

**IMPLEMENTATION OF AN APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY FOR
CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **17th April 2012**

From: **Andy Sanders, 16-19 Manager**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **2012\026** *Key decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **To consider the implementation of the Apprenticeship Strategy**

Recommendation: **To approve and adopt the Strategy**

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a responsibility to develop a strategy which increases the uptake of apprenticeships in their local area. This is referenced in the Apprenticeship, Schools, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) 2009, The Education Bill 2011, and the Wolf Review of Vocational Learning 2011.
- 1.2 Government has invested significantly in apprenticeships and has announced additional initiatives such as funding for the development of Higher apprenticeships, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices to assist the young unemployed. The government sees apprenticeships as a major training route to improve the skills within the UK in order to compete in a global market.
- 1.3 Apprenticeships are widely accepted as a major benefit to employers by improving skills, increasing productivity and reducing staff turnover. For the employee they provide a relevant training and a nationally recognised portable qualification.
- 1.4 Cambridgeshire as a county has been under performing in respect of apprenticeships compared to both regional and national trends. In 2008-9 16-18 year old apprenticeship starts in Cambridgeshire rose by 14% against a 41% rise in the Eastern Region and 32% nationally. In 2009-10 the increases were 8% in Cambridgeshire, 18% in the Eastern Region and 13% nationally. This underlines the need for a coordinated effort to improve the apprenticeship offer and take up in Cambridgeshire.

2.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 An Apprenticeship strategy for the County Council has been drafted and sets out our ambitions to increase participation, raise the skills and aspirations of Cambridgeshire residents and to meet the employment needs of the local economy. The strategy incorporates four channels to increase the apprenticeship offer within the County as follows:
 - **As an employer.** As part of the Workforce Development Strategy apprenticeships are a part of the Council's core offering, both as a preferred progression route for existing employees and as an entry into employment through appropriate recruitment channels. Ten new into employment apprentices are due to join Cambridgeshire County Council. The Council's recruitment process has been amended to prompt consideration of apprenticeship entry where appropriate.

- **As an Influencer.** Through procurement, the Authority encourages and promotes apprenticeship programmes within supply chain contracting. Tendering documentation is being amended to reflect this.
- **By supporting impartial Information, Advice and Guidance in schools.** This will be undertaken through the three 14-19 Educational Area Partnerships. The Authority is currently assessing specific activities such as the development of Apprenticeship Ambassadors in schools and identifying opportunities for improving progression for young people into skilled employment. Pilot funding will be allocated to support this activity.
- **By supporting employers and business** through enhanced employer engagement, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, and other networks as an enabler to link the demand for apprenticeships more closely with supply. It is also proposed to promote the development of support mechanisms for small and medium size businesses such as Apprenticeship Training Agencies.

2.2 A copy of the Apprenticeship Strategy is attached. (Appendix 1)

2.3 The Local Authority has a data sharing agreement with the government's Data Service to provide quarterly analysis of statistical performance. Quality is managed by the Skills Funding Agency through the application of 'Minimum Levels of Performance' which addresses low success rates by sector subject area. Funding contracts are awarded or withdrawn on this basis. The latest data analysis is attached for academic year 2010-11 (Appendix 2), and the first quarter of 2011-12 (Appendix 3)

2.4 The Apprenticeship Strategy has been developed along side the proposed 'Raising of the Participation Age' and broader 'Skills' strategies which are in advanced stages of development. Apprenticeships are also an integral part of the Workforce Development strategy within the County Council's plan

3.0 ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

3.1 By acting as the strategic lead and promoting apprenticeships, the County is increasing the opportunities available to both young people and adults as a way of entering and progressing through employment, benefitting individuals, businesses and the local economy.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource and Performance

4.1.1 Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) have allocated £50k in their 2012-2013 budget to provide resource to support the development

of 'internal' apprentices.

- 4.1.2 Apprenticeships will need to be funded from existing service budgets. As such, apprenticeships need to be seen as a core element of the Council's workforce development strategy and not as an additional training route. Services and external providers will be supported to design frameworks to fit the skills and development needs of staff and achieve economies of scale if groups of staff are interested in the same framework.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal

- 4.2.1 None

4.3 Equality and Diversity

- 4.3.1 None

4.4 Engagement and Consultation

- 4.4.1 Extensive communication has taken place across directorates within the County Council through presentations at team meetings. The proposed strategy has been shared with a variety of multi agency networks including the Voluntary Sector, Area Partnerships, Workplace Learning and other Provider networks.

Source Documents	Location
None	