

## Cambridgeshire as a next generation employer – growing our potential

To:	Staffing and Appeals Committee
Meeting Date:	7th November 2024
From:	Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships
Electoral division(s):	All
Key decision:	No
Forward Plan ref:	Not Applicable
Executive Summary:	The report provides an overview of the activity that enables Cambridgeshire County Council to be a next generation employer and support colleagues under 30 to develop and grow their careers.
Recommendation:	The Committee is recommended to note the progress made to date.

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# 1. Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire

- 1.1 The Council's People Strategy and the supporting action plan enable the achievement of all seven ambitions. A workforce that is appropriately attracted, supported, appreciated, developed, and included, is integral to the delivery of the Council's vision and ambitions for Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The Learning and Development Team activity to develop colleagues across the Council to meet those ambitions are a key part of the People Strategy.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire County Council was shortlisted in the Local Government Chronicle's Workforce Awards 2024 in the 'Best Next Generation Employer' category. This category considers a Local Authority's progress in supporting the career development of colleagues who are under 30. As part of the judging for these awards we were invited to present our journey to the judging panel and the final results will be announced at an event on 5th November.
- 2.2 This purpose of this update, is to share with the committee our approach to growing our own potential within the Cambridgeshire County Council Workforce and to share the presentation developed for the judging panel to demonstrate the practical examples of this approach in action.

## 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The Local Government Chronicle Workforce Awards, Best Next Generation Employer category sought councils who are proactively responding to the challenge that Local Government has an ageing workforce, which is only set to compound current skills shortages in the sector. Councils need to attract more millennials and Gen Z to join the workforce. However, many younger people are not aware of the many and varied opportunities the sector offers for a fulfilling career. The award category is about recognising councils working to recruit and retain people under 30, either across the organisation or in one specific service area.
- 3.2 Sharing our experiences at Cambridgeshire County Council, we were able to present our approach to:
  - Work Experience
  - Apprenticeships
  - Graduate Schemes
  - Career support
  - Examples of thriving careers
  - 5% Club Membership

### 3.3 Work Experience

Our work experience programme grew significantly in 2024, from supporting a small cohort of four students in 2023. Our offer for 2024 included increasing the number places to 40,

partnering with more schools and widening participation to include students with SEND and offering places to young people with care experience.

### 3.4 Apprenticeships

We focused our presentation on showcasing our Civil engineering apprentices and highlighted a case study about Sara, a Business Administration Apprentice, who won the Local Government Apprentice of the Year award for 2024. Our apprenticeship schemes are thriving, we typically have around 250 active apprentices at any one time across the council and in our maintained schools, this is enabling us to grow our own workforce pipelines, including in key roles, like Social Workers, Teachers, Accountants and Engineers, we use apprenticeship opportunities to upskill our leaders and managers. We also transfer some of our apprenticeship levy to other Cambridgeshire employers who are unable to fund apprenticeship training, this has enabled us to keep funding in Cambridgeshire, which otherwise would be returned to central government as expired funds.

### 3.5 Graduate Schemes

Our main graduate schemes are the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) for social work graduates, the CIPFA Finance and Accounting programme and the Local Government Association's National Graduate Development Programme, which has now rebranded as Impact. All these schemes bring new colleagues into Cambridgeshire County Council, to start their career with us. Our work to support colleagues in the Social Work Profession has also been recognised in the Social Work Awards where we are finalists in three categories: Supportive Social Work Employer of the year, Newly qualified children's social worker of the year and Practice Educator of the year. The winners will be announced at an awards evening on 8th November.

### 3.6 Career Support

Part of the career support package includes our Cambridgeshire Careers Network which is run by colleagues. The network arranges monthly events open to the whole organisation on a variety of topics. In addition to the career conversations employees have as part of their 'Our Conversations' we also offer 1:1 Careers Conversation with a qualified Careers professional, this is a confidential and impartial 60-minute conversation to explore career ambitions and options.

### 3.7 Examples of thriving careers

Our presentation included a couple of case studies to illustrate the range of careers and the different progression routes within the council;

- Cambria has been with Cambridgeshire County Council since 2016, in this time she has progressed through the business support pathway and managing others she has undertaken a management apprenticeship, she is currently working as Corporate Business Manager and is responsible for the Executive Support Service who support our Corporate and Extended Leadership Team.
- Ed joined Cambridgeshire County Council on the NGDP programme, in 2019, the programme exposed Ed to a variety of opportunities in the council including climate

change and education and opportunities to support projects like Operation London Bridge and exclusive Royal Visits. Ed is currently working at Grafham Water Outdoor Centre as a Business Development Manager.

### 3.8 5% Club Membership

Cambridgeshire County Council joined the 5% club in 2023 and were the first county council to be awarded Silver membership. The 5% Club works to inspire positive action for increased and accessible workplace learning, and career prospects focused on: Apprentices, Sponsored students and Graduates, collectively recognised as 'Earn and Learn' schemes.

Our ambition is to achieve Gold membership by having over 5% of our workforce in 'Earn and Learn' programmes. The results of the 2024 audit will be announced in November 2024. Being part of the audit also enables us to access the benchmarking report for produced from all participating employers, which helps us monitor trends and learn from other initiatives.

## 4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 Not applicable.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 Not applicable.

## 6. Significant Implications

### 6.1 Finance Implications

There are no foreseeable implications in this category.

### 6.2 Legal Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 6.3 Risk Implications

There are no foreseeable implications in this category.

### 6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

We are committed to ensuring our schemes to attract next generation employees to Cambridgeshire County Council are aligned to the EDI action plan.

## 7. Source Documents

7.1 None