

Report of the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Apprenticeships in Sunderland City Council

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update with progress on the Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme and to identify existing apprenticeships in the council as requested by Members.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2005 agreement was reached for the development and implementation of a council wide apprenticeship scheme. This commitment was based upon the needs of the organisation in rising to the challenge of providing young people with opportunities of employment and work experience in addition to the work already undertaken by Directorates. It is recognised that as well as contributing in part to meeting the Government's commitment to doubling the number of apprentices by 2020, there are significant advantages for the organisation in succession planning for a skilled future workforce and fulfilling the Council's role as a large local employer and corporate parent.

- 2.2 The Workforce Development, Strategy and Planning Team based in Human Resources is the central function for apprenticeship opportunities within the Council. The purpose is to deliver the Council's engagement as a key employer in the City to:

- § Provide a focus on the organisational need for professional skills development and capacity;
- § Enhance students' learning opportunities;
- § Deliver a fair and consistent entry to the organisation;
- § Manage risk in terms of safer working with entrants; and,
- § Develop consistent management and support of the individual and service area accommodating the apprentice.

3 Progress So Far

- 3.1 The main progress in driving the apprenticeship agenda forward are:

- Developing strong links with the Citywide Sunderland Training Provider Network to ensure the needs of the organisation are met in terms of the apprenticeships we are offering;
- Working with training providers, the National Apprenticeship Service and Connexions to ensure all young people across the City who wish to embark on an apprenticeship and are ready to do so, can apply for available posts within the Council;
- The recruitment process for potential apprentices is in line with the organisation's recruitment and selection process. This will ensure employee status from the onset of the apprenticeship, in compliance with central government guidelines, aimed to protect the apprentice and the employer in employment law, and encourage employers to take full responsibility for the management of employee status and success of the apprentice experience;
- Since 2004, opportunities available for apprentices within the Council have seen numbers increase to over 244 across Directorates over that period– see Appendix 1;
- Currently there are 85 apprentices engaged within the City Council in a variety of roles, 52 are aged 16-18 years old;
- The Council are promoting a “grow your own” ethos to workforce development, planning and succession. The Strategy and Planning Team supports this by promoting the benefits of using apprentices raising awareness of the responsibilities of those wishing to employ an apprentice; and,
- Recognition by NAS and the TUC of the good practice in the management of apprenticeship provision.

3.2 There are currently 88 apprentices in the following roles across the Council of those 52 are 16 - 18 years old.

- Accountancy - 2 (1 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Activity Leadership - 2 (0 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Business Admin - 10 (7 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Childcare, Learning and Development - 1 (0 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Civil Engineer - 2 (0 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Cleaning and Environmental Services - 47 (33 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Customer Services - 9 (4 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Electrical - 3 (1 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Engineering - 1 (0 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Gardening - 6 (3 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Gas Fitter - 1 (0 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- ICT - 3 (2 x 16 - 18 yr old)
- Paviour - 1 (1 x 16 - 18 yr old)

4 Next Steps

4.1 The aim is for an apprentice to progress into employment although this is difficult at the present time and cannot be guaranteed. Apprentices are provided with access to project work and developmental opportunities for employees who are not appointed to a post under the new structure. Furthermore apprenticeships can support plans for phased retirement or unpaid career breaks ensuring the skills set of employees is appropriate to the needs of the organisation and the wider city.

4.2 Either during or on completion of an apprenticeship, apprentices are also given the opportunity to apply for specific positions where scoping via SWITCH Officers has been exhausted. This will mean:

- The council and apprentice will still have a commitment to ensure the apprentice completes their apprenticeship framework if not already done so;
- If the apprentice has not yet completed their apprenticeship, the minimum hours worked still meets the legislative 30 hrs minimum for an apprentice. This could be made up from the new position and another if need be as long as opportunities are available to gather evidence for completion;
- Support is available for managers / apprentices / training providers in terms of awareness of responsibilities, commitment and flexibility in approach;
- Possibility of the apprentice having 2 contracts to cover employee status in new role and apprenticeship status; and,
- If 2 contracts are given, depending on the hours worked, the salary will be according to new role plus a potential pro rata of apprentice salary to hours worked in apprentice role. Example: If new role is a 15 hour post then an additional 15 hours will be allocated in an apprenticeship role.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

Contact Officer: Sue Stanhope Tel; (0191) 561 1722

Email: sue.stanhope@sunderland.gov.uk