

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

### **Cabinet Meeting: 11 July, 2016**

#### **Report of the Leader**

### **Youth Employment in the Vale of Glamorgan Council**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To receive an update on the Council's approach to the increased employment of young people in line with the Council's Workforce Planning objectives.

#### **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet note and endorse the update information as set out in this report.
2. That Cabinet refer the report for consideration by the Council's Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
3. That subject to 2 above Cabinet give delegated power to the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Managing Director to continue exploratory discussions with Cardiff and Vale College and finalise an apprenticeship partnership agreement.

#### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

1. To continue to make progress in relation to meeting the objectives set out in the Council's Workforce Plan.
2. As 1 above.
3. As 1 above.

#### **Background**

2. Members will be aware that the need to increase the employment of 16-24 year old employees proportionate to the wider workforce is set out in the Council's Workforce Plan as approved by Cabinet on the 23rd May 2016.
3. The percentage of 16-24 year old employees within the Council's workforce fell from 13.4% in 2013 to 12.6% in 2015. This compares to 17.1% when looking at the age profile within the local Vale of Glamorgan area.
4. The above aspiration is clearly a medium to long term aim but important to ensure the sustainability of our services and the promotion of work within the Council (and the wider public service) as an attractive career option.

5. Cabinet will also note that the objective is congruent with the Wellbeing Outcomes as detailed in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020:
  - An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale - Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.
  - An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale - Raising the overall standards of achievement.
6. In response to this issue Members will recall that the Council had previously been exploring the possibility of a partnership arrangement with Caerphilly Council to roll out their PASSPORT youth employment scheme across the Vale of Glamorgan.
7. The above scheme would have given the Council the opportunity to broaden the existing apprenticeship scheme through partnering with an organisation who have a proven success in developing youth employment opportunities.
8. Unfortunately, however the above plans could not be progressed due to the withdrawal of WEFO funding from the PASSPORT scheme in Caerphilly Council, resulting in the scheme being discontinued. Caerphilly Council continue to deliver elements of the scheme, but not exclusively to 16-24 year olds.
9. In view of the above, it has been important to continue to look at alternative options for strengthening the Council's approach in this important area.
10. An additional contextual point is that the UK Government is introducing a new apprenticeship levy in April 2017, to be paid by all employers at a rate of 0.5% of the wage bill. Each employer will have a digital account which they can use to fund apprenticeships, however it is unclear, as yet how this will be used in Wales. It is clearly important, however that the Council is in a position to fully utilise the levy once the parameters and working practices have been agreed.

### **Relevant Issues and Options**

11. The Council are still continuing the good work that has been achieved with the existing employment of administratively based Foundation Modern Apprentices (FMA) and Craft Apprentices within the Council's Building and Housing Teams.
12. The FMA scheme is delivered in partnership with Acorn Recruitment and over the last two years the Council has taken on 27 FMAs of which 33% are still completing their apprenticeship and a further 48% have gone on to attain ongoing employment or returned to education during, or on completion of, their apprenticeship.
13. The Craft Apprentices are employed primarily within Building Services, in roles such as plumbers and electricians. They attain their qualification through a successful partnership between the Council and the Cardiff and Vale College.
14. In addition to the above the Council continue to employ trainees in a number of service areas and accommodate work experience requests where possible.
15. Whilst the above arrangements are positive, they do not always reflect the diverse nature of the Council in terms of its services and occupational groups and may not, on their own help the Council achieve its workforce planning objectives.
16. In view of the above, it is suggested that a more co-ordinated approach is needed and specifically to "improve the employment of school, college and university leavers" as well as "launch a Council wide professional apprenticeship scheme".

## **Proposed Way Forward**

17. In light of the above, it is proposed that the Council broaden the provision of youth employment further developing the apprenticeship programme and building stronger relationships with schools, local colleges and Career agencies to promote the available opportunities within the local employment market.
18. The strengthening of our approach in this area is congruent with the Council's well-being objectives as set out in paragraph 5 and the sustainable development principle set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (in "looking to the long term").
19. The approach also complements actions set out within the draft Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support in prioritising looked after children in accessing opportunities for employment or skills.
20. In order to focus on the delivery of these outcomes it is proposed that the following areas of work will be progressed:

### **Foundation Modern Apprentice Scheme**

21. It is proposed that the Council continue to invest in the provision of FMAs across the Council, building on the platform that we have developed over recent years and supporting the transition from the scheme to full time employment.
22. As previously indicated, the scheme has been useful in providing a career start for employees interested in business and administration through a 65 week apprentice and in partnership with Acorn Recruitment.
23. Over the next 12 months it is proposed to increase the marketing of the FMA scheme within our schools and in partnership with Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus.

### **Widen the Provision of Apprenticeships**

24. As indicated earlier in this report, it is important that steps are taken to further broaden the provision of apprenticeships into a Council wide provision across a wider range of service areas.
25. With this in mind, exploratory discussions have recent taken place with Cardiff and Vale College to develop a strategic partnership in the development of apprenticeship opportunities within the Council. This follows the recent launch of the College's Apprenticeship Training Academy (ATA) model.
26. The ATA model (and the development of such a partnership) would provide an opportunity for the Council to have apprentices in a wider range of work disciplines and in areas where recruitment difficulties exist including accountancy, ICT, social care and legal services.
27. In exploring the above model, work will continue with managers across the Council to identify opportunities within the relevant service areas. Under the ATA model the college would employ the apprentices and provide the learning and support for the employees to complete their qualification. The salary and administrative costs would be met from within the relevant service area out of existing staffing budgets.
28. It is recommended that the Head of Human Resources be given delegated authority in consultation with the Managing Director and the Leader to continue such exploratory discussions with the college and develop a proposal for final consideration by Cabinet.

## **Work Experience Placements**

29. As indicated above the Council has a good reputation for accommodating work experience placements where capacity and co-ordination allow.
30. During 2016/17 further work will be invested in this process in liaison with our schools and through a more co-ordinated partnership with our service managers.
31. The Council's ability to progress this will be improved as a result of the appointment of a temporary employment officer as referred to in paragraph 37.

## **Trainees/Interns/Graduates**

32. The Council's Workforce Plan also refers to the strengthening of the Council's approach to the use of trainees over the next year and seeking to build a Council wide scheme. The Council currently has a total of 15 trainees/interns employed across the Council, but managed on a service by service basis.
33. A more co-ordinated approach to this issue will provide the opportunity to strengthen the marketing and promotion of graduate/trainee recruitment and in liaison with universities and colleges.

## **Customising Recruitment**

34. Members will appreciate that a key part of our approach to this key issue is the promotion of the available opportunities for employment within the Council, the profile and reputation of the authority and the review of our methodology for advertising such opportunities.
35. The greater targeting of our recruitment literature and communication methods through social media will both support this agenda and ensure greater cost effectiveness.
36. The work in this area will be helped through the development of a Human Resources Service Centre over the coming months and the capacity afforded through the appointment of the temporary employment officer as referred to in paragraph 37.

## **Capacity and Co-ordination**

37. The management and delivery of the strategy as set out in this report, will be supported through the appointment of a half time and one-year temporary post at Green Book Grade F (£14,000 including on-costs).
38. The above post will help to "pump-prime" the activity as set out above and develop a sustainable model of delivery which can be adopted across the authority. This cost will be funded through existing resources.
39. In taking forward this area of work the postholder will liaise closely with members of the Council's Youth Cabinet.

## **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

40. The resource implications related to this report are set out in paragraph 37 and 38 of this report. Any resource implications arising from a potential partnership arrangements with Cardiff and Vale College will be set out in a later report.

## **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

41. There are no sustainability and climate change implications arising as a result of this report.

## **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

42. There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report.

## **Crime and Disorder Implications**

43. There are no crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this report.

## **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

44. There are no direct equal opportunities implications arising as a result of this report. The aspiration to increase the number of 16 to 24 year old employees is in order to mirror the wider population and as such can be objectively justified and is congruent with the principles of the Equalities Act 2010.

## **Corporate/Service Objectives**

45. This report is congruent with the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan as referred to in paragraph 5.

## **Policy Framework and Budget**

46. This is a matter for Executive decision.

## **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

47. None.

## **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

48. Corporate Performance and Resources.

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Contact Officer**

Helen Scarrett - Corporate Training and Organisational Development Manager

## **Officers Consulted**

Andy Borsden - Lead Officer Youth and Community Learning  
Colin Davies - Barry Communities First Cluster Team  
Carolyn Michael - Operational Manager Accountancy  
Victoria Davidson - Operational Manager, Legal Services  
Hayley Selway - Head of Service (Housing and Building Services)

## **Responsible Officer:**

Reuben Bergman, Head of Human Resources