

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 7 JANUARY 2010

REPORT BY HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

4. NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME AND SKILLS FOR JOBS
RECRUITMENT SCHEME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To consider the introduction of Apprenticeships at the Council
- To consider the introduction of the Skills for Jobs Scheme at the Council

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION: That:

(A)	the introduction of the Apprenticeships and the Skills for Jobs schemes be approved;
(B)	a county wide Apprenticeship and Skills for Jobs scheme be progressed under the Pathfinder initiative through the Hertfordshire HR Partnership Group; and
(C)	the Council's Contract Managers pass on details of the National Apprenticeship Scheme and Skills for Jobs to the Council's contractors.

1.0 Background

1.1 At HR Committee in July, the HR department were asked to look into the National Apprenticeship Scheme and Skills for Jobs to see if the Council could consider taking part in these schemes.

1.2 The Council previously ran an apprenticeship scheme for administration apprentices, who were managed by the Training Officer in HR in partnership with Hertford Regional College. The

funding for these posts was withdrawn approximately two years ago for cost saving purposes. The apprentices were paid at SCP 6 and attended college one day a week. The apprentices worked in different departments and moved department every three months to learn how different administration offices operate. They were given one or two year contracts depending on the length of their qualification. There is still a member of staff working in Revenues and Benefits who joined the Council on a business administration apprenticeship and joined the Council permanently after completing her NVQ. IT apprenticeships were also looked into but were not established due to lack of funding available.

- 1.3 Skills for Jobs is a scheme designed to assist people not currently in employment and is supported by the Learning and Skills Council and the European Social Fund. Employees are given access to a pool of candidates who are given training tailored to the organisation's needs and are supported through their first weeks of employment.

2.0 Report

2.1 **The National Apprenticeship Scheme**

- 2.1.1 In January 2009 the Prime Minister announced an additional 35,000 new Apprenticeship places, at least 21,000 of which will be provided in the public sector. These places will be backed by a £140 million package which builds on a commitment to increasing spending on apprentices in the next year to just under £1 billion.
- 2.1.2 Ministers have also acted to make it easier for employers to take on apprentices by slashing bureaucracy. The new National Apprenticeship Service was launched in April 2009 and is leading the expansion and improvement of the Apprenticeship programme. Since January, the Apprenticeship Vacancies System has allowed prospective apprentices to search and apply for vacancies on-line.
- 2.1.3 Apprenticeships combine on and off the job training; on the job an apprentice will work with a mentor, learning skills on site and working towards a work based qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Off the job, apprentices spend time with a learning provider, working towards a technical qualification such as a BTEC. Both qualifications are usually at Level 2 or 3.

2.1.4 There are over 180 different Apprenticeships frameworks on offer in 80 different sectors. However, all Apprenticeships include the following elements:

- An appropriate work based qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at either Level 2 or Level 3;
- Key Skills qualifications, e.g. working in teams, problem-solving, communication and using new technology;
- A technical qualification such as a BTEC or City & Guilds (relevant to the specific Apprenticeship);
- Other qualifications or requirements as specified by the particular occupation.

2.1.5 As Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes, most of the training is 'on the job'. The rest can be provided by a local college or by a specialist training provider. Throughout an Apprenticeship, the training provider offers support and guidance and:

- helps organisations decide which Apprenticeship is right for them;
- explain the way that Apprenticeships might work for the organisation and if funding is available;
- agree training plans with apprentices;
- recruit an apprentice or support existing staff into Apprenticeships;
- manage the training and evaluation; and
- ensure that national quality standards are met and deliver integrated, coherent training.

2.1.6 The training provider will receive financial assistance from the Learning and Skills Council towards the cost of an apprentice's training. If the apprentice is aged between 16 and 18 the Government fully funds the training costs of an Apprenticeship programme. Where the apprentice is 19 or over, employers are expected to make a contribution towards the cost of training. The contribution does not necessarily have to be a cash payment to the provider but can be other contributions that reduce the cost of delivery.

2.1.7 Most apprentices are employed by organisations and paid a salary that reflects their skills, experience, age and ability.

- 2.1.8 Training providers can help recruit a suitable apprentice by advertising the vacancy free of charge on the Apprenticeship Vacancies system which is part of the Apprenticeships website.
- 2.1.9 A new project developed by Hertfordshire County Council called FUTURE 565 aims to generate a wide range of additional jobs where none previously existed. East Herts Council, as a Hertfordshire based employer could be eligible to receive funding of between £1,000 and £6,000 by creating an apprenticeship for a minimum of one year for 16-19 year olds. Funding will be determined by set criteria, such as the type of job, how well it meets young people's needs and the level of training and support offered. Herts County Council have indicated that the Council would be eligible but this has not been explored formally until approval has been sought from HRC.
- 2.1.10 The Council has recently received a joint letter from John Denham (Secretary of State for CLG) and Yvette Cooper (Secretary of State for DWP) announcing the Launch of a toolkit for employers called 'Leading by Example' which is a part of Local Employment Partnerships. The letter states that local authorities have a clear and crucial opportunity to invest now in people and their skills for the longer-term prosperity of their communities. The aim of the 'Leading by Example' toolkit is to help local authorities engage with their communities, and in particular young people, seeking skills and jobs. The toolkit will help authorities to identify jobs and opportunities and this includes apprenticeships.
- 2.1.11 The 2009 LGA Apprenticeships and Trainee Survey detailed in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** (Pages 4.9 - 4.11) shows that most local authorities intend to increase their apprenticeship opportunities by December 2010 in response to the government's target to increase the number of apprenticeships offered by local authorities from 7,500 to 15,000 by 2011.

2.2 Proposals for Offering Apprenticeships at the Council

- 2.2.1 It is proposed that the Council reintroduces Business & Administration apprenticeships and also introduces the new Customer Service apprenticeships. Rather than having supernumerary posts which would require additional funding, it is recommended that when vacancies arise for lower graded jobs at the Council in these areas, Heads of Service consider whether the role is suitable for an apprenticeship as part of the recruitment process.

- 2.3.2 Where an apprentice joins the Council this should be publicised and permission to do this should be part of the agreement between the Council and the National Apprenticeship Scheme.
- 2.3.3 At a recent conference held by the East of England National Apprenticeship Service regarding apprenticeships in the Public Sector, colleagues from Hertfordshire councils discussed the possibility of representatives from the National Apprenticeship Service attending the Hertfordshire HR Partnership Group as well as the Leaders Group and Chief Executives Group to promote a county wide approach towards apprenticeships in Hertfordshire.
- 2.3.4 The possibility of Hertfordshire councils sharing apprentices could be explored as due to their size, many of the district and borough councils only have limited apprenticeship places available which can be difficult to co-ordinate. Apprentices could rotate between the different councils, gaining experience in different areas as they go along. This will support the Pathfinder initiative as well as help boost the apprenticeship opportunities available as it is likely that more of the small local district and borough councils may consider taking on apprentices if this approach was taken.
- 2.3.5 At the same conference it was also suggested that the Hertfordshire councils could facilitate contact between the National Apprenticeship Service and their various contractors. It was recognised that many apprenticeship opportunities in local councils fall into areas that are contracted out and that involving contractors would increase the opportunities available across Hertfordshire. This would need to be done through the Contract Managers working at each of the councils as they have the most regular contact with their contractors. If the Contract Managers can provide contact details for the most appropriate person to speak to at the contracted company, the National Apprenticeship Service will then make contact with these individuals to explore possible apprenticeship opportunities.

2.4 Skills for Jobs

- 2.4.1 Skills for Jobs can assist the Council to recruit candidates from the local area who have been unemployed for some time.
- 2.4.2 Once notified of a vacancy, Skills for Jobs will review their candidate database and select up to 20 potentially suitable candidates. The recruiting manager then reviews the list and

once the final short-list is chosen the candidates are given training by Skills for Jobs.

- 2.4.3 Candidates are offered up to nine hours training including filling in application forms, motivation and confidence building, and certain bespoke training at the request of the Council.
- 2.4.4 Skills for Jobs request that those who have attended the training are guaranteed an interview.
- 2.4.5 There is also the option of a one week work trial if the employing manager considers it appropriate.
- 2.4.6 Once in employment with the Council, Skills for Jobs offers the new employee up to 10 weeks telephone support while they settle in to the role. The scheme will also pay the employee's travel for one month if considered necessary.
- 2.4.7 The Council could receive up to £1000 for employing someone through this scheme. The person must be over 25 years old and have been unemployed for over 6 months. The money may be used towards the employee's salary, training or any other expenses the Council deems appropriate. The Council will receive £500 on engaging the employee and the remaining £500 if they are still employed after 26 weeks.
- 2.4.8 At East Herts the roles most suitable for this scheme are Administration and Customer Service, however other roles will be reviewed to assess suitability.
- 2.4.9 Heads of Service would be asked to consider Skills for Jobs as part of the recruitment process.
- 2.4.10 Where a Skills for Jobs candidate joins the Council this should be publicised and permission to do this should be part of the agreement between the Council and Skills for Jobs.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'** (Page 4.8).

Background Papers

None

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives <i>(delete as appropriate):</i>	Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	Heads of Service have been consulted with and their comments are included in the report.
Legal:	Legal were consulted regarding recruiting outside the Manpower Contract. It has been agreed with Manpower that in the case of government supported schemes the Council may recruit outside the contract.
Financial:	Costs would be met from existing budgets where apprentices/Skills for Jobs candidates are appointed to suitable existing posts which become vacant. External funding will be sought as set out in the report.
Human Resource:	As detailed in the report.
Risk Management:	None.

LGA Trainee and Apprenticeships Survey 2009

Introduction

In July 2008 the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted the Local Government Workforce Survey. The answers to this survey informed the setting of a target to increase the number of apprenticeships offered by local authorities. The target was to increase apprenticeships from 7,500 to 15,000 by 2011. In October 2009, the LGA monitored progress against this baseline, by conducting a short, on-line 'Apprenticeship and Trainees Survey'. This explored the numbers of apprentices and trainees as at October 2009, and the number of apprentices and trainees that local authorities plan to employ by December 2010.

Response rate

Local authority heads of Human Resources in England were sent the survey on 16 October 2009. By the close of field work on 30 October, 136 local authorities had responded, giving a response rate of 39%. The tables below show response rate by type and region.

Region	Respondents count	Total number	Response rate
East England	18	52	35%
East Midlands	15	45	33%
Greater London	14	33	42%
North East	7	12	58%
North West	16	41	39%
South East	28	74	38%
South West	17	41	41%
West Midlands	12	33	36%
Yorkshire and Humber	9	22	41%
England total	136	353	39%

Type	Respondents count	Total number	Response rate
London Boroughs	14	33	42%
Metropolitan Districts	16	36	44%
Shire Counties	14	27	52%
Shire Districts	73	201	36%

Unitary Authorities	19	56	34%
England total	136	353	39%

Key Findings

Respondents were asked how many apprentices and trainees their authority currently employs. Responding authorities were employing a total of 3,022 apprentices and 2,477 trainees. Using these figures, it can be estimated that, in total, authorities in England currently employ a total of 14,400 apprentices and trainees.

	Mean Average	Median average	Maximum number	Total	Base	Estimated total for England
How many apprentices does your authority employ?	22	7	311	3022	136	7,100
How many trainees does your authority employ?	23	5	550	2477	116	7,300

Respondents were then asked how many apprentices and trainees their authority was intending to employ by December 2010. Responding authorities were planning to offer a total of 3,685 apprentices and 2,471 trainees. Using these figures, it can be estimated that, in total, authorities in England intend to provide 18,700 apprenticeships and trainee opportunities by December 2010.

	Mean Average	Median Average	Maximum number	Total	Base	Estimated total for England
How many apprenticeship opportunities is your authority intending to provide by December 2010?	30	10	250	3685	122	9,800

	Mean Average	Median Average	Maximum number	Total	Base	Estimated total for England
How many trainee opportunities is your authority intending to provide by December 2010?	25	5	300	2471	97	8,900