

## APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE AND FUTURE TRAINING PROPOSALS

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That HR Committee supports the continuation of apprenticeships where appropriate for both new apprentice recruits, as well as for training existing staff where this is the best method for doing so.

### 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update on apprenticeships undertaken over the last year, to look at those currently underway, and to offer options for future apprenticeship, T-Levels and trainee opportunities across the council.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is proud of its commitment to apprenticeships. This is fully supported by our Leader and our Executive Management Team.
- 3.2 We do this in two ways:
- By recruiting new employees as apprentices across our wide range of services
  - By providing and supporting apprenticeship training for our current employees
- 3.2 The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017, and the Council pays 0.5% of our pay bill into the levy each year. Last year (2020 – 2021) that was just over £104,000. We can draw down on our levy payments to fund apprenticeship training, each monthly payment remains available for 24 months, then will expire. We can opt to transfer 25% of previous years unused levy payments to a smaller organisation if we wish to.
- 3.3 Since the introduction of the Levy, 45 people have undertaken apprenticeships with the Council: 30 of these have been undertaken by current employees and 15 as newly recruited apprentices to the Council. Where possible and appropriate, the Council will seek out opportunities to secure further employment for our apprentices. For our current employees the apprenticeships have helped them develop in their current roles, and all who have undertaken these confirm they have added value to their role as well as their personal development and confidence.
- 3.4 Apprenticeship opportunities for new apprentice recruits or current staff are always given full consideration alongside alternative options to ensure this is the best development opportunity. In doing this, we look at the following factors:
- The content of the relevant apprenticeship programme
  - The skills required by the apprentice and whether these can be met by the apprenticeship
  - The impact of the requirement to spend 20% of the working week 'off the job learning' - both on the employee and on the team
  - The mentoring and support that can be given in the workplace
  - Future opportunities to allow for the learning and development to be put into practice.

3.5 Of the 15 new employees who joined us as apprentices:

- Five have successfully completed and have now gone on to secure permanent roles with us
- Four are currently undertaking their apprenticeship
- Six have left after successful completion of their apprenticeship to pursue other interests.

3.6 Stories from some of our recent/current apprentices are attached as an appendix 'Meet our Apprentices'.

## **4. CURRENT SITUATION**

### **4.1 New apprentice recruits**

4.1.1. The four current new apprentice recruits are in Grounds Maintenance; 2 about to finish, 2 just started – keeping up the steady flow of apprentices within the team.

4.1.2 We advertised in the summer and were unsuccessful. As a result of researching other employer rates, we increased our year 1 apprentice pay from £4.60 per hour to the national minimum wage for 16 – 18 year olds from January 2022. At April 2022 this is now £6.83 per hour. The college say the two we have secured most recently are some of the best they have seen, so that is very positive.

4.1.3 There will be a Grounds Maintenance Operative advertised shortly and it is likely one of the apprentices will secure permanent employment.

4.1.4 The Accountancy and Revenues team are in the process of recruiting a shared apprentice at level 2 or 3 through AAT training.

### **4.2 Completed Diploma Management Apprenticeship**

4.2.1 Three existing employees have completed the Management apprenticeship Diploma at Level 5 through Solent University – Pete Ferguson (Coastal), Dan Lacey (Housing Income) and Stewart Phillips (Streetscene), two passing with distinctions. One further manager (Scott Bailey) is due to complete in the Spring.

4.2.2 Once all have concluded, a celebratory get together will be organised in due course with our Leader and EMT.

4.2.3 When we have utilised management apprenticeships these have been funded via our levy payments, and services have accommodated the 1 day a week college time taken as the apprenticeship requires. This has had its challenges but so far has been successful.

4.2.4 EMT were keen to oversee applicants, so we 'advertised' the courses, levels 3, 5 and 6, we collated applications and then these were discussed, and participants were agreed at EMT.

### **4.3 Level 3 Team Leader apprenticeship**

4.3.1 Four employees successfully completed the Level 3 Team Leader apprenticeship during 2021. Sophie Thompson (HR), Tim Johnson (ICT), Amanda Camsey (Enforcement), Megan Ward (Homelessness).

4.3.2 Sophie Thompson went on to be runner up in the Local Government Association 'Apprentice of the Year' competition.

#### 4.4 Other existing staff undertaking apprenticeships

4.4.1 We have three existing staff undertaking apprenticeships:

- Sheryl Cole (Business Improvement) – Chartered Manager degree level 6 (Solent University)
- Debbie Everett (Elections) – Management Diploma level 5 (Intec business college)
- Jo Braid-Brown (Business Improvement) – Improvement Technician level 3 (Intec business college)

#### 4.5 Other management development and other training

4.5.1 Other corporate management development costs have been met from the corporate training budget (such as Supervisory Management 2-day introductions, Managing hybrid teams, and some coaching training). The performance reviews provide an indication of how we plan for the most pressing needs. The corporate training budget is used this way for other corporate generic needs as well as management development.

#### 4.6 Service Training Budgets

4.6.1 Additionally, there are service training budgets that management use to address service technical and mandatory needs.

#### 4.7 Training Budgets/The Levy

4.7.1 Services typically have their own training budget mainly used to meet technical and operational requirements. There is also a corporate training budget of £23,150.

4.7.2 Currently, we have £246,000 in accrued levy funds. We add about £100,000 per annum to this. We currently have £25,000 committed for the next 12 months.

### **5. PROPOSAL FOR THE WAY FORWARD/CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

5.1 We can continue to adopt apprenticeships/training with an adhoc basis for new apprentices and existing employees, or we can work with senior managers on an agreed strategic approach.

5.2 The approach would need to consider and agree:

- How any budget requirements would be met (salary for new apprentices, cost of alternative study methods to apprenticeships)
- Time out for study (20% for apprentices)
- Mentoring support
- Suitability of training available

- Number of apprentices/trainees per service or identify specific roles
- Application/selection method for internal staff.

### 5.3 Opportunities:

#### 5.3.1 Recruiting further new apprentices

As a Council we have a significant amount of money in the Apprenticeship Levy, which is currently unused. Now that a return to the office has become possible and staff are largely settled into new working routines, further consideration needs to be given to additional service areas where apprentices could be taken on.

June is a good time of year to advertise, as students plan to leave school/college. Some apprenticeships can start at any point, others have term time start dates.

#### **Action 1:**

Should the Council reaffirm a target of new apprentices across the organisation, as a percentage of overall headcount for example, to be recruited by 2023?

#### 5.3.2 Apprenticeship opportunities for existing staff including degree level

Managers should be encouraged to have open, regular conversations regarding individual development needs and aspirations in terms of career development.

- Apprenticeships are available from Level 2 – Level 7 qualifications. There are just under 100 degree level apprenticeships available at Level 6. These range from 1 year to 3 years for completion and would be funded from Apprenticeship Levy payments.
- For example, local Solent University offers Chartered Manager degree, Senior Leader MBA as well as Level 4 apprenticeships in Project Management and Data Analyst.
- HR can research specific areas and levels to suit service requirements.

#### **Action 2:**

Should the Council set a minimum target within each executive head area, or identify specific roles, to undertake apprenticeship training by 2023?

#### 5.3.3 T-Level industry placements

T Levels are new 2-year qualifications for 16 – 19-year-olds. Each T Level is equivalent to 3 A Levels and helps young people develop the knowledge, attitude, and practical skills to thrive in the workplace.

- Each T Level requires a 45-day industry placement. This could help us address project capacity.
- Employers access high calibre, motivated individuals and support the local area and next generation of employees.
- These are currently available in Construction, Digital & IT – Business administration. Legal Finance and Accountancy will be launched in the next year.
- Up to July 2022, employers receive a £1,000 award for each T Level placement.
- Students are not paid to undertake their T Level; it is their chosen route of study.
- There are no financial costs to the employer, however employers can opt to pay the placement person if they wish (this may impact calibre of placement student especially considering our remote locations).
- T Levels are still at an early developmental stage (launched in Sept 2020 but slowed by covid) – if we wish to move forward, we register our interest and get

connected with appropriate local colleges to see if such opportunities are available.

**Action 3:**

HR will continue to monitor these new qualifications with a view to putting forward NFDC as an appropriate workplace where a good alignment with a course occurs.

5.4 **Trainees**

Training can be Higher Apprenticeships or other training routes, but recruitment is made on the Council's pay spine according to formal JD scoring. The likelihood of recruiting someone to that role using apprenticeship pay should be considered. For 2 current advertising campaigns under consideration (Building Control and Legal) it was felt that the trainee route, although using apprenticeship training, would not have attracted staff at the apprenticeship pay rate.

**Action 4:**

HR will encourage managers to consider recruiting trainee positions, as opposed to requiring full experience and existing qualifications (where applicable).

5.5 **Other management/leadership training**

ADEPT Strategic leadership course – aimed at aspiring directors in Place (environment, planning, transport) – not currently available to district councils.

Strategic Leadership in Modern Government - ILM Level 7 qualification – specifically for Local Government, aimed at high performing senior managers aspiring to be strategic leaders.

- 9 days and 6 self-managed knowledge sharing sessions over 9 months.
- Programme Launch, incl. MBTI & 360 deg. feedback analysis
- Strategic and Commercial Thinking
- Decision Making and Innovation
- Knowledge Share Set-up
- Leading Strategic Change (3D Online Methodology)
- Strategy to Implementation
- Powerful Personal Leadership
- Developing High-performing Teams
- Making an Impact
- Virtual or classroom based, or in London.
- Course cost £5,000, bursaries available to cover 20% in some cases.
- April 2022 and September 2022 intakes.
- Established programme, undertaken by over 500 managers from 180 local authorities

**Action 5:**

Consider whether we wish to take some spaces on the September programme.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Whilst apprenticeship training can be covered from our Levy fund, costs of covering work and new apprentice/trainee salary costs will need to be accounted for within established staffing levels and budget.

6.2 In general, the Council cannot afford for a marked number of new apprentice or trainee posts to be added to the establishment budget, without services identifying offsetting savings to help mitigate the additional costs.

6.3 Additional staffing budgets can be sought through the Council's Business Case process, whilst adhering to Financial Regulations in terms of necessary financial approval levels.

## **7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None.

## **9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Apprenticeship training routes will be identified between Service Managers and HR – as training for existing staff, opportunities will be offered and discussed across relevant teams. For new apprentice recruits, from January 2022 the increase in pay rate makes these more attractive to all potential recruits, and we will continue to advertise in an accessible way appropriate to the role.

## **10. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None.

## **11. EMT COMMENTS**

11.1 In relation to apprenticeships and related training, EMT are supportive of continuing to utilise these opportunities where possible and appropriate.

11.2 Regarding the action points 1 – 5, EMT confirmed that specific targets would not be required, but agreed that HR would arrange a session with Service Managers to update on all these areas to:

- i. Understand current picture at NFDC
- ii. Understand opportunities available to all services
- iii. Explore benefits to all stakeholders
- iv. Discuss any barriers
- v. Gauge appetite
- vi. Plan next steps

11.3 An update paper will then be brought back to EMT to discuss and finalise the way forward for 2022/23.

## **12. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS**

12.1 None received

**For further information contact:**

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