

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

17 JUNE 2013

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

REPORT OF HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

PER210 – The National Graduate Scheme and Apprenticeships - 28 March 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Report contains proposals to employ a number of apprentices across the organisation on fixed term contracts building on the success of the Apprenticeship programme in 2012-13.

This would increase the resource capacity within the organisation, whilst at the same time offering work experience and additional training for young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the proposal to employ further apprentices across the Council, as set out in the Report, be endorsed.

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### APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

#### Report of Head of Organisational Development

#### DETAIL:

##### 1 Background

- 1.1 For prospective employees, Local Government is a diverse employer that encourages the development of its staff, who in turn deliver quality services to its clients – the public. This makes employees feel that they are contributing to the local community and making a difference in people's lives, whilst working in a dynamic, fair and flexible environment. It is important that opportunities are given to young people to work in Local Government to provide a workforce for the future and allow them to gain work experience and relevant qualifications.
- 1.2 Working in Local Government gives people the opportunity not only to develop a career but also to improve others' lives. Winchester City Council would like to continue to offer this opportunity to young people building on the success of the apprenticeship programme in 2012-13. This improves the flexibility within the organisation and increases the resources available in an effective and efficient way.
- 1.3 The apprenticeship programme in 2012-13 comprised of eleven apprentices working in a number of teams across the Council. The Council has had a very positive experience of apprenticeships over the two years of involvement with the programme. In addition to their qualification, the apprentices were also matched with a trained mentor from within the Council and worked together on two community volunteering projects giving them further skills and experience. This broad approach to their development has led to a successful programme meaning the Council can act as a role model to encourage other organisations and small to medium sized businesses within the District to recruit and train young people.
- 1.4 Whilst offering employment opportunities to young people and increasing the capacity of the team they are placed with, the programme has also helped with succession planning within the organisation. To date, five apprentices have secured permanent jobs within the Council on completion of their course.
- 1.5 It is proposed to build on the 2012-13 apprenticeship programme and continue to offer apprenticeships within the organisation, as set out in the detail below.

## 2. Apprenticeships 2013-14

2.1 Under the national apprenticeship scheme, young people work towards a nationally recognised qualification whilst gaining valuable experience of the workplace. These can provide a great opportunity for 16-19 year olds who can fall through the gap after leaving school or college.

2.2 Modern apprenticeships can span a huge spectrum of jobs. They can be occupation specific (which could be in accountancy as much as in manufacturing) but they can also be in cross-cutting skills such as business administration.

2.3 Building on the organisation's experience to date and following research into the possibility of utilising apprenticeships across the organisation, the following areas have been identified as those where both the Council and the apprentice would benefit:

Building Control

Community grants

Revenues (2 posts)

Sports and active lifestyles (2 posts)

Guildhall (already endorsed in PER201)

Customer Service (2 posts)

Housing (BTEC / HNC surveying)

Human Resources

Economy and Arts

Communications

Business Support team

Health and Wellbeing

Major projects

Policy

Accountancy

2.4 Apprentices are employed on a one year fixed term contract, with the exception of those studying towards a BTEC or HNC who would be on a two year contract. It is hoped that a number would be able to take up permanent vacancies on completing their apprenticeship, as they arise.

2.5 It is proposed to offer the same structure as the 2012-13 apprenticeship programme with a Placement Co-ordinator (Learning and Development Manager) and line management, and an internal mentor (a graduate of our Aspire training programme) for each of the apprentices to support as this will often be their first experience of the working environment.

- 2.6 The apprentices would be available to work on corporate projects where possible.
  - 2.7 Recruitment to these apprenticeship roles would be using the National Apprenticeship website. However, the roles would be promoted particularly within the District through our relationship with local colleges and with particular promotion to schools and colleges in areas of the Winchester District with lower employment in the youth community.
  - 2.8 The cost of this proposal is estimated at £173,000 - £190,000, dependent on the age of the apprentices and the qualification level they will be working towards. It is proposed that this will be covered by setting a specific budget for the apprenticeship programme of £200,000. The qualification costs are covered all or partly by external funding, with any contributions required from the Council to be covered within the overall budget of £200,000.
3. Consultation
    - 3.1 The Union has been consulted on these proposals and they are in favour of the Council employing apprentices as identified.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4. Sustainable Community Strategy and Change Plans (relevance to):
  - 4.1 The need to make the best use of all available resources by continued clear financial planning within the City Council is an integral part of the Community Strategy. This proposal would also assist with our economic objectives by helping young people gain experience in the labour market.
5. Resource Implications
  - 5.1 The total estimated cost of the proposals is £173,000 - £190,000, plus other minor costs such as training not covered by external funding.
  - 5.2 It is proposed that a specific budget of £200,000 is set up in 2013/14 to cover the total costs of the scheme. A carry forward request will go for Cabinet approval in June 2013 (and potentially Council dependent on the overall level of carry forwards) utilising General Fund budget underspends of £180,000 from 2012/13. The remaining £20,000 relates to the Housing Revenue Account and will be funded by a budget Virement.
6. Risk Management Issues
  - 6.1 There are no risks identified with these proposals.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Papers held in Organisational Development

APPENDICES: None