

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

For Information

6th September 2012

Report of: Strategic Director: Corporate Services

Title: Update - Review of Apprenticeship Recruitment and Retention

Officer Presenting Report: Emma Gurr, Service Manager:
Organisational and Employee
Development

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 92 24977

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee

- provide their comments and observations on the work that has been undertaken to date; and
- note that a further report will be brought back to this committee in November 2012 with recommendations for change.

Summary

Research into how apprenticeships and other youth sourcing strategies are currently operating in the organisation has recently been completed. The outcome of this work will lead to recommendations to improve the recruitment and retention of young people in the organisation. The views and observations of the Human Resources Committee are sought on the outcomes of the work that has been undertaken to date.

The significant issues in the report are:

- The Council is committed to recruit local talent into the organisation

and particularly young people. The Council also has a wider role in promoting and enabling the employability of young people in the City. Since 2009 the Council has operated an Apprenticeship programme targeted predominantly at business administration roles.

- A third of all youth employment within the Council is linked to apprenticeship programmes.
- The Council's in house Apprenticeship Programme (AP) is successfully improving employability while attracting a greater level of diversity into the workforce. The AP predominantly hires apprentices in business administration roles. As at March 2012, 52% of all apprentices hired have gone on to get jobs with the Council (72% in total have found employment opportunities). Further work is required to improve consistency of the on- the- job development and contribution.
- "On Site Bristol" provides construction and allied trade apprenticeships to the construction sector in Bristol, including the Council's Landlord Services. Over 90% of Apprentices recruited through this route obtain permanent employment in the Council. This is a niche area of recruitment and in contrast to the AP, the intake is not diverse.
- Further work is required to establish a broader range of youth resourcing strategies to address skills gaps and enable the organisation to respond quickly to changing requirements of citizens and service users.
- That further recommendations will be brought to this committee in November 2012, including options for a one-off pay award.

1. Policy

- 1.1 The Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 includes a requirement to review the Council's approach to the Recruitment and Retention of Apprentices.

2. Consultation

2.1 Internal

Initial consultation through the research process has taken place with

the following:

- People Programme Board
- Co -Chairs of the Young Employee Voice Self Organised Group
- Apprentices
- Trade Union representatives
- HR Employment Initiatives Team

2.2 External

- On Site Bristol - Apprentice provider to employers in the construction industry who supply circa 25 placements to the Council each year.

3. Context

- 3.1 It is critical that the recruitment and retention of apprentices is seen in a wider context of economic growth and ensuring that young people leaving school secure appropriate education, training or employment. This highlights that the organisation needs to have a coherent strategy linked to the wider economic challenges facing the City. A summary of the current Apprenticeship Programmes is provided at Appendix A. This has highlighted that the organisation needs to have a much more coherent strategy with clearer targets for youth employment. The key areas for further consideration are summarised below.

Setting much clearer organisational goals and targets for the Council's apprenticeship programmes

Options could include:-

- ✦ Providing as many employability opportunities to join the Council as possible at an entry level in the format of apprenticeships or providing fewer opportunities but with a much stronger commitment to permanent employment at the end of the placement.
- ✦ Much more explicit emphasis on the requirement to bring about changes to the workforce demographics by helping managers to understand how they can create opportunities.

Trial changing the terms and conditions of employment for apprentices

Firstly, there is a need to more clearly articulate that apprentices should

be recognised as trainees and not employees because they are learning on the job. Secondly, consideration is being given to reducing the number of hours in work to 30 hours a week so that more time can be spent in study with no change to pay by increasing the hourly rate of pay to keep apprentice wage levels at a consistent level. Proposals will also be brought to the committee in November on whether a one-off pay award should be made to apprentices this year.

Consider better targeting apprenticeships programmes.

Target recruitment at the 16-18 age group and particularly under represented groups with more effective marketing, using of role models from across the organisation to promote the scheme in schools.

Further research is required to identify how to capitalise on the opportunities around the changes to the mandatory school leaving age and the requirement for young people to stay in education or training until they reach the age of 18.

Ring fence the provision of all future BFI opportunities to apprentices

Make it clear in recruitment processes that apprentices are encouraged to apply for other roles at appropriate levels (typically BG 6/7/8)

Ensure future workforce planning activity identifies and creates new opportunities and clear requirements for the full range of youth employment strategies. e.g. Building Futures Initiatives, Higher apprenticeships, graduate schemes etc

Work with the Trade Unions and Union Learn to develop collaborative learning products that support young employees in the workforce.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1 Maintain the current status quo. This has been discounted as the evidence from the research highlights the need for clearer goals and improvements to practices.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 This will be developed as recommendations are defined.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

7.1 To date the equalities impact of the apprenticeship programme has been favourable in terms of impact on the workforce demographics. Due in part to the targeted marketing and revised recruitment approaches adopted by the apprenticeship programme, the scheme manages to attract and select a relatively high proportion of BME applicants

8. Legal and Resource Implications

Will be explored in further details as the areas of exploration are turned into recommendations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A - Summary of research on Apprenticeship Programmes

An overview of current programmes

The Bristol Apprentices Programme (AP)

Aims

AP has been running since September 2009. AP's primary aims have been to:

- To mitigate the impact of recession upon young people by improving their experience, skills, qualifications and general employability.
- To contribute to correcting age disparity in the BCC workforce. Currently, workforce representation of under-24s, at 4%, is 13% below that in the local population (17.3%). Representation of over-50s, at 36%, is 16% above (19.8%).

Work is also undertaken with the Bristol Partnership to give city wide leadership to employability issues and champion apprenticeship opportunities.

Recruitment

AP recruits in cohorts of 20-30. Three cohorts per year were recruited 2009-11, two from 2012. 50-80 apprentices have been on the scheme at any one time. Cohort 9 is currently recruiting for September start. The eight cohorts already taken on have offered 180 apprenticeship opportunities (200+ once Cohort 9 is in place). Cohort 9 has received applications from 240 people; 80 will be shortlisted and 30 places offered.

Access

Access to AP is facilitated in various ways. The application process has been kept simple, and there is no minimum qualification requirement. Outreach includes targeted activity to engage specific communities, including employability workshops.

Diversity

Just over half 52% of AP apprentices were aged 16-18 at intake; 44% were aged 19-24. Women 54%, BME 20%.

Contract

AP apprentices are currently employed on a 24 (originally 22) month fixed term contract. All apprentices are in addition to the required establishment.

Pay in Year 1 is £2.71/hr (35hr week). Year 2: £3.29, unless a higher rate is triggered by the National Minimum Wage rules.

National Minimum Wage applies from age 19. NMW: Current range £2.60/hr -£6.08/hr dependant on age

Below NMW, travel costs are reimbursed (HR Committee Jan 2010);

First Bus also provide a discount scheme for apprentices.

Training & support

AP apprentices study for NVQ 2-3 qualifications through day release at local FE colleges. Fees are paid as follows by the organisation: 16-18 (free); 19-24 (£1,500); 25+ (£2,000); graduates (£2,000). In addition to NVQ framework support, apprentices also receive BCC on-the-job training (generic and role-specific).

AP seek to allocate a trained mentor to each apprentice, mentor resources are however limited. Post-apprenticeship opportunities are actively sought.

Destination & retention

Of Cohorts 1-4, 52% were retained within BCC. 72% found other employment (internal and external) before contract end. 3% returned to Higher Education.

Apprenticeship frameworks being followed: (as at April 2012)

Business Administration:	Youth Support Work:
Customer Service:	Childcare and Primary Teaching:
Procurement:	Play Work:
ICT:	Vehicle Mechanics:
Health & Social Care (Adult Support Work):	Museums:
Engineering (Docks, Highways):	Security:
Accounting:	Marketing and Media:
Transport Logistics:	Construction:
Horticulture:	

57% are Business Administration, none of the others exceed 5%

Evaluation

A third of all youth employment within BCC is linked to apprenticeship programmes. The AP is successfully improving employability while attracting a greater level of diversity into the workforce. There is however work required to improve consistency of the on the job development and contribution.

On Site Bristol

www.onsitebristol.co.uk

Aims

OSB supports local people into sustained careers in construction and allied trades. OSB is funded by Skills Funding Agency (£1m), plus employer contributions. (Approved by CiTB Construction Skills). In-scope employers benefit from grant funding (£9K over 3 years).

Recruitment

BCC apprentices form part of OSB's wider intake; (29 in Landlord Services). OSB has an annual intake in September. Typically, 550 applicants become 60-80 recruits pa. At any time, some 200+ apprentices are engaged.

Access

Dedicated outreach through schools, jobcentres, community groups.

Diversity

Of total intake, 66% start without GCSE passes in English and Maths. Three-quarters (76%) are aged 16-18, about a fifth (22%) 19-24, with few (2%) over 25. BME intake is 7%. 96% of the intake is male.

Contract

Contracts vary by employer. 88% are small/micro businesses. Duration varies. Craft trades are 24 months, with optional extension to 36. Electrical and Plumbing contracts are for 44 months. BCC Landlord Services apprentices are employed on training contracts with no guarantee of post-programme employment (but in practice the great majority are retained – see below).

BCC apprentices placed by OSB are paid in accordance with the Red Book which is set according to recommended levels by the CITB and Allied Trade bodies. BCC apprentices placed by OSB on construction or allied trade frameworks initially receive a min. £110/wk with staged progressions at 6 months.

Training & support

OSB apprentices receive on-the-job training plus day release at local FE colleges; min. two-year programme at NVQ levels 2-3. In some trades, additional industry-controlled assessment also applies. 76% complete Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship. In 2011, three of the 80 who completed t went on the HE programmes. Scope is limited, as this route is available only via large PLCs.

OSB provides pastoral care; employers are also supported. A dedicated Training Officer monitors apprentices' progress against SMART objectives. In 2011, the success rate was 94% (against a national average of 76%).

Destination & retention

Retention on the 2011 intake was 98%.

Overall, 735 apprentices have qualified since 2003. 96% continued in post-apprenticeship employment. Of the BCC Landlord Services apprentices, 92% were retained, with a further 6% moving to a new employer in their chosen trade.

Evaluation

Annual self-assessment: learners and employers report excellent levels of satisfaction. OFSTED rated OSB Outstanding in 2012.

Building Futures Initiative

Aims

Initiated in 2007, BFI facilitates entry into establishment posts. BFI trainees take existing budgeted posts at a lower salary; the difference is used to fund training and development. The process is cost-neutral, as the overall cost of the post is the same as that of an establishment post.

BFI is run by the AP team.

Recruitment

The primary opportunity for BFI is the arising of a vacancy. The AP team works with managers to assess suitability for a BFI placement. It is estimated that in excess of 64 BFI roles exist in the organisation at present

Access

BFI sets no access restrictions. There are three entry levels: School leaver, College/University leaver, Graduate.

Diversity

Limited performance data available. The AP team supports recruiting managers to ensure fair recruitment and selection.

Contract

Normal establishment terms apply.

Training & support

Limited performance data available. Qualifications vary, as they are tailored to specific posts. Day release to local FE colleges for NVQ qualifications is used where appropriate. BCCF on-the-job training (both generic and role-specific) also applies.

Destination & retention

Limited performance data available.

To date, 13 AP apprentices have taken up BFI roles. To date, every AP apprentice applying for a BFI post has obtained it.

Evaluation

Limited performance data available.