

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	23rd May 2013
TITLE:	Policy: Apprenticeships, Work Placements, Work Experience, Internships and Volunteering
WARD:	ALL

### AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

#### List of attachments to this report:

1. Policy Document
2. Equalities Impact Assessment

## 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 There is currently a significant amount of un-coordinated and ad hoc activity supporting apprenticeships, paid and unpaid placements, internships, work experience and volunteering within individual services and Directorates. This paper informs the Panel on proposals for a coordinated approach which should be followed by all Council services whereby any apprenticeship or work experience scheme will follow the same broad principles.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:-

2.1.1. Comment on the proposed Policy Framework and Operational document for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid placements, work experience and volunteers within individual departments across the Council.

2.1.2. Identify any issues that require further consideration.

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are a number of financial implications arising from the report predominately the impact on individual managers in the time required to supervise and manage these opportunities. In addition, each service area will need to ensure sufficient funds are available to pay for additional expenses ie travel.

3.2 These impacts will be outlined in each Service Area's Delivery Plans.

3.3 As a result of an increase in opportunities offered by the Council, it may also be necessary to delegate a Lead Officer to support Managers in developing their

approach building upon the current pockets of best practice. This will be achieved through utilising existing staff.

- 3.4 The implementation of this co-ordinated approach could create potential savings through the reduction of temporary agency staff and the conversion of these to apprenticeships.

## **4 THE REPORT**

- 4.1 Nationally, the government wishes to increase the number of apprenticeships on offer and to provide as many opportunities for unemployed people to gain skills and experience which will improve their employability.
- 4.2 In the current difficult economic climate, unemployment in certain groups is increasing. Local people need to have the skills to compete effectively in the labour market. The Council has an ageing workforce and needs to renew and develop its skills sets in order to respond to the challenges of reduced budgets and changes in the ways in which services are run. The workplace transformation programme lends itself to an examination of the role of apprentices, paid and unpaid placements and volunteering. As a procurer and commissioner of services, the Council has a supply chain which can be encouraged to invest in local people. Young people are particularly vulnerable to unemployment at the moment; the Council though its policies can provide opportunities for the most vulnerable to gain skills and experiences which will help them into the labour market. Locally there is concern about graduate retention; paid and unpaid placement opportunities can enable local undergraduates to gain experience of local government and contribute to a strategy for retaining talent locally.
- 4.3 National figures show that the South West has experienced a 60% increase in the number of apprenticeships started between 2009/10 and 2011/12. However this was the lowest % increase across England's nine regions and Bath and North East Somerset is ranked 15th out of the 15 Local Authority areas in the South West for apprenticeship starts in 2011 – 12. Furthermore when ranked by South West Parliamentary Constituency figures for the same time period show apprenticeship starts for Bath were ranked 55th out of 55 and North East Somerset were 47th.
- 4.4 Some Councils have set targets to reduce the number of 16 to 18 years olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and to increase local skills. Apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering can all improve the employability both for young people and adults. Apprenticeships, work placements (paid and unpaid), work experience and volunteering provide opportunities for people to improve their skills, qualifications and employability.
- 4.5 Such opportunities enable the local skills base to be improved and local people improve their employability. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2012) highlighted the importance of creating opportunities to increase employability for that are not in education, training or employment. As one of the largest local employers, the Council is in a good position to provide such opportunities and by providing a range of paid and unpaid opportunities, including volunteering, the Council will:

- Demonstrate leadership in place shaping
- Improve employability
- Reduce unemployment
- Address issues of an ageing workforce
- Deliver benefits for the workforce both now and in the future
- Influence the practices of suppliers of goods and services
- Improve graduate retention
- Underpin the culture of continuing professional development within the Council's workforce
- Actively promote the inclusion of care leavers and those groups deemed at risk of long term unemployment in the recruitment process for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering

4.6 A full set of manager's guidelines to support the implementation of the policy have been developed and reviewed as part of the wider consultation process.

4.7 To resolve and intervene on these problems, the Regeneration, Employment and Skills Service have undertaken a programme of work to research and propose a new Council policy for apprenticeships, work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering.

4.8 Research undertaken with 34 managers (including 7 Directors, 1 Strategic Director and 3 Heads of Service) shows that the Council is already providing a range of apprenticeship, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering opportunities, all of which make a significant contribution to improving the employability and skills of local people.

4.9 However there are no set targets, no monitoring of involvement by managers, no co-ordination of what should be being attempted, little sharing of good practice across Directorates and nothing specified in procurement and commissioning processes.

Two comments from managers illustrate the key issues:

"The ad hoc basis of existing arrangement for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering means that we do not know how good we are at it".

"We have had some successes and now is the time to step up a gear".

4.10 A review of Council Volunteers was undertaken by Human Resources and Policy and Partnerships in 2011 to look at the working in practices of volunteers. The review also highlighted the need for a co-ordinated approach as there were a number of inconsistent practices identified in different service areas. However the review also highlighted that volunteering roles continue to offer best value in terms impact on service delivery, adding value to existing service provision and also offer individuals in the community the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of local services, develop their own skills, and support for some to gain access to employment opportunities.

4.11 The Council however has begun to record the volunteering activity across individual service areas:- there are over 600 volunteers working across the Council in a variety of roles. Some of which are regular commitments for

instance heritage services (Roman Baths/Fashion Museum), youth service and libraries. Other roles offer more adhoc commitment for instance community litter pick teams.

- 4.12 The proposed policy is attached at appendix 1 and is scheduled for a Cabinet decision at the 12<sup>th</sup> June meeting, followed by a full council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September.

The key recommendations will be:

- 4.13 The Council should seek to maximise its social return on investment in the local community by creating apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering so enabling more people to gain access to employment opportunities
- 4.14 Through adopting this policy the Council will develop and launch a more standardised programme of opportunities across service units and will ensure more effective co-ordination of the Council's recruitment, induction, training and support for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering.

This will include:

- The provision of support, advice and help to managers
- Increasing the numbers participating in apprenticeships, work placements, work experience and volunteering through identifying suitable new roles which do not displace existing staff
- Making the sharing of good practice more effective
- Ensuring that the council continues to adopt a best practice approach to the recruitment and retention of apprentices
- The setting of a minimum standard which can be applied in order to ensure that all services know what is expected of them when recruiting and managing participants
- Ensuring that we build on the commitment that some managers have already shown to the creation of apprenticeships, work placements, work experience and volunteering through influencing and negotiation by adopting a standard approach across the Council.

- 4.15 The setting of a minimum standard which can be applied in order to ensure that all services know what is expected of them when recruiting and managing participants

The new policy framework will enable the Council to make a formal commitment to:

- The provision of support, advice and help to managers
- Increasing the numbers participating in apprenticeships, work placements, work experience and volunteering through identifying suitable new roles which do not displace existing staff
- Making the sharing of good practice more effective
- Ensuring that the council continues to adopt a best practice approach to the recruitment and retention of apprentices

- The setting of a minimum standard which can be applied in order to ensure that all services know what is expected of them when recruiting and managing participants
- Ensuring that we build on the commitment that some managers have already shown to the creation of apprenticeships, work placements, work experience and volunteering through influencing and negotiation by adopting a standard approach across the Council.

4.16 Council services will be asked to make a formal commitment:

- to identify opportunities for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering as part of the annual work force planning process
- to undertake an annual survey of activity, to collect data on opportunities offered
- to re-imburse travel expenses for people undertaking unpaid work placements and work experience through accessing internal support packages
- to report regularly to Directors Group on any issues, successes, concerns.

4.17 The approach will support future policy development for procurement and commissioning.

4.18 The Council will prioritise the marketing of opportunities, encourage applications from and provide advice on applying for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience and volunteering opportunities to:

- Care leavers'
- Groups who are most at risk of long term unemployment
- Those who live in disadvantaged wards
- Those living in rural areas

## 5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## 6 EQUALITIES

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. Adverse impacts were identified and have been justified/mitigated in the following ways:

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones
Consultation with service users.	Regular consultation with those on apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of supporting materials for Line Managers and mentors</li> <li>• On-going consultation and monitoring.</li> </ul>
Equalities awareness	Standard induction process for all apprentices and people on paid and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and development of induction programme for apprentices and people on paid and unpaid work</li> </ul>

	unpaid work opportunities to ensure awareness of equalities issues	opportunities.
Participation of those with protected characteristics / measurement of success	Development of a framework to measure the impact of the policy upon groups with protected characteristics.  Inclusion of monitoring of participation in the target setting with Directorates/services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of measurement framework.</li> <li>• On-going monitoring of policy and process in conjunction with HR team.</li> </ul>
Participation of those from rural communities.	Development of further policies/approaches to enabling participation from young people in rural areas on apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of encouraging participation from those people who live in rural areas through offering incentives such as a subsidised bicycle / moped scheme, driving lessons and public transport bursaries.</li> </ul>
Equalities Refresher Training	Members of the Employment and Skills Team require further E&D training as last sessions took place before October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Equalities training.</li> </ul>
Gaps in data	Regular review of EIA as policy is developed to ensure that there are no gaps on data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data gaps plugged.</li> </ul>

## 7 CONSULTATION

7.1 In addition to the initial research where 30 face to face meetings took place with managers, service directors and cabinet members, over 70 individuals were consulted with / invited to participate in the consultation process. This was carried out through a number of channels including:

- Formal Interview
- Group Presentations
- The Council's online consultation system.

## 7.2 Consultees included:

- Cabinet Members
- Trades Unions
- Staff
- Cross section of B&NES services
- Existing apprentices, work placements and Interns
- Head of HR
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Section 151 Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Legal
- Health and Safety
- HR

7.3 Discussions have taken place between the Unions, the authors of the policy and the Head of HR regarding the implementation of the policy. The Unions are in favour of the policy and have been reassured that no paid jobs will be displaced by apprenticeships, work placements or volunteers.

## 8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Social Inclusion; Young People; Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations.

## 9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services), Head of HR and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Policy Document, Equalities Impact Assessment
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	