

Apprenticeship update

Date: 24th September 2018
Contact Officer: Cathy Pepper/Christie Tims
Tel Number: 01543 308112/308100
Email: Cathy.pepper@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Christie.tims@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision? NO
Local Ward n/a
Members



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 All public bodies in England with more than 250 employees must report on the apprenticeship target. This target is to employ at least 2.3% of the workforce as new apprenticeship starts for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. It is assessed as an annual average over this 4 year period, and it is mandatory to report this annually. The deadline for the report to be completed is 30 September each year from 2018 to 2021. This report outlines the data and some of the narrative we will need to submit to the .Gov website and our apprenticeship account.
- 1.2 Progress for 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018
- 1% of our headcount (414) are apprentices using the Apprenticeship Levy (4 intakes).
 - Our target for 2017- 8 was 10 apprentices. Due to a drop in headcount following leisure outsourcing our target for this year (2018-19) is 7, but as we can now average over the 2 years the intake for that period should be 8.5.
 - It is important that we are achieving our target by the 31st March 2021 – which will be an average of 8 each year if staffing levels remain consistent until then.
 - Our current levy account balance is £ 37,456 and we have used £6,219 to date. Each year we estimate we will be contributing £27,000 into the account (this is topped up by £15,000 contribution from Government)
 - Any funds placed into our levy account not used within 2 years by us are returned/absorbed back into the central government account to fund National schemes.

Our approach to achieving the 2.3% target is to consider apprenticeships when a vacancy arises. Targets have been set for each Head of Service to have at least one apprentice in their area each year. Managers, as part of the annual Performance Development Review (PDR) are asked to consider an apprenticeship as part of the development program for each member of staff.

Apprenticeship intake has increased by 75% since last year, though clearly there is still much to do to meet the 2.3% target over the 4 years. There is still no clear indication from government as to what the penalty of failing to reach the target will be.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That members of the committee note the progress made to date in using our Apprenticeship Levy and achieving the 2.3% workforce target.

3. Background

- 3.1 We, like many other Councils, have faced a number of challenges in appointing apprentices for the following reasons:
- **Requirement for experienced staff** - we had had 33 external vacancies during 2017, of these vacancies, 17 articulated the need for experienced staff to hit the ground running to enable us to meet our statutory duties.
 - **Suitable or relevant professional apprenticeships** - 6 vacancies were actively considered for apprenticeships and 2 have successfully recruited, the other 4 in planning, environmental health, and licencing could not find suitable apprenticeships to meet the needs of the role.
 - **Outsourcing project for leisure services** - we envisaged this service would have been a key area within the council to place apprentices and reach our target due to the interest of younger workers and lower level entry skills and high proportion of relevant apprenticeship frameworks.
 - **Limited professional training providers** – The majority of training providers are offering entry level and generic apprenticeships, for which there is very little demand at district council level.
 - **Lack of local training providers** - Before recruiting for a Planning Technician, we did look at an apprenticeship newly available under Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). However, there are only 4 providers in the UK delivering the framework and the nearest was Northampton. RTPI advised if we had 10 apprentices each year they would seek to find a training provider to deliver in our area. So there is a lack of co-ordination at a regional level that requires further investigation.
 - **Lack of applicants** – Appropriately qualified school leavers are not applying. We had 5 applicants for an audit apprenticeship role, 3 of which already had a degree (2 were not eligible as they had a finance degree).
 - **Length of some apprenticeships** - Finance AAT, it would typically take 2 years. Currently the relevant apprenticeship takes approx. 5 years. This was deemed to be too long to get the skill level of work required, plus the employee would then need to go on to CIPFA which could be another 3 years. This was deemed as too long for us to get the necessary skills into our organisation.

3.2 Meeting the target

- **Regular Communications** - We have regular updates with manager's forum about relevant apprenticeships available as these come online. We are also developing a Workforce Development Plan in consultation with all Heads of Service to consider all options and keep the profile high. We are considering hosting an apprenticeship open day for staff with a few relevant training providers to have a stand to answer queries and promote options.
- **Develop talent pools** - We liaise with local schools, colleges and training providers to consider the talent pool of future, making them aware of opportunities at the council. We are considering a more generic apprenticeship for public sector operatives as part of our workforce development plan however, our teams are very small to have a floating resource.
- **Targeted apprenticeships for existing staff** - We are considering a manager apprenticeships to follow on from the management development programme where staff need longer term development. We are considering a project management apprenticeship that could be undertaken by anyone involved in projects, whatever their team.
- **Pay** – our experience is that National Minimum Wage at apprenticeship rate is insufficient to attract young people. We are considering levels of pay for different types of apprenticeships and shifting focus away from school leavers, as these require significant pastoral support to integrate into our workforce.

3.3 Other issues

- **Learning Curve** - Some of these standards are still under development by the professional bodies but it is likely to be 2019 before they are ready to launch. Training providers have been learning themselves how to deliver the programmes, over and above the academic study so they have not been able to direct us as an employer easily through the paperwork and agreements needed to start a new apprenticeship. This will improve with time but the providers we have used so far have seemed confused about the required paperwork and support processes. One training provider did not handle the set-up of an apprenticeship well, it took a long time to get a talent coach appointed – this will take time to bed in. Training agreements are very complex and have varied between 8 pages and 53 pages of legalistic language, which has taken time and effort to understand and ensure they are fit for our needs.

3.4 Apprenticeships in our context

- Due to the continued need to cost save within local Government our management structures have become flatter and capacity very limited, which has meant that there is less ability to spend the time required to develop some trainees - particularly school leavers, with no work exposure where pastoral care needs to be provided to integrate them into the workforce.
- Our ageing workforce profile could mean lack of interest in further study if people are at the peak of their career plans. Our flat structures can also make progression for staff who are developing, very challenging.
- 20% time off the job training has been more off-putting to staff than their managers. A few staff have expressed interest but have changed their mind when detail been provided as they are in a busy role and even though the manager has said they can have the time, they feel they would have to do their role on top of the study.
- Attracting school leavers – this is a national challenge for all public sector organisations and has been recognised in the recent LGA consultation – [‘Great people for growing places’](#) which we responded to.

Alternative Options	1. n/a
Consultation	1. This subject is widely consulted internally with staff, unions and management. Any external consultation is specifically mentioned within the report.
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The annual balance in the Apprenticeship Levy each year is £. This can only be used to fund training support given directly to participants in relevant frameworks. 2. All salary and management costs for apprenticeships must come from existing resources.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apprenticeships support the District Council’s Strategic Plan 2016 -20 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the Council’s workforce develops to be fit for the future • Ensuring we provide meaningful jobs and opportunities
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All apprenticeships are developed in line with our Equal Opportunities policy and working practices.
Crime & Safety Issues	1. None

GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	1. N/a progress towards our target and spend against our levy is subject to reporting on the national .GOV website.
--------------------------------	---

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	That we do not achieve our target of 2.3% of the workforce	Continue to monitor and report progress	Yellow
B	That we fail to use all of our levy funds	Despite low numbers we have used a high proportion of our levy to date	Yellow
C	That we bring on a number of apprenticeships that we cannot effectively support	Be clear on the types of apprenticeships we can support and only recruit those we can effectively manage	Green
D			
E			

Background documents

Relevant web links