

## EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

29 September 2020

### APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

#### Report of the Strategic Director Resources

Strategic Aim:	Develop a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan to support service delivery (4.3)	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr O Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate and Growth, Tourism and Economic Development, Communications, Resources (other than Finance)	
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Ward Councillors	N/A	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the Council's approach to the Apprenticeship Levy/Target and progress towards an Apprenticeship Strategy.
2. Is introduced to one of the Council's Apprentices in order to hear about their experience in Rutland.

#### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To notify the Committee of our progress, development and experience of Apprenticeships since the Levy and target was introduced in 2017 and to get a perspective of the experience of one of our Apprentices.

#### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Apprenticeship Levy and Public Sector Apprenticeship Target were introduced in 2017 as part of the Government's efforts to deliver 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020. Public Sector bodies with 250 or more staff have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts annually, over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. The Levy is charged at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's paybill.

2.2 Experience across the sector is that the policy and the target has been a challenge in local government with just over a third of organisations having met their contribution to the target, and have spent about 10% of the Levy so far.

### **3 WHAT HAVE WE DONE AND HOW ARE WE DOING?**

3.1 As with most authorities, Year 1 and Year 2 were restricted in part by the limited range of Apprentice standards that were available – hence our focus was the Team Leader/supervisor standard and Health and Social Care. The Human Resources team worked closely with local managers to identify and support use of the standards from a training and development perspective and we were laying foundations for the wider use of Apprenticeship roles.

3.2 In Year 3, the level of interest and understanding was continuing to grow – through bulletins, manager briefings and local discussions, and we started to see an increase in the number of apprenticeship roles.

3.3 The charts in Appendix A highlight for each year our target and the number of Apprentice starts we achieved. The target numbers can include Apprenticeship roles and existing staff who undertake an Apprentice standard.

3.4 Apprenticeship levy - the following table identifies the contribution into the Levy and how we are performing to date.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>ACTUAL EXPENDITURE</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>£50,393</b>	<b>£7,791</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>£54,169</b>	<b>£32,998</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>£57,292</b>	<b>£53,002</b>
<b>2020-21 (PROJECTED)</b>	<b>£56,680</b>	<b>£58,025</b>

Apprenticeship levy paying organisations have 24 months from the date of payment to utilise the levy, with the earliest payment being utilised first.

The earliest payment within our account that we have not yet used relates to January 2019, meaning we have until January 2021 to use that contribution before it expires. Current commitments within the account cover this contribution, therefore the Council does not have any Apprenticeship levy funding that is at risk of being removed from the account.

3.5 In summary, we consider we have performed well in the first 3 years – achieving 32 apprenticeship programme starts against a cumulative target of 36. However, we recognised in mid-2019 that there was more to be done and we needed a strategy and a detailed plan in place for subsequent years and importantly, enable Apprentices to be an integral part of our workforce and employee development model.

## 4 NEXT STAGES

- 4.1 In 2019, we were successful in securing a place on the 2019/20 Apprenticeships Accelerator Programme sponsored by the LGA and Education Skills Funding Agency. In 2018/19 they supported 22 projects covering 37 Councils – predominantly larger authorities. There was no cost to Rutland and we benefited from 8 days of targeted support from one of the LGA’s Workforce advisers between July 2019 and January 2020.
- 4.2 The overall aim of the programme was to:
- increase apprenticeships starts, through the delivery of an Apprenticeship Strategy and action plan
  - deliver a ‘deep dive’ for a specific service to explore its workforce data and people analytics.
- 4.3 It was our intention for this strategy to be in place for April 2020 but unfortunately further work and its completion has been deferred whilst we support the organisation with the Covid-19 response work. The following provides a summary of activity we undertook with the LGA, followed by an outline of the programme to be picked up from September 2020.
- 4.4 Accelerator Programme:
- 4.4.1 To help raise awareness of Apprenticeships and Apprentice standards and how these can be effective within teams, we carried out 8 workshops with a range of managers from across the organisation. We used a **Workforce Planning Five Stage approach** for these discussions to help and encourage managers to focus on what they currently have, what they need, what is the gap, what action is needed. In particular where does this start to draw opportunities for career grades, Apprenticeship roles and Apprentice standards.
- 4.4.2 These were first stage, exploratory discussions to help support an approach and thinking about skills needed within teams, and to provide a tool for managers to identify what they currently have. They were also used as an opportunity to consider how Apprentice standards and Apprenticeship roles could be incorporated into teams and for managers to feature that in discussions with staff about development, but also moving posts into Apprenticeship roles in the future.
- 4.4.3 Since these workshops we have:
- Updated our career grade structures in Adult and Children’s Social Care
  - Designed and implemented a Planning Career Grade
  - Designed and implemented a Building Surveyor Career Grade
  - Appointed to four Apprenticeship roles - in Planning, Finance and Revenues and Benefits
  - Supported three existing members of staff to follow an Apprentice standard - in Business and Administration, and Social Work.
- 4.4.4 We carried out more focused workshops within two service areas to test the model

in 4.4.1 in more depth - Business Support, and Revenues and Benefits. Some key outcomes of the workshops were:

- Clear understanding of both strengths and weakness within the team
- Recognition that there is no career pathway nor talent pipeline to fill key roles
- Recognition of the skills and qualities needed to deliver a quality service - particularly the 'softer' behavioural skills
- Recognition of the need to increase skill levels in some areas – this would also improve team and service resilience
- Greater appreciation and understanding of the range of apprenticeship standards which could be used within the team to help skill development – these would increase core skills and resilience
- Raised awareness of the importance of continuous growth and development within the team and hence the team's ability to respond to work pressures, changes in demand and new services
- Provided a tool for the manager to carry out local workshops within the team to help them shape team and individual development needs
- The scope to develop career pathways within the service
- The Business Support workshops enabled the team to create a clear vision, and to develop a process for identifying and progress development needs. Many team members have started learning to address their needs - predominantly around digital skills
- The Revenues and Benefits team's workshop was particularly helpful in highlighting issues with the team's succession plan. As a result of the findings they have recruited an Apprentice, who joined the team in August 2020.

4.4.5 The model and the process worked really well – it was enlightening for the service managers, and the LGA Adviser left us with an approach that we can use within services and teams as a generic workforce planning model, in addition to helping identify opportunities for Apprenticeships.

4.4.6 The LGA Adviser also worked with us on examples and templates on which to base our Apprenticeship Strategy, supported with key objectives and actions. This is work in progress with a target date of December 2020.

#### 4.5 Next Steps

4.5.1 As previously, our progress has unfortunately been delayed due to the implications of the Pandemic. We will be picking up key areas of work later in the year and will also take the opportunity to assess and potentially incorporate, some new government initiatives (see para 4.5.3). Our overarching vision is:

- To deliver an Apprenticeship programme that is available to individuals from all ages, from those who have limited or no work experience/qualifications to those wanting a career change

- To embed Apprenticeships within the workforce and as an integral part of local workforce planning
- Apprenticeships to be recognised across the organisation as a highly effective means for us to build our pipeline of skills and future talent.

#### 4.5.2 Key areas of work:

- Develop the 'Workforce Planning Five Stage' approach into a tool that managers can use locally to identify development needs for their service and staff – improving resilience.
- Identify Apprenticeship opportunities to support the needs identified in those plans. *(This will also identify needs and opportunities for career pathways and career grade structures that will enhance recruitment and retention).* October 2020 to March 2021.
- Raise awareness of apprentice standards as a route to progress for all employees – communication, case studies, briefings. October 2020 onwards.
- Work with service managers to map apprentice standards to critical skill needed within their service. October 2020 onwards.
- Share good news stories – positive experiences of our Apprenticeships. December 2020.
- Improve the promotion and attraction of apprenticeships as career choices for young people and disadvantaged groups e.g. care leavers. January to March 2021.
- Identify opportunities to use relevant supervisory and management apprenticeship frameworks to support aspiring and developing managers. January to March 2021.
- Work with key providers, partners and other local authorities to identify existing and new qualification routes and standards. Ongoing.

#### 4.5.3 New Government announcements:

- Apprenticeship Incentive Payments – a new payment for employers of £2,000 for each new apprentice that is hired aged under 25, and £1,500 for each new apprentice aged 25 and over. This is in addition to the £1,000 payment the government also provides for new 16-18 year old apprentices. (NB. Only paid out for new employees).
- Kickstart Scheme – there is a £2bn fund to create high quality 6-month work placements aged at those aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long term unemployment. Individuals on the Kickstart Scheme cannot also undertake an apprenticeship at the same time.
- Expansion of Traineeships – an extra £111m will be available in 2020/21 to triple the provision of traineeships in England. The Government will also provide a

£1,000 payment for employers providing trainees with work experience up a maximum of 10 trainees.

- We are awaiting further information from the Department for Work and Pensions on these schemes, but it is planned that we will offer placements in the Places Directorate, to support work around climate change. It is also anticipated that we would offer placements across the Council to support short-term project work around backlog arising from Covid-19.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 There are consultation requirements arising out of this report.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1 Working towards the Apprenticeship Levy and target became a requirement under the Government scheme introduced in 2017.
- 6.2 In addition, the Council considers that apprenticeship roles and standards are an integral part of our workforce model providing positive and effective job and training opportunities for all.

## **7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Most costs of supporting an Apprentice standard are met from the Levy. If the Levy is not 'spent' this is lost revenue. Para 3.4 outlines how the Council is currently performing against the Levy.

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The Council must be compliant with relevant employment law and regulations.
- 8.2 We are able to develop our own local policy and provision that exceeds legislative minimum requirements.

## **9 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed as there no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## **10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed as there is no differentiation for the provisions against the Protected Characteristics.

## **11 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no Community Safety implications arising from this report.

## **12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The Council has an overall duty of care to its employees which means taking all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff. Clear and fair policies and procedures can also be a key factor in building trust and reinforcing commitment to our staff and help improve staff retention, productivity and performance and greater employee engagement.

## **13 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 This paper updates and advises the Committee on the Council's approach and performance to Apprentices since the scheme was introduced in 2017 and appraises them of our ongoing work.

## **14 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **15 APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Apprentice Starts – Years 1 to 4.

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**