

## EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

16 February 2021

### APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
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) and Property	
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Ward Councillors	N/A	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Approves the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy (Appendix A)

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present for approval of the Committee, an Apprenticeship Strategy for the Council – this follows the update to Committee in September 2020.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In September 2020, the Committee was advised of the Council's progress towards achievement of the Apprenticeship Levy and Public Sector Apprenticeship Target that had been introduced in 2017. The meeting was provided with a summary of the developments and actions we had taken. This highlighted:
  - 2.1.1 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.

- 2.1.2 As with most authorities, Year 1 and Year 2 were restricted in part by the limited range of Apprentice standards that were available. In Year 3, the level of interest and understanding was continuing to grow and we started to see an increase in the number of apprenticeship roles.
- 2.1.3 Between Years 1 to 3, we achieved 32 apprenticeship programme starts against a cumulative target of 36.
- 2.1.4 The Council had undertaken some work with the Local Government Association's Apprenticeship Accelerator Programme to help develop our Strategy and Programme. Our intention had been to 'launch' this for April 2020 but unfortunately further work was deferred whilst we supported the organisation with the Covid-19 response work.
- 2.2 Members also received an excellent presentation from one of the Council's Apprentices – Sophie Hayes, and this provided a valuable insight into the 'real life' of one of our Apprentices and their experience with Rutland. They also expressed their thanks for the positive work we have done so far and requested the February 2021 Employment Committee be targeted for presentation of the Strategy.
- 2.3 Cllr Sam Harvey proposed that the Strategy include specific reference to showing our commitment to Rutland Care Leavers with Apprenticeship roles and this was approved.

### **3 OUR STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Whilst the Apprenticeship Levy and Public Sector Apprenticeship Target places a 'target' on us – the aim of our strategy is about more than numbers. We have a strong employee development ethos with a commitment to strengthening our skill base within the organisation through high quality learning and development opportunities.
- 3.2 The many challenges in parts of the UK economy and employment may present some changes to the local government job market – what does not change is the need to be an 'employer of choice'. Opportunities for progression, growth and development are excellent selling points and puts us in a stronger position to attract and retain good talent.
- 3.3 We also know our job market and the job functions that are in the 'hard to recruit to' – such as Social Work, Planners, Engineers. Fortunately these are all in the areas of development with Apprentice standards and we are starting to see new programmes to bring people in at grass root levels.
- 3.4 There is no doubt that 2020 has not been a successful year for some of our new Apprentice recruits. Supporting people into their first office role during a Pandemic and working from home has been a challenge and regrettably led to the resignation of some of our new starts. This has reinforced the need for greater peer and mentoring support and we have built this into the strategy
- 3.5 The draft strategy as presented, is intended as a 'strategy' document to see us through the next two years. It does not therefore contain a full delivery plan but it is the intention that the Human Resources Team develop a plan and report on its

progress to the Senior Management Team. Employment and Appeals Committee will also be appraised of our progress against the Strategy.

#### **4 CONSULTATION**

4.1 There are consultation requirements arising out of this report.

#### **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

5.1 Working towards the Apprenticeship Levy and target became a requirement under the Government scheme introduced in 2017.

5.2 The provision of a Strategy enables us to document our commitment to supporting Apprentices for new joiners and further training for existing staff. This could still continue outside of a Strategy document but would lack the strength of message and Member support.

#### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Any costs associated with delivering the strategy are met from the Levy fund.

#### **7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 The Council must be compliant with relevant government regulations.

#### **8 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

#### **10 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **11 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 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.

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

12.1 This paper summarises the update provided to Committee in September 2020 and presents a draft Apprenticeship Strategy.

## **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

13.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **14 APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Draft Apprenticeship Strategy.

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