

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

REGENERATION CABINET MEMBER

APPRENTICESHIP AND WAGE INCENTIVE PROGRAMME FOR 2014-2015

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the council's apprenticeship programme and extend the young person's work experience programme for 2014-2015.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 A council apprenticeship offers the opportunity for someone to work within the council. They earn a salary and gain a qualification at the same time. The apprenticeship scheme lasts a minimum of 12 months. It is open to anyone regardless of age or existing qualifications.
- 2.2 Between April 2012 and March 2014, 87 apprentices were employed by the council across a whole range of service areas. These included; business administration, sports development, horticulture, customer services and information technology. All apprentices work towards a Level 2 qualification. Some continue on to complete a Level 3 qualification.
- 2.3 In addition to the apprenticeship programme, the council also helps those aged 18-24 who have claimed job seekers allowance for over 6 months to gain paid work experience through the Government's Wage Incentive Scheme. Under the scheme, young people gain a minimum of 6 months experience. The council receives a contribution of £2275 from the Department of Work and Pensions under the Youth Contract. Some 21 young people have participated in the wage incentive scheme since November 2013.
- 2.4 The council employs a new cohort of apprentices at the beginning of the financial year and half way through (April and September).
- 2.5 In planning the future apprenticeship programme, officers have looked at which jobs have been advertised across the council. Levels of interest were sought from Managers across the organisation and discussions over the future employment needs within the council have taken place. In addition, levels of current capacity and available support for an apprentice within departments is also taken into account.

2.6 The table below shows the number of apprentices and those on the wage incentive scheme so far and the number proposed for the remainder of 2014-2015.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	Beginning of 2014-2015	Proposed for August /Sept 2014	Total
Apprentices (L2)	40	33	14	14	100
Apprentices (L3)		5	5	6	16
Total					116
Wage Incentive scheme		11	10	10	31

2.7 The new programme will see 14 Level 2 apprenticeships starting in September 2014, working in the following areas:

- Environmental Health
- Licensing
- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Physical Activity and health
- Home Assistance Team
- IT
- Highways
- Community Disabilities and Learning Disabilities Team
- Neighbourhood Services
- The Junction
- Legal and Democratic Services
- Street Sports
- Finance
- Environment Team

2.8 In addition, it is envisaged that six current apprentices will continue in the council and work towards a Level 3 qualification.

2.9 The council will also support a further 10 wage incentive posts with a start date of August 2014 offered in the following areas:

- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Grounds maintenance
- Housing Advice Team
- Transport
- Children's Services (x2)
- Development Control
- Sport
- Public Health
- Human Resources

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the new programme.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The programme has become an integral part the council and the local community giving opportunities for individual across North Lincolnshire. Over 80% of people in the programme have a positive outcome, including moving into sustainable employment or training. Job Seeker numbers have reduced by 28.1% over the last 12 months. This programme has the supported this reduction.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 The council has allocated money within the approved revenue budget for the apprenticeship and wage incentive programme. The costs to support the existing level 2 and level 3 apprentices and the current wage incentive employees, plus the proposed August/September intake of apprentices and wage incentive employees would be £440,000. As the apprentices would be with the council until at least August 2015-16, revenue costs will continue to be incurred in 2015-2016. These currently amount to approximately £90,000, not taking into account further intakes in April and September 2015.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Officers have completed an integrated impact assessment for the programme.

6.2 The wage incentive scheme is restricted to those aged 18-24 who have received job seekers allowance for a minimum of 6 months.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 Officers have attended four related events recently – a jobs and careers fair for unemployed 18-24 year olds at the Jobs Centre Plus, the jobs fair at Brigg and careers events at North Lindsey College and John Leggott College. At each of these events, information was collected related to interest in apprentices within the council. In total details were collected from 237 people. The highest areas of interest were in business administration; gardening; IT; social care; mechanics, sport; and, customer service.

7.2 Finance and Human Resources were consulted on the report. Their comments were included in the report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the apprenticeship and wage incentive programme for the remainder of 2014-2015.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None