

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting9th February 2012

1. Title of Item/Report

Young Worker Employment

2. Record of the Decision

Members sought approval to a new approach to the employment of apprentices and young people within the Council.

It was explained that within the Council, three elements of the proposed way forward currently operated with varying degrees of success; these were work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships. The proposal was to coordinate and draw these elements together in a more systematic way to provide an effective and efficient development offer and maximise the opportunities to utilise the funding available.

Work experience

In the future, an offer of pre employment training could provide an opportunity for employers like the Council to support young workers prior to leaving school to be 'work ready' and associated careers workshops could be used as an opportunity to encourage potential young workers to consider local government as a career.

Apprenticeships

It was proposed that, in future, training opportunities for apprenticeships within the Council would be identified in advance of advertising, normally on an annual basis. This approach would allow the Council to tailor opportunities to a range of young people. It was proposed that some 50% of those would be aimed at those who were most disadvantaged such as NEETs, Looked after Children or those with an offending history. This approach supported the needs identified through the evaluation of the Communities Fund and its impact on reducing levels of worklessness within the Borough. Other opportunities would be aimed at the most talented young people, supporting the Council's aim of increasing the number of young people in the workforce and its succession policy. For those, advertising would be timed to coincide with potential school and college leavers entering the

employment market.

The following apprenticeship opportunities had already been developed with managers: 2 Civil Engineering, 2 Business Administration, 1 HR, 4 Catering, and 3 Horticulture apprenticeships, 12 in total. In addition officers were actively exploring apprenticeships in ICT, Marketing, Youth Work, Teaching Assistants and Care Workers. Future opportunities could include Building Maintenance, Highways, Accountancy, Housing and Cleaning and Environmental Services

Support for young people with learning disabilities was currently provided through the Job Carving Scheme. In 2009, CMT pledged to provide 12 opportunities each year. Since then 12 young people had worked in the Council under this scheme, although only 6 were employed. This programme therefore needed to be rejuvenated now the EIT programme was drawing to its conclusion.

Finally, Corporate parenting responsibility needed to be considered as a part of a young workers strategy. This group of potential young workers had access to positive action initiatives i.e. training in work ready skills and a small budget to support work placement for apprenticeships. As a tool for transition to work, additional funding would enable more targeted support, an opportunity to be in a work environment and a supported employment model for potential young workers in the Council's care. It had been agreed to increase this ring fenced budget (£20k) to 40k to enable the additional wage subsidies and expenses for up to 8 LAC apprentices in 2012 /13 to be full met. This would make such young people much more attractive to potential employers.

Traineeships

It was proposed that an in house graduate programme be developed to engage young workers who had completed degrees. A two year fixed term learning contract could provide the basis of employment and adoption of a pay model similar to the Future Jobs Fund model developed.

To ensure the successful implementation of this approach it was proposed that the Head of Human Resources and Communications would take on responsibility for the central coordination of apprenticeship/trainee schemes and work experience /support to managers to include coordination of recruitment /employment and monitoring mechanisms and the development of a graduate trainee scheme. Working closely with other interested parties within the Council, HR would also be responsible for the identification and ring fencing of resources to provide wage subsidy for apprenticeships (including LAC) and graduate trainee salaries

and to stimulate opportunities. In addition future vacancies will be monitored so that suitable vacancies were identified for apprenticeships.

Members noted the financial implications associated with the proposals and the target to create a minimum of 21 new apprenticeships in 2012/13.

RESOLVED that

1. the approach to increasing the numbers of apprentices be agreed
2. the proposed method of funding, as detailed in the report be agreed.
3. future vacancies be monitored, so that suitable vacancies were identified for apprenticeships

3. Reasons for the Decision

To seek Members views on a revised approach to the employment of young workers and apprentices within the Council including support for a graduate trainee programme, apprenticeships, pre employment and 'work ready' support initiatives. Part of this approach would be tailored particularly to NEET's (not in employment, education and training), looked after children and other disadvantaged young people.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on 17 February 2012

Proper Officer
13 February 2012