

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Council
MEETING DATE:	12th September 2013
TITLE:	Policy: Apprenticeships, Work Placements, Work Experience, Internships and Volunteering
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: Policy Document. Appendix A Equalities Impact Assessment. Appendix B Cabinet Decision Registry Entry. Appendix C	

1 THE ISSUE

Bath & North East Somerset Council is working extremely hard alongside companies in the private sector and also education establishments, to give people the support they need in order to make the best of the opportunities in the local jobs market.

Encouragingly, the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance in Bath and North East Somerset remains below 2% for July 2013.

Within Bath & North East Somerset Council we are actively supporting apprenticeships, paid and unpaid placements, work experience, internships and volunteering within individual services and Directorates. In certain areas there is award winning best practice that can influence other services. However, this activity is ad hoc and un-coordinated.

This report therefore proposes that a coordinated approach should be followed by all Council services to ensure that any schemes apply the same broad principles, deliver the Government agenda and assist the Council to deliver an "excellent" programme of apprenticeships, work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering.

2 RECOMMENDATION

Council is asked to endorse the Cabinet decision of 12th June to adopt this policy and note the recommendations below.

- 2.1 The Council should seek to maximise its social return on investment in the local community by creating, where possible, apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering thus enabling more people to gain access to potential employment opportunities in the private sector and wider labour market.
- 2.2 The Council will develop and launch a consistent 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 internships and volunteering.
- 2.3 The policy approach set out in Appendix A is endorsed including:
 - the provision of support, advice and help to managers;
 - increasing the number of participants in such schemes;
 - sharing of good practice;
 - the provision of consistent, high quality recruitment, induction, training and support processes; and
 - minimum standards which can be applied to ensure that all services know what is expected of them when recruiting and managing participants
- 2.4 Council services be asked to make a commitment to:
 - identify opportunities for apprenticeships, paid and unpaid work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering as part of the annual work force planning process;
 - undertake an annual survey of activity, to collect data on opportunities offered;
 - re-imburse travel expenses for people undertaking unpaid work placements and work experience through accessing internal support packages; and
 - report regularly to DDG on any issues, successes, concerns.
- 2.5 The Council's Procurement Strategy 2013-17 'Think Local' approved by Cabinet in April 2013 has committed the Council to prioritise Social Value. The Council now follows this policy which must recognise the local economic, environmental and social improvements that can come from each procurement, such as new jobs and apprenticeships.
- 2.6 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2012) highlighted the importance of creating opportunities to increase employability. The Council will prioritise the marketing of opportunities, encourage applications from and provide advice on applying for such schemes to:
 - Care leavers
 - Groups who are most at risk of long term unemployment
 - Those who live in disadvantaged wards
 - Those living in rural areas

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. All costs will be absorbed within existing budgets. Teams will not be forced to participate in programmes, but will be supported with a suite of best practice guidelines.
- 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 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The proposals will have a particular impact on the achievement of the following Council objectives:
 - *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*
 - *Building a stronger economy.*
- 4.2 Helping people to renew and/or develop their skills through the provision of high quality apprenticeships, work placements, work experience and volunteering will enable individuals to gain experience which will help them into the labour market. The Council will be investing in its citizens and supporting their ability to become independent and lead positive working lives. A strong local economy needs a skilled workforce and the provision of training opportunities will develop skills which can support economic development within the private sector.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Nationally, the government has increased 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. The Council is also committed to this agenda because of the benefits associated with such schemes. Since 2010 there have been one million new private sector jobs and there have been over one million new apprenticeship starts. Youth unemployment is reducing as a result of the half a million young people being given opportunities through the Government's £1billion Youth Contract.
- 5.2 In the current difficult economic climate, unemployment amongst 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 already invests in local people. Young people are particularly vulnerable to unemployment at the moment, (especially 18 to 24 year olds); the Council through 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.

Current Council Initiatives.

5.3 Within the Council, two Engagement Officers have been recruited to work with the Worklessness Programme Manager to develop a programme of effective engagement with the target client groups. Working with the Government's Work Programme providers and other agencies, the Worklessness Team has developed a flexible "Whole Journey Pathway Management" Programme to provide individual clients with flexible solutions tailored to their needs and requirements.

5.4 Through local delivery of the Government's agenda, the Council has been successful in securing a range of targeted employment & training (TET) outcomes on the Crest Nicholson Bath Western Riverside development. To date 10 apprentices, 10 unemployed skilled trades and a total of 125 up-skilling outcomes have been achieved.

Furthermore, in procuring the City Casino operators licence the Council has negotiated contractually the employment of 70% of the workforce to be B&NES residents and that at least 30% of the workforce will be engaged, trained and employed through a Job Centre Plus pre-employment programme, plus the provision of three apprentices. There are also conditions in the construction phase to ensure that 95% of net new jobs will be B&NES residents and that there will be 10 apprenticeships and 10 employment opportunities for Job Centre Plus clients.

5.5 In delivering the Keynsham Town Hall Regeneration scheme a range of outcomes including 3 x apprenticeships, 4 x Children Leaving Care work experience placements and 7 x JSA client employment opportunities have been achieved. Keynsham remains a particular area of concern and we shall be seeking to target it further when implementing this new policy.

5.6 Through the Council's new value based procurement strategy the Divisional Director for Resources is leading the strategy for the whole Council. The Council will shortly be launching the strategy amongst the private sector where new jobs and apprenticeships are most needed. The key strategy pointers are:

- (1) Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing
- (2) Collaboration and Consolidation
- (3) Cost reduction and control
- (4) Knowledge and Skills
- (5) Transparency and Accountability.

The Commissioning and Procurement Framework is the standard process followed by all officers when commissioning goods, works and services for the Council.

- 5.7 The Council supports and provides funding for the B&NES Learning Partnership which brings together education providers and key labour market agencies operating in B&NES. The team also work closely with the skills team in the WoE Local Enterprise Partnership. The focus of this work is to make sure the needs of B&NES residents are met by education and job agency providers as well as being articulated through LEP economic and skills initiatives.
- 5.8 The EEB Team has a Business Engagement Programme through which the opportunities for work placements/apprenticeships/graduate internships can be promoted to local companies.
- 5.9 Project SEARCH is a partnership between the Council, Norton Radstock College and Sirona with community organisations such as Remploy, BOSS Employment and Connexions in supporting roles. The partnership provides internship opportunities for students with developmental disabilities with the hope of them becoming more employable in order to get real paid jobs after completion of the programme.
- 5.10 The Council 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 ad hoc commitment, for instance community litter-pick teams.

Defining the Policy

- 5.11 This policy supports the Council's vision to "build a stronger economy" with a broad range of job and employment opportunities that recognises the different needs of rural, town and city communities.

This policy directly supports that vision by helping the Council to lead on:

- reducing the number of JSA claimants in the region, overall, but with a specific target of the 18 – 24 age range;
- increasing the number of private sector apprenticeships offered in B&NES and within the Council; and
- assisting more people into employment

5.12 The Regeneration, Employment and Skills Service undertook a programme of work to research and propose a new Council policy for apprenticeships, work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering.

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 such schemes all of which make a significant contribution to improving the employability and skills of local people.

There remains scope for the monitoring of involvement by managers, wider coordination, sharing of good practice across Directorates.

5.13 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”

5.14 A review of Council Volunteers was undertaken by Human Resources and Policy and Partnerships in 2011 to look at the working practices of volunteers. It highlighted the need for a co-ordinated approach as there were a number of inconsistent practices identified in different service areas, but it 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.

5.15 The Council undertakes partnership working with a variety of agencies and bodies. It regularly liaises with private sector organisations and companies. Through publicising our activities to these organisations we can help extend the range of opportunities available to B&NES residents.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. Adverse impacts were identified and have been justified/mitigated – see appendix B for details.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Cabinet members; Trades Unions; Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users were all consulted.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 Consultees included:
- Cabinet Members
 - Trades Unions
 - Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
 - Staff
 - Cross section of B&NES services
 - Existing apprentices, work placements and Interns
 - Neighbouring Local Authorities
 - Section 151 Finance Officer
 - Monitoring Officer
 - Legal
 - Health and Safety
 - Head of HR
 - HR Team
- 8.4 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, internships or volunteers.
- 8.5 Consultation has taken place with the Council's Legal Department and recommendation 2.6 regarding targeting the marketing of opportunities to priority groups is compliant with the 1972 Local Government Act.

9 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

- 9.1 Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Human Resources; Young People; Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations were all considered.

10 ADVICE SOUGHT

10.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) 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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Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Stevens
Background papers	Policy Document Appendix A Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix B Cabinet Decision Registry Entry. Appendix C
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