

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – 21 December 2021

Report of the Head of Strategic Support

Part A

ITEM 6 Apprenticeship Reporting Update – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Personnel Committee with information relating to the apprenticeship scheme within the Council and the apprenticeship target reporting for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Recommendation

That the findings of the apprenticeship reporting be noted by Personnel Committee.

Reason

The Public Sector Apprenticeship Targets Regulations 2017 came into force on 31 March 2017. All public bodies with 250 or more staff in England as of 31 March have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period of 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

SLT were provided with details of this periods apprenticeship reporting on 11 August 2021. The report was also discussed at the Joint Management Trade Union Meeting (JMTUM) on 7 October 2021.

This is the fourth report on the apprenticeship scheme covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

The findings of the apprenticeship scheme reporting will be noted following agreement at Personnel Committee. The data has been published on the Council's intranet prior to the Personnel Committee meeting, to ensure the publishing deadline of 30 September each year is met.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this decision.

Risk Management

There risks outlined within this report are highlighted in Part B below.

Background Papers: None

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Part B

Background

1. The Government introduced the Apprenticeship Scheme with effect from 6 April 2017.
2. As required under that scheme, reports are due within six months of the end of each reporting period. This means that the information should be published by 30 September each year in an easily accessible location to the public. It is therefore considered that the appropriate place to publish the Return Section 1 - Data Publication is on the Council's intranet. The Return Section 2 – Apprenticeship Activity return does not have to be published.
3. The target for public sector bodies is 2.3% apprenticeship starts each year based on the organisations headcount as of 31 March each year. The apprenticeship target for the Council remains at 12.
4. Apprenticeship starts can include both existing employees, who can take advantage of apprenticeship funding, as well as new starters appointed to apprenticeship posts.
5. Work has continued each year to increase the amount of apprenticeship starts, to enable the Council to demonstrate its commitment to meeting the target, where possible.

Findings

6. Return Section 1 – Data Publication

The Data Publication includes several figures which will enable the Government and the public to understand each body's headcount and the number of apprentices they employ, and then use that information to assess the progress a body has made towards meeting the target. The figures outlined in Section 1 will be published as outlined at paragraph 3.

Figure A: The number of employees whose employment in England by the body began in the reporting period in question.

46

Figure B: The number of apprentices who began to work for the body in that period and whose apprenticeship agreements also began in that period.

- This includes employees who were already working for the body before beginning the apprenticeship, as well as new apprentices hires.

7

Figure C: The number of employees employed in England that the body has at the end of that period.

510

Figure D: The number of apprentices who work for the body at the end of that period.

12
Public bodies are also required to provide two percentages in order to give context to the other figures. These percentages do not reflect the progress a public body has made towards the target:
Figure E: Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure A.
15.22%
Figure F: Figure D expressed as a percentage of figure C.
2.35%
In addition, the Apprenticeship Activity Return (Return Section 2) requires public bodies to send the following figures, which will help identify their progress towards meeting the target, to the Department for Education. Public bodies could also consider providing these figures in the Data Protection.
Figure H: Headcount on the day before the first day of each reporting period in the target period
520
Figure I: Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure H.
1.35%

7. Return Section 2 – Apprenticeship Activity Return

The Apprenticeship Activity Return includes both information on a body's progress against the target and information to assess actions taken towards, and challenges faced in, meeting the targets.

The return includes quantitative and qualitative elements:

QUANTITATIVE
Headcount on the day before the first day of each reporting period in the target period; and
520
Figure B in Return Section 1 (the number of apprentices who began to work for the body in the reporting period in question and whose apprenticeship agreements also began in that period), expressed as a percentage of headcount on the day before the first day of the reporting period in question. (This will enable the Government to assess the progress a body has made towards meeting the target).
1.35%
QUALITATIVE
Action that the body has taken to meet their apprenticeship target (i.e. how it has "had regard")
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted information on apprenticeship opportunities to managers. • Due to covid restrictions there have been difficulties in promoting the apprenticeship scheme and managers supporting new apprentices. •
If the target has not been met then specific further evidence may be required. This may include an explanation of why the target was not met, actions the body has taken to overcome the challenges it has faced and/or mitigating factors which demonstrate the body's commitment to apprenticeships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitation of 20% off the job learning difficult to manage for existing staff. • Impact of Covid-19 limiting opportunities. As Covid restrictions are lifted we hope to promote apprenticeship opportunities further.
Information about action the body proposes to take to meet their future apprenticeship targets: and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to promote apprentice opportunities with managers, but it is likely to be difficult to meet targets due to Covid restrictions.
If the body considers that a future target is not likely to be met, an explanation of why that is so.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is anticipated that the future target will continue to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.