

WORKFORCE PLANNING: UPDATE ON WORK BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Personnel Committee on the range of schemes and initiatives, as at 31st March 2016, which are focused on encouraging young people into the Council's own workforce by providing experiential, work based, learning opportunities with Nottinghamshire County Council.

Information and Advice

2. There are a significant number of young people across Nottinghamshire who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs). The County Council wishes to address this (having made explicit references within the current Strategic Plan) and has a number of established schemes to encourage youth employment by offering work based learning opportunities with the County Council thereby modelling good employment practice to other organisations.
3. These opportunities are open to young people across Nottinghamshire and neighbouring authorities.
4. The most recent update report on the schemes in place to offer work based learning opportunities for young people came to Personnel Committee in July 2015. The schemes are all managed and co-ordinated corporately through the Workforce and Organisational Development team (WOD) on behalf of the wider council.
5. In the period since the last report the schemes have been further developed to ensure they are more closely aligned with the Council's workforce planning priorities as set out in the 2016-2018 Workforce Strategy.
6. The schemes in place contribute to the delivery of the Council's wider workforce planning response by helping to address imbalances in the age profile of its workforce through encouraging a greater number of young people to work for the Council. The schemes also have the potential to provide progression routes to enable young people to develop a career within the County Council, particularly in areas where there are identified skill shortages.

7. These initiatives also support the Council's wider aspiration to support youth employment across Nottinghamshire and will be reported to the Economic Development Committee in November 2016 as part of the update provided into apprenticeships with Small to Medium Employers (SME's).

Apprenticeship Scheme

8. The County Council continues to work with Futures Apprenticeships Training Agency to ensure that our internal apprenticeship scheme is an attractive proposition for local young people.
9. Since its inception in June 2011, 192 apprentices have accessed 215 placements with the County Council (there have been more placements than actual apprentices as some individuals have been supported to move on from intermediate to advanced level apprenticeships linked to higher level NVQ qualifications).
10. The move from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships has occurred where it can be shown that the apprentice is capable of working at a higher level and this would significantly improve their employment prospects in certain fields (e.g. youth work).
11. As at December 2015 there were 58 apprentices placed within the Council. The target number of placements over a rolling 12 month period is set at 60. As of 31st March 2016 there were 51 current apprentices in active placements with the Council and a further 10 placements were advertised during April and May 2016 to ensure that the Council maintains its target.
12. Apprenticeships have been offered across all districts within the County however, there is particular emphasis on offering placements in those areas with higher levels of youth unemployment with the intention of attracting apprentices from those areas.
13. As well as the geographical spread, the success of the scheme also depends on placements being provided across a variety of services and departments.
14. In addition to the 41 new apprentices recruited between 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, a further 10 current apprentices began their apprenticeship prior to this date but are still on the apprenticeship scheme at NCC.
15. The quality of the Council's scheme has been nationally recognised. At the Apprenticeships 4 England award ceremony 2016 the County Council and Futures Advice secured the Bronze award for supporting apprenticeship recruitment. An apprentice in the Health and Safety team has also been named as runner up at the Prostart Training Agency "Apprentice of the Year" awards.
16. This year's annual NCC apprentice conference was attended by the leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and a new Apprentice Support Forum has been established jointly hosted by Futures and Nottinghamshire County Council. Both of these events are valued by the apprentices as they are able to hear from senior leaders and also gain valuable job seeking information.

17. There continues to be an improved focus on enabling apprentices to access employment opportunities within the Council on completion of their apprenticeship. Whilst there is no guarantee of a job within the Council, under current vacancy control arrangements, managers are encouraged to consider applications from apprentices (after those relating to re-deployment have been considered as a priority), for appropriate vacant positions in their service areas.
18. Whilst apprentices are encouraged to find employment within the Council, the scheme is also designed to develop the knowledge, skills and experience required to improve career prospects. Managers are encouraged to support the apprentices in their job seeking efforts towards the end of their placement.
19. During the 12 month period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016:
- 77% of apprentices completing their apprenticeship went on to employment or further education
 - 30% of these found employment with the Council on completion of their apprentice placement.

National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

20. The Council has been actively involved in the Local Government Association's NGDP scheme, which aims to build leadership capacity in local government, since 2009 and recruits to a new cohort annually.
21. Graduates recruited through the scheme become National Management Trainees (NMT's) employed by the County Council on a fixed-term two year contract during which they are provided with at least three placement opportunities with a strategic, operational and front line focus. This enables them to develop the leadership and management skills needed to help modernise and bring about improved services in local government.
22. To date 19 NMTs have been taken on by the County Council as part of the NGDP of which there are currently five on the scheme. While there is no guarantee of a job at the end of the scheme all 14 who have left the scheme so far have secured employment, four of whom still remain within the Council.
23. The County Council is planning to recruit a further three graduates to the scheme as part of this year's recruitment. The start date will be September 2016. The intention is that, at any one point, there will be six NMTs on the scheme with NCC. Those finishing the scheme will hopefully go on to access appropriate positions within the County Council. This supports the Council to build a talent 'pipeline' to develop and retain leadership talent within the organisation.

Nottinghamshire Financial Management Training Scheme (CIPFA)

24. The current financial challenges facing the public sector have highlighted the need for high quality financial management support. A key consideration for local authorities and other public sector organisations is to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of suitably qualified finance managers in the future. The County Council lead on the development of a collaborative scheme where graduates are recruited to a 39 month programme and have placements across a number of partner organisations.
25. Nine trainees were recruited on to the scheme in July 2013 and a further six in July 2014. It was agreed with partners there was to be no further recruitment during 2015. Three more trainees have recently been recruited to the scheme to start in July 2016.
26. Placements are rotated around participating organisations across the 39 month training period. Placements typically last for 12 months and are designed to provide trainees with the opportunity to experience a number of disciplines such as audit, management accounts etc. As well as the County Council the participating organisations are:
- Gedling Borough Council
 - Mansfield District Council
 - Newark & Sherwood District Council
 - Nottinghamshire Police
 - Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Nottingham Healthcare Trust
 - County Health Partnership
 - Grant Thornton
27. As of the 31st March 2016 there were eight trainees on the scheme. Of the seven trainees who have left the scheme all but one moved into positions within the County Council or with partner organisations.

Work Experience Placement Scheme

28. As part of the work based learning programme, the Council offers short term, unpaid, work experience opportunities to support its aspiration to be an exemplar of good employment practice. The programme aims to encourage people back into the workplace and engage young people with a view to considering the career options available to them in local government and wider public sector.
29. The central co-ordination of placements within the Workforce and Organisational Development team ensures the process for applications across all service areas are dealt with equitably and consistently. Placements typically last for up to two weeks and are offered across the Council to:
- School pupils aged 14-18
 - School leavers
 - Undergraduates and graduates
 - Adults seeking a change of career
 - Adult returners to work

30. The scheme is not currently designed to accommodate or fund requests for placements of longer than 10 working days in duration or sandwich course/industrial placements which are usually undertaken as part of an under graduate degree course.
31. The scheme does not link with any government Welfare to Work scheme.
32. Work experience applications are made through the County Council's public website and every effort is made to try and accommodate requests although no guarantee of securing an appropriate placement can be given.
33. A successful placement requires a considerable investment in managerial/supervisory time and the scheme relies on managerial commitment and participation. Inability to offer a suitable placement is usually due to reported lack of capacity within teams to offer support to placements. The increased use of digitalisation within the workplace also means that basic tasks previously undertaken as part of work experience, such as filing, are now electronic transactions.
34. The Workforce and Organisational Development team is currently reviewing the focus of the work experience scheme with a view to extending the range and duration of placements available and actively engaging more managers across the whole Council to improve the placement success rate. This includes:
- Promoting interest in the Council's scheme through more accessible information on the Council's public website and schools portal
 - Reviewing the online Work Experience application form to ensure that applications provide clear information on what they want from their placement to provide managers with sufficient information to identify a suitable placement in their team or service
 - Engaging more managers across the whole Council to improve the placement success rate by identifying when and where their team can offer placements.

Proposals for further development

35. The Council's current Work Based Learning offer will need to be responsive to new employment initiatives announced by the Government as part of the Enterprise Bill, in particular, the implementation in April 2017 of an Apprentice Levy and Public Sector Duty. The levy is applicable to all large employers with a pay bill of over £3 million, to be paid as a percentage tax on the employers' payroll which will fund the national Apprentice Programme.
36. The implementation of the levy presents an opportunity to extend and broaden the scope of the current apprentice programme to include higher level apprenticeships and the Council's current approach to non-graduate traineeships.
37. Further more detailed information on the application and the implications of the Apprentice Levy and Public Sector Duty will be presented to Personnel Committee for consideration in the Autumn.

Other Options Considered

38. Other options to continue and broaden the overall approach are currently under consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

39. To keep members informed of the range of initiatives to support work based learning opportunities available across the Council which support the strategic objective of increasing youth employment and enhance the Council's workforce capacity as set out in the 2016-18 Workforce Strategy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

40. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

41. Centrally allocated budget for 60 placements is currently available to enable managers to take on an Apprentice. Some services also fund their own placements. Traineeships are also centrally funded. There is no cost arising from the work experience scheme.

Human Resources Implications

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

Equality implications

43. The Council works actively with partner organisations to endeavour to attract a diverse cohort of apprentices and trainees, representative of all protected characteristics in the local community and labour market, to participate in all of its experiential work based learning schemes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Personnel Committee:

1. Note the achievements and focus to date of the Councils current work based learning initiatives.

2. Note the proposals for further developments of the schemes involved to ensure improved alignment with the Council's workforce planning priorities and to maximise the use of the Apprentice Levy to meet Public Sector Duty with effect from April 2017.
3. Agree to receive further annual update reports, the next in July 2017.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 22/06/16)

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

Financial Comments (RWK 22/06/16)

45. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 41.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All