

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Employment Committee

Date of meeting: 16th September 2014

Subject: Apprenticeships - Progress Report

Report by: Jon Bell - Head of HR, Legal & Performance Improvement

Wards affected: N/A

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

To update members of the Employment Committee on the progress of the action plan to recruit apprentices to the City Council.

2. Recommendations

Members are **recommended** to:

- (i) note the positive progress to date in promoting apprenticeships within the Council
- (ii) approve the current target to recruit 25 new apprentices each year for the next 4 years, or suggest an alternative target

3. Background

- 3.1 The Regeneration Strategy 'Shaping the Future of Portsmouth' sets out the overall vision for Portsmouth to become 'a great waterfront city', with a leading edge economy supported by a highly skilled workforce. Recognising that the successful regeneration of the city will be dependent on how successful the city is in developing a strong skills base, a Business Growth and Skills Plan for Portsmouth was developed and approved by Cabinet in November 2013. This plan supports the Shaping the Future agenda with a two pronged approach which includes training, skills and access to employment as one of its main themes.
- 3.2 The delivery of apprenticeships and other work based opportunities has been identified as a core component of the skills growth agenda of the City Council and local partnerships, including Solent LEP (Local Economic Partnership), Shaping the Future of Portsmouth and PUSH (Partnership for Southern Urban Hampshire). There is a key role for the Council as an employer to lead by example in offering a sufficient range and number of apprenticeships. As a

community leader and policy maker within the city, the Council also has an influencing and enabling role to encourage and support the development of increased opportunities across the city. An example being the Employment and Skills Plans which are now part of the planning requirements for all major developments in the city.

3.3 An options paper has been considered by the Strategic Directors Board in order to select the 'best fit' option for the organisation and the following was recommended:

- All vacancies at Bands 1 - 5 would be considered for an apprenticeship and any opt out would need to be justified by the recruiting manager
- For level 2 apprenticeships** Band 1 would be paid
- For level 3 apprenticeships** Band 2 would be paid
- Priority would be given to eligible young people living in the City of Portsmouth or local authority housing in Leigh Park and Weacock Farm with special regard to those not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
- Portsmouth's looked after children and care leavers would be guaranteed an assessment for any apprenticeship posts in the City Council
- A target of 25 apprenticeships each year for the next four years was agreed

This approach was later discussed and adopted at the Corporate Projects Board.

***Level 2 is described as an Intermediate level Apprenticeship, the qualification taken is equivalent to 5 GCSE A*-C Grades and usually takes 12 months to complete.*

The Level 3 is described as an Advanced level Apprenticeship, the qualification taken is equivalent to 2 A Levels and usually takes 12-18 months to complete. The length of qualification is dependent on the apprenticeship being undertaken.

An Apprenticeship is made up of the following elements:

- *A qualification from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (formerly NVQ)*
- *A Technical Certificate to underpin the knowledge requirements of the QCF*
- *Functional Skills (Adult Literacy, Numeracy and IT)*
- *ERR (Employment rights and responsibilities)*

4. Progress to date

4.1 Appendix 1 shows a detailed breakdown of the posts and services where apprentices have been recruited or are in the process of being recruited. The table below show a snapshot of this.

Apprenticeship Numbers		
Service	Number of Apprentices in recruitment	Number of Apprentices employed
Adult Social Care	1	5
Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	1	0
Customer, Community & Democratic Services	0	4
City Development & Cultural Services	2	0
Education	0	1
Finance	3	2
Housing & Property Services	6	1
HR, Legal and Performance Improvement	1	1
Totals	14	14

- 4.2 Interest in the apprenticeship opportunities within the City Council has been strong with on average 50 - 100 applicants per post. In most cases the qualification provider carries out an initial 'sift' of applicants to ensure those applying are eligible and are suitable. This usually results in 25 - 30 applicants for the recruiting manager to shortlist. HR are working closely with the Integrated and Targeted Youth Support Service (ITYSS) and the Young Person's Support Team (YPST) to identify any looked after Children or Care Leavers to ensure these young people are offered an opportunity to attend an assessment. Vacancies are notified to these teams to ensure they are advertised as widely as possible and young people in the city are supported with their applications. Each apprenticeship recruitment has an assessment with around 8 - 15 young people invited (this is dependent on the number of posts available) to determine those going forward for interview. All those who are unsuccessful at assessment or interview stages are offered feedback and signposted to resources; such as CV writing and interview skills available through Pride in Pompey and the 'Go for it' centre.
- 4.3 HR have been successful in recruiting three Care Leavers into apprenticeships commencing in September 2014. These posts are supernumerary and funded through a grant obtained by the ITYSS Manager from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.
- 4.4 At the date of this report the City Council has 28 Apprenticeships employed or in recruitment.

5. Issues

- 5.1 The recruitment process can be quite challenging for some care leavers and there is evidence of one applicant leaving the assessment after finding it too stressful. HR is working with the ITYSS and the YPST to ensure applicants are prepared for the recruitment activities and receive constructive feedback. Where apprenticeships have been ring-fenced for care leavers (as in the case of the

funded posts from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office grant), the assessment and interview process has been modified to take account of their needs. Although the City Council should not treat Looked after Children and Care Leavers any differently to other applicants they do often need additional support which they can get via the ITYSS, YPST and their Social Worker.

6. Legal implications

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

7. Finance comments

7.1 Detailed below is an exemplar to indicate the savings to services in recruiting apprentices to a Band 4 post.

7.2 The cost of a Band 4 post plus employment on-costs is £18,569.00

- A Level 2 Apprenticeship is paid at Band 1 which, with employment on-costs, is £14,832.00 giving a saving of £3,737.00
- A Level 3 Apprenticeship is paid at Band 2 which, with employment on-costs, is £15,833.00 giving a saving of £2,736.00

7.3 Additional costs per apprentice are determined by age and the qualification being undertaken. In the main apprentices between 16 & 18 years of age will receive full funding resulting in no additional charges to the service for the qualification being undertaken. Apprentices between the ages of 19 and 23 years attract a lower level of funding and the costs of the qualification can vary between £100 per person to around £3,000 dependent on the level and type of qualification being undertaken and the training provider being used.

7.4 Apprenticeships are subject to their own arrangements in terms of minimum pay and it is not anticipated that they would be subject to the Living Wage, if adopted. However, Members have previously agreed to pay apprentices above the National Minimum Apprenticeship wage (this varies dependant on age). This decision was taken to promote apprenticeships as a positive recruitment and retention option for the City Council and provide a role model to employers in the city. The interest shown in the apprenticeship vacancies and the quality of applicants further supports the decision to use Bands 1 and 2 for the Apprenticeship wage.

8. Conclusions and next steps

8.1 HR is continuing to work with services to identify apprenticeship opportunities. Positive responses have been received from all services as can be seen from the recruitment figures detailed in section 4. The apprenticeship programme is being closely monitored and will be evaluated at the end of year one to ensure it continues to develop and provide the best possible outcomes for young people and for the City Council.

- 8.2 It may be possible to increase the numbers of apprenticeships within the City Council. As stated above, a target has been proposed of 25 new apprenticeships per year, but this has already been exceeded. However, this is dependent on the availability of vacancies, the nature of these vacancies and the costs of providing an appropriate qualification for them. There are also 'hidden' costs attached to apprenticeships such as time out of the workplace for study and the additional management time that an apprentice may need.
- 8.3 The next area of work will be to identify apprenticeships within the City Council that would meet the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) agenda as this is a key element for the 'Shaping the Future' Skills work-stream. HR will be working to identify any external funding streams to support this agenda. Case studies will be developed from the current cohort to enable HR to support the promotion of apprenticeships throughout the City Council and employers across the city.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Tables showing the Apprenticeships in recruitment and recruited by Service, Qualification and Number.

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Shaping the Future of Portsmouth	Strategy Unit
Business Growth & Skills Plan	Strategy Unit
Apprenticeship Strategy	Strategy Unit

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....Signed by:

Apprenticeships in recruitment			
Service	Team	Qualification	Number of Apprentices
Adult Social Care	Recovery Hub	Business Administration	1
Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	ITYSS Participation	Customer Service	1 (Care Leaver)
City Development & Cultural Services	Museums	Customer Service	1 (Care Leaver)
City Development & Cultural Services	Museums	Awaiting confirmation	1
Finance	EBS, ASC Payments team, Income & Payments	Business Administration	3
Housing & Property Services	Green & Clean	Gardening	2
Housing & Property Services	Housing Area Offices	Housing	4
HR, Legal and Performance Improvement	Learning & Development	Customer service	1 (Care Leaver)

Apprenticeships Recruited			
Service	Team	Qualification	Number of Apprentices
Adult Social Care	Transformation & Business Development	Business Administration	2
Adult Social Care	Portsmouth Day Service	Health & Social Care	3
Customer, Community & Democratic Services	City Help Desk	Customer Service	4
Education & Strategic Commissioning	Education Information Services / Admissions	Business Administration	1
Finance	Corporate Finance & Housing Finance	Business Administration	2
Housing & Property Services	Communities and Play	Personal Training & Instruction	1
HR, Legal & Performance Improvement	HR Admin	Business Administration	1