

APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Scrutiny Committee with information about apprenticeship opportunities within Sunderland Council. The Director of HR & OD will be in attendance at the meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 There is national commitment to boost the number of apprenticeships to 250,000 by 2020. Apprenticeships will be managed by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) which will be part of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). Apprentices will be given employment status. It will be a job with training.
- 2.2 The Committee has been taking evidence this year on 16-19 changes. The local authority will become the single point of accountability for all 0-19 Children's Services and key to the planning, coordination and integration of services in their area. Local government has a key role and opportunity to push the apprenticeship agenda forward and as part of the evidence gathering of the review the Committee will be provided with information about the Council's use of apprentices.

3. Placement Opportunities Team

- 3.1 The Placement Opportunities Team is based in the Training and Development section of HR & OD. The team is the central function for apprenticeship opportunities within the Council. The purpose of the team 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.
 - Develop consistent management of the placement and the experience of the individual.
- 3.2 Since 2006 the opportunities available for apprenticeships within the Council has seen numbers increase from 23, to upwards of 170 across Directorates.
- 3.3 Developments are taking place to promote a "grow your own" ethos and to promote the benefits of using apprentices and also raise awareness of the responsibilities of those wishing to employ an apprentice. The aim is for an apprentice to progress into employment although apprentices are required to

be recruited into any permanent post in line with the usual recruitment and selection process.

- 3.4 It is recognised that as well as contributing in part to meeting the Governments commitment to doubling the number of apprentices by 2020, there are significant advantages for the organisation's ability to develop a skilled workforce for the future.

4. Numbers of Apprentices

- 4.1 Currently, there are 97 apprentices engaged within the City Council, in a variety of roles and 48 are aged 16-18 years old. 85 have completed apprenticeships and to date 68 have gained employment within the City Council. In addition a further 60 potential posts have been requested for the 2010 cohort and will be progressed accordingly. Five apprentices have had their learning suspended due to maternity leave or long term sick. The monitoring of this data is analysed and held by the Placement Opportunities Team.

- 4.2 Traditionally apprentices have been in areas such as Customer Service and Business Administration, however there are many more 'frameworks' now available and this has led to new apprenticeships in areas such as catering and childcare, learning and development as well as a range of 'craft' apprentices which includes electricians, gas fitters, paviors and plumbers.

5. Development Activity

- 5.1 A new centralised approach to coordinating Apprenticeships will include:

- Developing a data management system to track apprenticeships.
- Delivering awareness sessions for Managers and teams supported by the production of a Managers Guide.
- Ensuring OHU / CRB checks are carried out and Statement of Particulars are issued where necessary.
- Coordinating safeguarding training to those managers with apprentices' under the age of 18.
- Developing standard recruitment processes and procedures compliant with the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy.
- Monitoring of training provider activity.

- 5.2 Information about opportunities is available through the Council's Intranet and articles have appeared in 'Workwise'. The Placement Opportunities Team is further developing communication and promotion in order that Managers are aware of the team, the services on offer and also the benefits of employing an apprentice.

6. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to receive the report.

7. Background Papers

None