


Non-Executive Report of the: Human Resources Committee 1 st July 2015	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Stephen Halsey, Head of Paid Service	Classification: Unrestricted
Routes into Employment	

Originating Officer(s)	Simon Kilbey, Service Head (Human Resources & Workforce Development)
Wards affected	All

Summary

This report provides Members of the HR Committee with information on the various 'routes to employment' schemes administered by Human Resources & Workforce Development, following a request from the Committee for further information.

Recommendations:

The Human Resources Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report.

1. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 To note the experience and direction of the apprenticeship, graduate and other work experience initiatives in order to inform the way forward.

2. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3. **DETAILS OF REPORT**

3.1 **Background**

- 3.1.1 The Council has been running a number of schemes to assist people into employment for several years. These include Apprenticeship and Graduate Schemes, the Tower Project pre-apprenticeship scheme and the Leaving Care pre-apprenticeship scheme.

3.1.2 Details of the schemes and their success rates, in the main as measured by retention in the Council's employment, are given below.

3.2. Apprenticeships

3.2.1 There is a long history of Apprenticeships in the U.K. and in Local Government. The traditional Apprenticeship Framework's purpose was to provide a supply of young people seeking to enter work-based learning via apprenticeships, structured learning and transferable skills and knowledge. The system in place in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s provided the framework for young people to qualify in craft trades such as, fitter, plumber, mechanic, etc. Up until the 1980s Local Government employed a large direct workforce carrying out services such as maintaining housing and public building stock, vehicle fitting and highways maintenance. As a result a number of apprentice programmes were in place linked to the Industry Training Boards and Employers' Federations.

3.2.2 These traditional apprenticeships diminished in the 1980s in both the private and public sectors. In Local Government the availability of traditional apprenticeships was adversely affected by the erosion of direct employment through the Planning and Land Act and Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

3.2.3 In 1994, the Government introduced Modern Apprenticeships based on frameworks devised by the Sector Skills Council. Apprenticeship frameworks contain a number of separately certified elements:

- A knowledge based element
- A competence based element typically certified through an NVQ
- Key Skills

3.2.4 The Tower Hamlets Modern Apprenticeship programme started in 1996 as the 'Youth Apprenticeship Programme' and then the 'Kaleidoscope' scheme. In 2001 the scheme was re-named 'Tower Hamlets Youth Training' and this remained unchanged until 2012 when the scheme became known as 'Tower Hamlets Apprenticeships'. Up until 2006 the schemes focussed solely on the development of Business Administration apprentices, at this point Health and Social Care apprentices were added.

3.2.5 The team also deliver the apprenticeship framework for ERS (Employment Related Services, formerly IAG, Information, Advice and Guidance) and have approval to deliver ITQ (an ICT apprenticeship framework). The Workforce Development (WD) team have developed a partnership with Havering College to deliver the level 3 apprenticeship in Planning & Building Control and there are 2 Tower Hamlets' apprentices on that programme. The WD team are also working in partnership with the Youth Service and the YMCA to deliver the Youth Work apprenticeship to 9 apprentices

3.2.6 The Council has achieved excellent retention rates for apprentices. The majority have progressed to either a level 3 apprenticeship or a job. This does

not necessarily mean that they were all retained by the council although that is the case for 84% of apprentices over the last four years.

3.2.7 Managers who accept an apprentice placement are required to submit a retention strategy which will indicate how they will support the apprentice to find a permanent role at the end of the apprenticeship. In the last 12 weeks of the programme, the apprentice will be placed on the redeployment list and will be eligible to apply for roles up to scale 4. They also register with the In-House Temporary Resourcing Scheme and with Skillsmatch. Career planning is ongoing throughout the apprenticeship programme to ensure the apprentices find a positive progression route.

3.2.8 Progression Data

Cohorts	Schemes	No	Employed	Progression to L3	RR ¹	Early leavers	Employed Elsewhere
17 (July 11 -Jan 13)	HSC L3	6	4	0	66%	1	1
18 (Apr/Jun12-Jul/Sept13)	Admin L3	19	4	14	94%	1	0
19 (May 12-13)	Admin L2 /HSC L2	28	12	13	89%	3	0
21 (Jan 13-Jan14)	Admin L2	19	7	7	73%	2	3
23 (May 13-Aug 14)	Admin L3	13	10	0	77%		3
24 (Sept 13-Sept14)	Admin L2	17	5	10	88%	1	1
24 (Sept 13-Sept14)	Catering L2	2	0	1	50%	0	1
		104	42	45	84%	8	9

3.2.9 Over the last 4 years the structure of the Council has changed in response to austerity measures and the introduction of new ways of working, facilitated by new technology. The savings programme will result in a continued reshaping of the Council over the next few years with potentially fewer administration roles emerging. This adversely affects the ability to retain apprentices in the Council unless the offer is more closely aligned to workforce planning.

¹Retention Rate

3.2.10 Diversifying the apprenticeship offer provides a long term benefit to both the individual and the Council as apprenticeships can support succession planning and provide permanent jobs. In 2013/14 an adjustment was made by reducing the previous numbers of Business Administration apprenticeships and giving greater concentration to skill shortage/succession planning requirements in areas such as Building Control, Youth work and Catering.

3.3 2014/2015 Apprentice Intake

3.3.1 The Council's priorities include the commitment to getting local people into work and this is especially important in relation to young people. The apprenticeship programme is one of the key planks to realising those aspirations. Earlier this year a new cohort of 32 Apprentices was recruited.

3.3.2 The recruitment process is an integral part of the 'apprentice experience'. It not only gives the council the opportunity to select the right candidate but also allows the candidate to make the decision regarding whether the apprenticeship is right for them. Many of the applicants have no (or very limited) previous experience and the assessment centre approach allows the team to 'recruit for attitude and train for skills'.

3.3.3 The recruitment process has five stages:

- Advert and Engagement
- Skillsmatch carry out initial screening and provide URL to those who meet the criteria
- Basic Skills Assessment and Briefing Session
- Development Centre
- Induction

3.3.4 To ensure that the widest possible audience is reached the strategy adopted is:

- Advertisement in East End Life and on the Council's website
- Notices in local youth clubs, employment centres and community organisations
- Workforce Development engage with teams across the Council who have a particular interest in ensuring that 'their young people' know about and apply for the scheme
- Workforce Development team attend 1 youth club in each LAP during the recruitment process
- Referrals from Connexions Jobcentre Plus
- Direct marketing to Leaving Care and other internal teams with a remit to work with young people

3.3.5 The 32 newly recruited Apprentices have now commenced on the following frameworks:

- Health and Social Care x 4
- Administration x 19
- Youth Work x 9

3.3.6 Of these 32 successful candidates, 22 are Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi, 1 is Black or Black British – African, 1 is Black or Black British – Caribbean, 1 is Black British – Other Mixed – Other and 7 are White – British.

3.4 2015/16 Intake

3.4.1 A further 20 Apprentices will be recruited in 2015/2016. The recruitment will be targeted towards school leavers and will also take steps to ensure that under-represented groups such as white youths are aware of the opportunities and encouraged, and assisted, to apply.

3.4.2 The recruitment campaign is currently at the planning stage. The aim is to identify the occupational areas where apprenticeships can be offered before any publicity is generated and/or visits made to schools and community facilities.

3.6 Pre-Apprenticeship Programme – Tower Project

3.6.1 The WFTRC action plan includes a commitment to recruit two cohorts of pre-apprentices including recruiting 10 adults with learning difficulties.

3.6.2 The apprentices are engaged by Tower Hamlets but placed with local preferred providers. These providers are Toynbee Hall and the Tower Project/UEL Rix Research Centre. Subject to better off calculations the apprentices are employed for a minimum of 8 hours per week at London Living Wage, 6 hours of work time is in the work place and 2 hours of work time in training. Tower Project JET Service provide dedicated training room space across the year for Workforce Development to deliver the training and desk space for any administration work. Tower Project also provide Teaching Assistant support for the training classes. Those who are successful on the pre-apprenticeship programme have the opportunity to progress to a Level 2 apprenticeship. One graduate of the Tower Project traineeship programme has progressed to the current Level 2 Business Administration apprenticeship

3.7 Pre-Apprenticeship Programme – Leaving Care

3.7.1 The Workforce Development Team also support the Leaving Care trainee programme. Leaving Care trainees are engaged on a 25 hr contract for 6 months and are paid a tax free training allowance of £125 per week. They will work towards level 1 functional skills in Maths and English. The overall aim is to provide the opportunity for young people leaving care to experience the world of work and receive sufficient training to either progress into employment or to a L2 apprenticeship. Two graduates of the Leaving Care traineeship programme have progressed to Level 2 apprenticeships, 1 in Health and Social Care and 1 in Business Administration.

3.8. Graduate Programme

- 3.8.1 Since 2000 the Council has, from time to time, operated various Graduate schemes. However, the LEAN and Employment Options programmes, with accompanying pressures on redeployment have resulted in reduced opportunities and concentration has therefore focussed more recently on apprenticeship programmes.
- 3.8.2 A future Graduate programme will be considered as part of the developing workforce strategy and will be focussed on meeting future organisational needs. At service level, as reorganisations are implemented, graduate entry schemes will continue to be developed to meet future resourcing requirements in skills shortage areas.

3.9. Alternative Apprenticeship operating models

- 3.9.1 Apprenticeships are now available in the majority of vocational areas. This has given colleges and training providers the opportunity to specialise in apprenticeships and develop best practice whilst keeping operating costs to a minimum.
- 3.9.2 There are a number of different ways in which colleges/training providers operate apprenticeships. Some provide a rolling programme which enables an apprentice to start at any time. A number of providers also deliver all the learning in the workplace, thus reducing the cost of releasing the apprentice for day release offsite.
- 3.9.3 Local authorities have increasingly changed their approach to the delivery of apprenticeships to reduce costs and enable an increased level of flexibility in the types of apprenticeships and the way they are delivered. For example, the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Hackney Council have changed their approach from an 'in house' delivery to using colleges and other training providers or an Apprentice Training Agency. The net result is a substantial saving in staffing costs. Both now have only one or two staff working on this full time who focus on:
- Strategy
 - Community engagement
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Procurement of a training provider
 - Monitoring/reporting.
- 3.9.4 The Vocational Team which is currently located in HR&WD will transfer to Economic Development in the very near future. HR&WD will continue to determine the strategy for Apprentices and will work with Economic Development to widen the possibilities for developing shared initiatives with the business community and other major employers in the area. The current apprenticeship delivery model will also be reviewed and the economies of scale to be gained by joining the Vocational Team with the Economic

Development team and co-ordinating current and future initiatives fully explored.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations for Committee to note the report.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The report provides information about the Council's various schemes to promote routes into employment including reporting on the history of the different apprenticeship and graduate schemes and providing details of future recruitment.
- 5.2 The priorities of the schemes include getting local people into work especially young people, to diversify the availability of the schemes ensuring that previously under-represented groups are aware of and able to access the programmes, and to support the Council's workforce to reflect the community strategy. Future recruitment to the schemes is described in the report. Such recruitment should be transparent, competitive and be available to all sections of the workforce.
- 5.3 Sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act 2010 provide limited circumstances where an employer may take positive action by reference to persons who share a protected characteristic under the Act. The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. The protected characteristic of age may be particularly relevant in the context of the schemes outlined in the report.
- 5.4 Under section 158 of the Equality Act, where persons with a particular protected characteristic are disadvantaged or have particular needs or are participating in an activity in disproportionately low numbers, an employer can take action (provided it is proportionate) to enable that group to overcome the disadvantage, meet those needs or encourage increased participation. Under section 159 of the Equality Act, if persons with a particular protected characteristic are disadvantaged or there are disproportionately low numbers of that age group participating in a particular activity, the employer could treat a person of that group more favourably in recruitment or promotion provided that person is as qualified as any other candidate. This is only lawful if the employer's actions are proportionate and it does not have a policy of treating people of that age group more favourably. In order to avoid the risk of discriminating against other groups with protected characteristics, the schemes should be proportionate and be kept under review to ensure that they continue to fulfil their objectives.
- 5.5 The Council is subject to a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate discrimination and harassment, advance equality

of opportunity and foster good relations between difference groups. The schemes seek to advance those objectives, particularly to advance equality of opportunity. In line with that duty the schemes should be proportionate to reflect the Council's size and diversity of functions; should be seen as part of the Council's business plan and support its delivery and engage with the public, third sector and staff when setting objectives which make full use of equality data.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The initiatives highlighted in this report all have as their basis the promotion of employment opportunities for the community, especially young people and those who may be disadvantaged. The pre-apprenticeship programmes are designed to assist those who are not currently equipped with the basic qualifications to enter a traditional apprenticeship programme to gain the relevant skills. Graduates from the pre-apprenticeship programme are then better placed to enter an apprenticeship programme with the Council or elsewhere. Recruitment to the 'Routes into Employment' programmes relies on an approach which reaches out to the community with a particular emphasis on targeting those areas where there is less ability to gain employment.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are two aspects to this report which impact on Best Value. The first area is the diversification of the apprenticeship offer. This is being more closely linked to workforce planning so that there is an increase in the opportunity to secure continued employment at the end of the apprenticeship. Thus, the effectiveness of the scheme will be increased. The second is the seeking of alternative routes for training. Diversification of the offer is accompanied by a closer link with colleges and training providers and reduces the reliance on the in-house operation whose functional capability does not cover all the areas in which apprenticeships can be offered. In turn, the cost effectiveness of the apprenticeship offer is improved. The planned re-location of the Vocational Team to Economic Development will also achieve economies of scale and efficiency through cross-fertilisation of knowledge, experience and co-ordinated initiatives.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 There are no implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The continuous review and improvement of the initiatives which contribute to employment opportunities ensures effectiveness and mitigates the risk of the offers becoming too costly, whilst at the same time ensuring that apprentices and graduates are sufficiently supported to achieve successful outcomes. There is a need to constantly monitor how these initiatives are being pursued

elsewhere so that the Council can take advantage of opportunities to increase the offer through increased external funding and/or partnership.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Increasing the opportunities for people to gain employment (especially the young and disadvantaged) has the potential knock-on effect of reducing crime and disorder.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- NONE

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

- N/A