

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2019

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND  
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- To provide an update on the Council's apprenticeship programme

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:</u></b>
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<b>That:</b>
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<b>(A)</b>	<b>the Apprenticeship Programme report be noted</b>
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1.0 Background

1.1 The Council is in its third year of the current national apprenticeship scheme.

1.2 In 2016 the Council employed six apprentices, in 2017 five apprentices and in 2018 six apprentices, with two officers accessing the apprenticeship levy funding to support their career development.

2.0 Report

The Levy

2.1 The apprenticeship levy is calculated at 0.5% of the annual pay bill. In 2018/19 the requirement was to pay £36,334 into the levy fund; this is paid in monthly instalments.

2.2 The levy is available to support resource requirements in conjunction with the Professional Training Budget. The services have identified areas where the levy can be explored to help close the skills gaps and develop employees in hard to recruit posts.

2.3 The Council is challenging the traditional perception of an apprentice as the apprenticeship levy funds individuals outside of the traditional 16-19 age range.

2.4 The levy fund is currently being used to support eight learners to study for the following qualifications:

<b>No. of Apprentices</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Total cost of the qualification</b>	<b>Monthly payment</b>
2 (24 month apprenticeship)	Construction Technical and Professional: Town Planning Technical Support, Level: 3	Planning and Building Control	£9,000 per head	£375
1 (13 month apprenticeship)	Customer service practitioner, Level: 2	Communications, Strategy & Policy	£4,000	£308
1 (18 month apprenticeship)	HR Support, Level: 3	Human Resources and Organisational Development	£5,000	£278
1 (18 month apprenticeship)	Business Administrator, Level: 3	Housing and Health	£5,000	£278
1 (18 month apprenticeship)	Business Administrator, Level: 3	Planning and Building Control	£5,000	£278
1 (15 month apprenticeship)	Assistant accountant, Level: 3	Strategic Finance & Property	£8,500	£567
1 (36 month)	Chartered surveyor	Strategic Finance & Property	£27,000	£750

apprenticeship)	commercial; Level 6			
<b>Total costs</b>			<b>£63,500</b>	<b>£2,834 per month</b>

### How the apprenticeship Levy supports the council's workforce plan

- 2.5 Apprenticeships can be a cost-effective way to ensure that new and existing employees have the skills they need to support and grow the business. As the breadth of the apprenticeships expands; there is an increase in higher and degree apprenticeships becoming available. Levy funding can be used towards the qualification cost (not the cost of employing the individual) and the employee must be given 20% of their working time away from the job for their development. Apprentices receive onsite training and mentoring from senior staff as well as college based training.
- 2.6 Human Resources met with Heads of Services to consider how the range of apprenticeships could support them with:
- Hard to recruit positions
  - Areas where there is a skills gap
  - High turnover areas where retention is becoming an issue
  - Posts where there is a clear employment career path
  - Supporting workforce and succession planning
  - Making the most of the apprenticeship levy
  - Attract and retain employees by exploring higher and degree apprenticeships
- 2.7 Human Resources represents East Herts Council at the HAA (Hertfordshire Apprenticeship Alliance) which is an alliance between the Hertfordshire local authorities, the four main colleges, Hertfordshire University, local business and training providers. The aim of the alliance is to share knowledge, support the development of apprenticeships and work towards keeping the levy funding within Hertfordshire.

- 2.8 Human Resources works with the Hertfordshire Careers service supporting the schools work experience initiatives; encouraging young people to explore the range of opportunities available at the Council. Human Resources also attend careers fairs at secondary schools, colleges, local businesses and Hertfordshire University. Some of the careers fairs are specifically targeted to encourage young people to think about the opportunities available within hard to recruit areas e.g. Planning and Environmental Health. Other events are based around informing young people about the whole range of apprenticeships available and the services the Council offers. There are career opportunities in a range of areas such as Communications, Media, Finance and HR as well as more specific sectors such as Environmental Health and Planning. Please see **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for a promotional leaflet for apprenticeships at East Herts Council.
- 2.9 The Council has worked with Oaklands College to help shape the content of the Town Planning apprenticeship qualification in 2016/17, to ensure it met the current business needs. That programme continues to be used today as detailed further in 2.12 below.

#### Current apprenticeships

- 2.10 The quality of the current apprentices employed is of high standard and through their development they are on course to progress and fill roles where there are genuine recruitment shortages in more experienced roles. Below is a breakdown of the current apprenticeship programme in place:
- Human Resources and Organisational Development - The HR apprentice commenced their NVQ 3 in October 2017 once the new HR Standard was finalised. Their apprenticeship will be completed in August 2019. The service structure is being reviewed to see if a position can be established to retain the knowledge and development of

the HR apprentice.

- Communications, Strategy and Policy - The service is using the levy to upskill a current member of the customer services team to enable them to progress in their career graded role. This opportunity has been made available to the whole team and it is envisaged that other officers will train through this route. In terms of future development, the project management team could be supported by a project management apprentice; working towards an NVQ 4 in Project Management.
- Housing and Health identified that Environmental Health Officers are hard to recruit. There are two apprenticeship standards are in development which once approved should help the workforce planning and recruitment needs:
  - Environmental Manager (degree) – NVQ Level 7
  - Environmental Health Practitioner – NVQ Level 6

The service currently has an apprentice working towards an NVQ Level 3 in business administration. The role has been structured to work in all the areas within the service enabling the apprentice to gain experience and look at future career opportunities within their sectors. The previous business administration apprentice has remained in the service and is now being sponsored (through the professional training budget) to train as a Trainee Environmental Health Practitioner.

- Strategic Finance and Property have an apprentice in their Finance Team. The apprentice completed their AAT Level 2 and has continued onto AAT Level 3. The service is also using the levy to sponsor the Asset and Estates Surveyor to study for a BSc Real Estate Management. This is a four year study programme.
- Planning and Building Control currently have three

apprentices. One Business Administration Apprentice has successfully completed their level 2 and has gone on to study their level three.

- 2.11 As noted above, the Council is already part of the Hertfordshire Apprentice Alliance which brings together all Hertfordshire Authorities on a regular basis. The Council is also part of a cross county Strategic level Planning group of all authorities which meets. Politically, it has been very challenging to combine the planning service in the same way that the Council has achieved with Building Control, but this is constantly on the radar and something that will be advanced if the opportunity arises.
- 2.12 Officers have been working closely with their counterparts across Hertfordshire and particularly with St Albans where the same levels of pay and reward has been agreed for Apprenticeships. Human Resources, The Head of Planning and Building Control and the Deputy Chief Executive worked jointly with Oaklands College and St Albans Council to recruit two Town Planning Apprentices. The joint working ensured that the pay and conditions were aligned ensuring both Council's offered the same terms and conditions to fulfil the need to recruit into the profession, previously an apprentice was lost due to the terms being more favourable at St Albans.
- 2.13 In September 2018, the Council offered unlimited apprenticeships in Planning. Six applicants applied which an increase on previous years with two meeting the criteria set nationally and both accepted roles with us. Officers have developed the apprenticeship scheme along with accredited educational support provided by Oaklands College also used by both St Albans Council and Hertsmere Council. Due to only two being recruited, a further two Planning Assistants were recruited and along with the Business Apprentice, Planning now have 5 junior posts across the department to support succession planning and ability to fill hard to fill more experienced/senior roles. Planning have held some vacancies

to enable the Council to offer progression/career development roles to junior staff once they have completed their training/development. The Council will be commencing the next round of recruitment after the Easter break to commence Apprenticeships in September this year.

- 2.14 The Council continues to 'grow our own' planners to meet the recruitment gap in this field by also sponsoring three trainee planners to achieve their Masters in Urban and Regional Planning (through the professional training budget).
- 2.15 The University of Hertfordshire are not able to offer degree level planning qualifications at the moment as the course has not been accredited by the RTPI. The Council currently supports employees to undertake the degree qualification at Westminster University. Whilst there is not an unlimited pot of funding, the Council does encourage employees to become fully qualified and have yet to turn down a request for professional training.
- 2.16 The Council was willing to recruit more than two Town Planning apprentices but unfortunately were unable to attract enough candidates. However the work with schools, St Albans Council and Oaklands College should improve this over time. Please see **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** for a leaflet used with schools and at careers fairs.

### 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'**.

### Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Simon O'Hear - Head of HR & OD  
Ext 2141

[Simon.o'hear@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.o'hear@eastherts.gov.uk)

Report Author: Helen Farrell – HR Officer  
Ext 1633  
[helen.farrell@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:helen.farrell@eastherts.gov.uk)