

Report of East North East Area Leader

Report to Inner East Area Committee

Date: 6th December 2012

Subject: Apprenticeships Update

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| Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Killingbeck & Seacroft, Gipton & Harehills | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary of main issues

1. The Leeds Apprenticeship Hub forms part of the City Deal and will be established early in 2013.
2. The Apprenticeship Training Agency will launch in Leeds on 29th November 2012.
3. Work is ongoing to develop a local partnership framework to provide two Level 2 Business and Administration apprenticeships, funded by the Inner East and Inner North East Area Committees.

Recommendations

4. The Area Committee is asked to note the update provided within this report on strategic initiatives and local Area Committee support to encourage the growth of apprenticeships across Leeds and specifically within Inner East and Inner North East.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on city-wide initiatives to support growth in apprenticeships. It also provides an update on the proposal to offer two local partnership based apprenticeship, sponsored by the Inner East and Inner North East Area Committees.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The East North East Area Leadership Team (ALT) has identified a number of priorities that it wishes to tackle over the next year. One of these is to reduce worklessness and the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). In response, the ALT set a challenge for partners to take on an apprentice.
- 2.2 The Area Improvement Manager has developed a proposal for an apprentice to be placed with the Area Support Team, then a partner such as the Police and hopefully complete the placement within the business sector.
- 2.3 This proposal was considered and endorsed by Area Chairs in March 2012.
- 2.4 The Inner East and Inner North East Area Committees approved funding of £6,240 each to each support an apprentice within their area, at their meetings in September 2012.

3 Main issues

City-wide Apprenticeships

a) The Leeds Apprenticeship Hub

- 3.1 The Leeds Apprenticeship Hub forms part of the City Deal and will be established early in 2013, aimed at developing and expanding Apprenticeships across the City in particular among SMEs in key growth sectors, as a long term solution to achieve sustainable youth employment and unlock the growth potential of smaller businesses. The funding has been confirmed for the Hub and the business case has now been submitted and will be considered by Leeds City Region Chief Officers on 19th November. Operating as a collaborative partnership, the Hub will help to increase the Apprenticeship offer in Leeds to meet local needs by aligning partner resources and activities with agreed local priorities.
- 3.2 During the next decade, Leeds is expected to account for 29% of net additional jobs in the region (46,100 out of 158,400) driven by financial, professional and business services and, retail and health. Employers will need employees with appropriate skills to meet sector needs and help businesses grow and develop. Despite job growth predictions, youth unemployment remains high in the City and the ability of young people to meet the skills needs of employers remains a challenge.
- 3.3 Over the next 3 years the Apprenticeship Hub will act as a vehicle to shape and drive forward a programme of interventions to create a better offer for learners

and businesses in the City. Hub activities will focus on increasing the number of businesses with an apprentice, primarily through local and targeted campaigns and via the Leeds Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) that will be launched in November 2012 (see below). Increasing the number of young apprentices will also be prioritised through business/learner engagement activities in secondary schools and the development of peer support and mentoring schemes. Higher level Apprenticeship Frameworks will also be developed through the Hub to meet employer needs for highly skilled individuals within key growth sectors including business and financial services.

- 3.4 The Leeds Apprenticeship Steering Group will be further developed to guide and monitor the Hub's activities and help to embed a shared vision of the outcomes the City wants to see over the next 3 years.

b) The Apprenticeship Training Agency

- 3.5 The Apprenticeship Training Agency forms part of the wider Apprenticeship Hub model that will be developed in Leeds, through the City Deal and will be launched on 29th November. The ATA is expected to be fully operational from January 2013. The launch event is targeted at SMEs to raise the profile of the ATA and encourage SMEs to get involved from the outset. Wider briefings and / or promotional materials will be made available to Ward Members and other interested parties over the next few months.
- 3.6 An interim Chief Executive for the ATA, Keith Ramsay, has now been appointed for three months to help get the ATA up and running. Recruitment for the permanent staff will commence this week and will be led by the Chamber on behalf of the ATA. It is envisaged that a new Board of Directors will be established in January and they will sign off the Business Plan

Area Committee Funded Apprenticeships

- 3.7 Work to take on two apprentices, funded through the Inner East Area Committee and Inner North East Area Committee, is progressing. Leeds City College believes that the proposal offers an exciting opportunity and is particularly attractive because of the breadth of experience the partnership based delivery model could offer each apprentice. They have offered significant support and guidance in developing the proposals.
- 3.8 The Police have confirmed that they are keen to support the development of a partnership model for these apprenticeships. The next steps are now to develop the detail of the proposal to ensure that the apprentice gains sufficient experience and development and that the host organisations also benefit from a positive experience. Business in the Community is continuing to support the development of this proposal through trying to secure a business sector partner for the final third of the placement. Leeds City College have also offered to contact employers within East North East with whom they have a positive relationship. Employment and Skills also have details of employers who are expanding within the area and these will be contacted to encourage their involvement in the partnership. Arcadia is supporting the development of the Burmantofts Neighbourhood Improvement

Plan and has expressed an interest in supporting apprentices generally and this potential will be explored.

- 3.9 It is hoped that a business sector partner will have been identified by the end of December 2012. In the meantime details of the partnership arrangement will have been agreed with the Police by the end of December. It is anticipated that subject to confirming business sector partner involvement, recruitment will take place in early 2013. With the support of Leeds City College, this should be fairly rapid and it therefore likely that the first apprentice should be in post by the end of March 2013.
- 3.10 As set out in the partnership model submitted to the Area Committee in September, it is suggested that the apprentices are placed on a rolling programme. Therefore the confirmation of a business sector partner will dictate whether the Inner East or Inner North East Area Committee sponsored apprentice commences first. On the basis of this agreed model, the second apprentice would commence their placement within the Area Support Team in summer 2013. Once a business sector partner has been confirmed, this timescale will be finalised.
- 3.11 Discussions with the Inner North East Area Committee Chair have suggested the potential opportunities that smaller businesses within East North East could offer in the promotion of apprenticeships, particularly within the BME business sector in retail, catering, property management and law. This recent suggestion will be pursued by the Area Support Team over the next few months.
- 3.12 Although there is no legal requirement to provide a job on completion of the apprenticeship, it is likely that the absence of a guaranteed job will impact on the numbers and calibre of young people applying. Although a private business sector employment option at the end of the apprenticeship is being pursued, the Area Leader is also seeking to secure a commitment from the Council's corporate HR to offer the apprentice, on completion of their training, access to Council vacancies advertised internally.
- 3.13 Leeds City College aim to make it simple for employers to recruit and place Apprentices. The Big Match is Leeds City College's own recruitment service and its aim is to place the right candidate first time. This is achieved through a rigorous selection and assessment process meaning that employers only see those candidates that have been matched to their vacancy. The team will write a job description and advertise the role for a period of 4 weeks. During this time their experienced team will sift applications matching to the job description. Those successful at getting to the next stage will meet with Big Match team and carry out a skills test and interview. Those successful at this stage will be recommended to the employer for final interview.
- 3.14 Currently there are around 320 young people city-wide who have applied for apprenticeships but have not yet been matched to an apprentice person specification. The College can advertise apprenticeship opportunities on-line and through The Big Match are able to refine their search and selection criteria for example, by specific postcodes. This would meet the Area Committee's requirement to support a young person from within their area boundary.

- 3.15 It is suggested that it may be appropriate to specify a minimum entry level of English and Maths GCSE at grade C or above. Although the proposal does not seek to exclude any potential candidates, it would not be sensible to set a young person up to fail. This basic requirement would also ensure that the apprenticeship could be completed within 12 months as this is the period that funding has been secured for.
- 3.16 Leeds City College has also advised that the person specification is very important, given that 90% of young people who are NEET are not 'apprenticeship ready'. They can help identify young people who would be suitable for consideration. It is suggested that a recruitment campaign should also be carried out through local channels such as community centres, One Stop Centres etc.

Apprenticeship Recognition

- 3.17 Importantly there has been recent recognition of the success and benefits of apprentices. Within the Area Support Team, the Office Support Officer, who initially started work within the Council as an apprentice, has recently won Colleague of the Year Award within the Customer Access and Performance Staff Awards. An apprentice within Children's Services has also been presented with an Apprentice of the Year award and a similar accolade has been awarded to an apprentice based within igen.

Worklessness strategy

- 3.18 It should be noted that work is underway to tackle to wider worklessness agenda.
- 3.19 An Outcome-Based Accountability workshop took place on October 11th, arranged by the Area Support Team and facilitated by Heather Pinches; Intelligence and Performance Team. The aim of the workshop was to draw together information on initiatives in place to tackle high numbers of young people who are NEET and high levels of worklessness within Inner East. A wide range of partners attended including Employment and Skills, Children's Services, igen, Economic Development, Targeted Services Leaders, Job Centre Plus, East North East Homes, Leeds City College, Leeds College of Building, Children's Centres and Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust. The workshop aimed to identify good practice and any duplication within the area with a view to re-configuring service provision where appropriate.
- 3.20 Although a wide range of partners attended with significant expertise in their particular service areas, it was very difficult to draw this together into a coherent action plan. The Area Support Team has pulled together the information and ideas from the event and started to draft an action plan which will be tabled at the ALT meeting. It is acknowledged that this is very much work in progress and detailed discussions will be required with partners to identify specific actions and timescales.
- 3.21 Although some positive discussions took place including the identification of some gaps in service provision, the overall outcome from the session was limited. Partners struggled to identify how they could work together to promote better outcomes for communities in East North East.

- 3.22 It is suggested that it may be useful to complete an audit of existing provision in terms of pre-16, 16-19 and 19-24 programmes. It is also suggested that it would be helpful to assign a red, amber or green status to each programme in terms of whether they work with young people who need very basic level support or young people who are 'job ready'.
- 3.23 The Area Leader is arranging a high level meeting to inject some pace and direction into the work to reduce worklessness and numbers of young people who are NEET within Inner East and across the wider ENE area.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 There are no specific consultation or engagement considerations. However a number of partners have been consulted to support the development of this proposal, including Leeds City College, West Yorkshire Police and Business in the Community.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 There are no specific implications for equality and diversity or cohesions and integration.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The City Priority Plan 2011-2015 identifies a headline indicator under the aim of making Leeds a child friendly city, to reduce the number of 16-18 year olds that are not in education, employment or training (NEET). In addition, reducing the number of young people who are NEET is a priority identified in the Children and Young Peoples Plan and is one of the key 'obsessions' for Children's Services to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Leeds 11-19 (25) Learning & Support Plan (2011-2015) sets out the strategy and priorities to shape the future of learning provision and support services for young people aged 11-19, or up to 25 for learners who have learning difficulties or learning disabilities.

- 4.3.2 The East North East (ENE) Area Leadership Team has identified reducing NEETs as one of its key aims during 2012/13. This is in the context of the ENE and particularly Inner East area having particularly high levels of NEETs.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The proposal utilises Inner East and Inner North East Area Committee Well-being funding. It also draws in match funding from the Skills Council of approximately £5,500 per apprentice.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The main risks are potential lack of interest from suitable candidates, host organisations being dissatisfied with the apprentice and the lack of permanent employment at the end of the apprenticeship. The Area Improvement Manager is seeking to reduce these risks by working closely with partners to secure suitable candidates and a positive experience for both the employer organisations and the apprentice.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Work is progressing well to secure Area Committee funded apprenticeships. However a number of issues still need to be resolved, including most importantly identification of a business sector partner to work with and confirmation of an employment opportunity at the end of the placement.
- 5.2 These issues are currently being addressed and further updates will be submitted to the Area Committees and ALT.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the update provided within this report on strategic initiatives and local Area Committee support to encourage the growth of apprenticeships.

Background documents

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.