

HR Committee

18 March 2025



Report of: Director: Workforce & Change

Title: Learning and Organisational Development and Apprenticeships update report

Ward: N/A

Officers Presenting Report: Sally Drewett, Learning & Organisational Development Manager and Elouise Wilson, Talent and Resourcing Manager

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Recommendation

The Committee notes the report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on its learning and organisational development activities in relation to manager and leadership training, and to provide an update on the internal apprenticeship programme.

The significant issues in the report are:

The Council provides a comprehensive and flexible range of manager and leadership development to equip its managers with core skills.

A key component of the learning and development offer is our apprenticeship programme – providing structured learning pathways that support workforce development, address skills shortages and enhance career progression.

Policy

1. The Corporate Strategy and Workforce Strategy describe the aspirations for the future and sets out our vision for the workplace to create an inclusive, high-performing, healthy and motivated workplace and become an employer of choice. Both strategies drive the work of the Learning and Organisational Development service and the apprenticeship programme.

Consultation

2. **Internal**
Not required because this report is for information only.
3. **External**
Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

4. At its meeting in December 2024, in a discussion about the development of the Workforce Strategy, HR Committee requested an update on the learning and development offer - in relation to line manager learning and development, and an update on the apprenticeship programme.
5. **Learning and development offer for managers and leaders**

The Learning & Organisational Development team provide a range of training programmes, both online and in-person, to help improve employees' and managers' skills and knowledge, resulting in better work performance.

All leadership development is underpinned by our Leadership Framework – which sets out the expectations of managers, aspiring managers and senior leaders for how they lead and develop their teams and deliver their services. It is being integrated within our performance appraisals, recruitment processes and job paperwork.

The offer includes:

- To complement the Corporate Induction there is a Key Information for Managers workshop which supports new leaders with an overview of organisational expectations, the Leadership Framework, and available support services.
- Mandatory training – as well as the mandatory e-learning that all employees need to complete (Corporate Induction (online), Safety, Health and Well-being, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity: Your rights and responsibilities, Climate Change Awareness and Modern Slavery), supervisors, team leaders and managers are expected to complete the following: Managing Diversity, A Guide to the Menopause, How to Handle a Data Breach, Reasonable Adjustments, Managing Mental Health, Procurement breaches, Core Health and Safety Training for managers and Excessive Workplace Pressure – Risk Assessment.
- Team Leader Development Programme gives support to new and prospective team Leaders/those stepping up into a line management role. The course includes areas such as an overview of council policy and procedures, how to organise/prioritise your workload and performance management.

- Leadership Webinars covering core skills topics such as understanding reactions to change, understanding different working styles, developing your team's strengths, having conversations with compassion, developing your coaching skills as a leader, focusing on your personal productivity, building inclusion and addressing exclusion.
- Diversity leadership programmes including "Understanding Cultural Values and Behaviours" which helps managers in apply cultural awareness in their leadership practise.
- The team design and deliver bespoke leadership programmes based on the team's needs, with topics such as building trust, change management and dealing with resistance and managing performance and attendance.
- The team also support managers to lead, shape and implement major change, by helping them to embed new skills and behaviours and ways of working which are likely to improve organisational performance.
- There is an internal coaching offer – to support leaders develop their skills and mediation to help conflict resolution and career coaching.

6. Apprenticeship Programme

Apprenticeships play a critical role at Bristol City Council by providing structured training pathways that support workforce development, address skills shortages, and enhance career progression. They offer opportunities for employees to gain qualifications while earning, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth.

As a public sector employer, BCC has a legal duty to meet apprenticeship targets set by the government. The Apprenticeship Levy, introduced in 2017, mandates that organisations with an annual payroll of over £3 million contribute 0.5% of their payroll costs towards apprenticeship funding. The council is also committed to the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that apprenticeship opportunities are inclusive and accessible to underrepresented groups.

Since 1 April 2024, we have achieved 178 new apprenticeship starts at Bristol City Council, contributing to a total of 1,197 starts since May 2017.

Awareness and Engagement

To raise awareness of apprenticeship opportunities, the team has delivered regular information sessions and drop-in events in collaboration with training providers. The Apprentice Network has been established to create an inclusive and supportive environment for apprentices through quarterly meetings in both face-to-face and online formats. These initiatives have been well received, with positive feedback from participants.

During National Apprenticeship Week an Apprentice Recognition Ceremony celebrated the contributions of apprentices at the council.

The Levy

Since May 2017, the Council has contributed £9.09 million to the Apprenticeship Levy, with £6.58 million spent to date. Since April 2024, £1.617 million has been utilised, with no Levy funds

expiring in the last financial year. These efforts ensure that we maximise contributions to support skill development and mitigate future expirations.

Strategic Initiatives

Data Academy

Our Data Academy initiative continues to enhance data literacy and decision-making within the Council. Since its launch, 130 colleagues have enrolled in Level 3 Data Technician and Level 4 Data Analyst apprenticeships

Professional Apprenticeships

Professional apprenticeships remain a significant focus. Since 2020, 43 social work degree apprentices have enrolled, with 10 already qualified and another 10 set to graduate in 2025. Additionally, we have expanded apprenticeships in public health, occupational therapy, and environmental health. These programmes address critical workforce needs and significantly hard-to-fill roles. In maintained schools, we have supported the effective use of the Apprenticeship Levy by engaging with the Department for Education to explore apprenticeship opportunities. Schools are also engaging with training providers to explore Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) training available through apprenticeship standards, helping to enhance expertise in this vital area.

Future priorities

- Our goal is to increase apprenticeship starts by 15%, particularly in areas with skill shortages such as social care, housing, finance, digital services and trading standards.
- We aim to diversify our talent pool by enhancing outreach efforts to underrepresented groups such as racially minoritised, Disabled people and young people (aged 16-24) through targeted campaigns and partnerships with educational institutions and community organisations.
- We aim to strengthen professional pathways by expanding apprenticeship offerings in emerging fields, particularly in green technologies. Examples of roles include Renewable Energy Technicians, Sustainable Construction Specialists, and Environmental Policy Advisors.
- To improve retention and development, we plan to introduce post-apprenticeship pathways, including leadership programmes and mentoring opportunities. These initiatives will support career progression, bolster long-term workforce stability and retain the talent developed through apprenticeships
- Apprentices are required to spend 20% of their contracted hours on off-the-job training, which can place additional strain on service delivery. To mitigate this, we are exploring flexible training solutions that align more closely with operational needs.
- We'll also be adapting to forthcoming government changes to apprenticeships.

Workforce and Apprenticeship Strategy

Our approach to learning and development for managers and our focus on apprenticeships will feature in the refresh of the Workforce Strategy. This integrated approach ensures that apprenticeships are aligned with broader workforce goals, addressing critical skills gaps and preparing the Council for future challenges.

A key element of this strategy is succession planning, ensuring we develop internal talent pipelines to fill future leadership and specialist roles. By investing in apprenticeships and career development opportunities, we are equipping our workforce with the skills and experience needed to take on more senior responsibilities over time.

This approach supports career progression, workforce stability, and business continuity, enabling us to retain knowledge and expertise while fostering an inclusive and adaptive workforce that reflects the diversity of Bristol's communities.

Proposal

7. That Committee notes the report.

Other Options Considered

None.

Risk Assessment

8. Not required because this report is for information only.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 8a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled

people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);

- encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

8b) Not required because this report is for information only.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Not required because this report is for information only.

Financial

(a) Revenue

Not required because this report is for information only.

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.