

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
CABINET	11 FEBRUARY 2015

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SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME	LEADER	S NUGENT	6(b)(ii)

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

To report on the proposal to introduce an Apprenticeship Scheme into the council. This links with the corporate priority of being an efficient, effective and exceptional council by developing a high quality, motivated and flexible workforce.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet are asked to recommend the proposal to introduce an Apprenticeship Scheme, to the council meeting on 4 March 2015, as part of the budget-setting process.

DETAILS AND REASONING

The council plays an important role with businesses in the borough, by encouraging, advising and supporting them to consider recruiting apprentices. This includes assisting businesses by providing advice, liaising with the colleges and even arranging bespoke apprenticeships in more specialised industries. The introduction of an Apprenticeship Scheme within the council will therefore help demonstrate the council's leadership role to other local employers, as it will be recognised as being an employer of apprentices.

The council has a skilled and experienced workforce, with around a quarter of employees having worked for the organisation for at least 25 years. While the borough has benefitted from their local knowledge and experience, only five permanent employees are aged 25 or under. This equates to 2% of the total workforce.

The council has in recent years provided employment to trainees and apprentices in job specific roles, for example in regeneration and sports development, and also provided numerous opportunities for student placements for schools, colleges and universities.

After reviewing the council's forward budget position, it is now felt to be an appropriate time to introduce an Apprenticeship Scheme. The council prides itself on being an employer of choice providing the opportunity for young local people to obtain a range of skills and formal training to equip them to become employable, ideally within the council, or elsewhere would be yet further evidence of this.

Cabinet will be aware that there is a national drive to encourage organisations to employ apprenticeships. This includes funding being available for private sector organisations to encourage the recruitment of apprentices. Within Central Lancashire there are two Apprentice Framework Delivery Providers, who are able to attract money to deliver training, they are Runshaw College and Preston's College.

If the proposal to introduce an Apprenticeship Scheme is approved four apprentices would be recruited.

The first intake of apprentices would commence in the year 2015/2016 and would be appointed to generic Business Administration roles or those requiring more specific training such as ICT or Neighbourhood Services.

The apprentices would be employed for 2 years and would gain skills and experience in their role, as well as formal training, leading to an NVQ with a local training provider.

The apprentices will be issued with a contract of employment and will be subject to the council's terms and conditions of employment. During their employment they will be allocated a mentor who will oversee their development and other needs throughout their time with us.

Subject to their ongoing performance being satisfactory, towards the end of the two year period they will be eligible to apply for suitable vacancies either within the council or elsewhere.

Following approval of this proposal, consultations will continue to take place with UNISON, as part of the implementation process.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these. The risk assessment which has been carried out forms part of the background papers to the report.

FINANCIAL	The cost of introducing the scheme would be in the region of £24,000 in 2015/16 and £55,000 in 2016/17. These costs are detailed in the Financial Strategy, Budget and Council Tax 2015/16 report, also on the agenda of this Cabinet Meeting.		
LEGAL	The Apprentices will be issued with a contract of employment and will be subject to the Council's usual terms and conditions of employment.		
RISK	There are no recognised risks		
OTHER (see below)			
<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>
<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

none

SN/January 2015