

# **JOINT PERFORMANCE AND REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS PORTFOLIO**



**Friday 10 February 2012**

**at 4.30 pm**

**in Committee Room A, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

Councillor H Thompson, Performance Portfolio Holder, and  
Councillor P Jackson, Regeneration, Economic Development and Skills Portfolio  
Holder will consider the following items.

**1. KEY DECISIONS**

No items

**2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

2.1 Council Apprentice Arrangements – *Chief Customer and Workforce Services  
Officer*

**3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

No items

**4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS**

No items

## **REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO**

### **Report To Portfolio Holders**



**Report of:** Chief Customer and Workforce Services  
Officer

**Subject:** COUNCIL APPRENTICE ARRANGEMENTS

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## **SUMMARY**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Joint Portfolio Holders on the progress to date regarding the Apprenticeship Partnership between the Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education.

To obtain the Joint Portfolio Holders approval to continue with the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement for the recruitment and placement of apprentices in 2012/13.

### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

Proposed continuation of the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangements between the Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education.

### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBERS**

Employment and business initiatives outside the Council falls within the remit of the Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio. Council apprentice arrangements fall within the remit of the Performance Portfolio. The original decision to enter into an Apprenticeship Partnership between the Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education was made by both the previous Portfolio Holders with a request for a further report to be submitted to the joint portfolio holders.

### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non Key Decision.

**5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

To be jointly considered by the Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and the Performance Portfolio Holder.

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

To note the progress made to date regarding the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement between the Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education.

To agree to the continuation of the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement for the recruitment and placement of apprentices in 2012/13.

**Report of:** Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer

**Subject:** COUNCIL APPRENTICE ARRANGEMENTS

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the Joint Portfolio Holders on the progress made to date regarding the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement between the Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education.
- 1.2 To obtain the Joint Portfolio Holders approval to continue with the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement for the recruitment and placement of apprentices in 2012/13.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As a consequence of the budget reductions in 2011/12, the capacity of the Council to recruit and manage directly employed apprentices reduced significantly, resulting in alternative delivery methods being explored.
- 2.2 On the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the previous joint portfolio holders for Regeneration & Economic Development and Performance agreed to a single year partnership arrangement between Hartlepool Borough Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education for the college to become a managing training agent for Council apprentices. It was also agreed at the above meeting that any future arrangements would be subject to a further report being submitted to the joint portfolio holders by January 2012.
- 2.3 As a managing training agent, HCFE employs the apprentices and places them within the Council. The Council pays HCFE for the apprentice's services.
- 2.4 This has resulted in significant salary savings for the Council as detailed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

<b>Apprentice</b>	<b>HBC Apprentice salary</b>	<b>HCFE salary</b>	<b>Apprentice</b>
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Aged 16 – 18 (year 1)	12,312	5,002
Aged 19 - 20 (year 2)	12,787	9,582
Aged 21 + (year 2)	12,787	11,698

- 2.5 In 2010, as part of the Council's strategy to minimise/eliminate equal pay risks and in light of guidance provided by the Local Government Employers (LGE), Apprentice posts were graded in accordance with Council's Pay and Grading Structure agreed as part of the Single Status Agreement.

### **3. PROGRESS OF PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS TO DATE**

- 3.1 To effectively implement the partnership arrangement, an SLA has been developed and signed which details the key roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- 3.2 The Apprenticeship Working Group led by the Corporate OD Team and comprising departmental workforce development representatives is responsible for the day to day management of the SLA which includes:
- Identifying departmental apprenticeship requirements
  - Supporting the recruitment process
  - Monitoring apprentice progress against qualification
  - Managing performance
  - Acting as conduit between the council and HCFE to report performance related issues
  - Exploring options for increasing apprenticeship opportunities
  - Any issues relating to individual apprentice performance issues whilst placed with their department
  - Attending term time review meetings
- 3.3 Representatives from the Council will also be invited to attend the HCFE Employer Steering Panel meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the key issues that are affecting each sector and how the College can help support businesses i.e access funding, design new programmes etc. It is also used to inform employers of key changes in Further Education and training and the potential opportunities/impact they may have in the sectors. The first meeting is expected to take place early February, date to be confirmed.

- 3.4 At the previous joint portfolio holders meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011, it was agreed that the Chief Customer and Workforce Services Officer and the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Planning would attend these meetings.
- 3.5 It was also reported at the above meeting that during the early discussions regarding the proposed apprenticeship partnership, HCFE initially suggested that a rebate arrangement might be applied however, following further discussion, it has since been confirmed by the college that this will not be possible.
- 3.6 Two further proposals have recently been offered by the college, the first is in relation to adult Apprenticeships which would require the Council to identify 100 employees to undertake an adult Apprenticeship. The Council would carry out the assessment role and the college would deliver the remaining elements. In return the college would pay the Council a fee of £250 per apprentice.
- 3.7 The Corporate OD Team have explored this option with departments who have confirmed that there is currently no additional demand for 100 adult Apprentices this offer as employees are either already qualified to the required level and for those who are not, existing arrangements are in place via Adult Education. CMTSG are being asked to confirm the existing arrangements with Adult Education in respect of adult Apprentices for existing employees will apply in future (the employees will continue to be paid their substantive rate and there is therefore no equal pay risk).
- 3.8 The second proposal offers the Council the opportunity to undertake the role of assessor for the NVQ element of the Apprenticeship framework and the college would pay for the Council's services which could be in the region of £250 per apprentice.
- 3.9 This option is currently being explored further by Economic Development and Adult Education.

#### 4. 2011 INTAKE OF APPRENTICES

- 4.1 In September 2011, the Council placed 22 apprentices across the authority. This is a significant increase compared to previous years as detailed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

<b>Apprenticeship Framework</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Business Administration	7	10		18

Customer Service				1
Accountancy		1		
Engineering	2			1
Electrical	2	2	1	
Plasterer/Tiler	1			
Pavior	2			
Arboriculture	1		1	
Horticulture			1	
Countryside Technician			1	
Joiner			1	
Heating Engineer			1	
Mechanical Fitter				1
Building Control				1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>

## **5. APPRENTICE PROGRESS**

- 5.1 All apprentices were placed on probation for the first 10 weeks of their placement. During this period regular progress review meetings were undertaken between the apprentice, line manager and/or departmental apprentice representative.
- 5.2 Following the progress review meetings, any issues or concerns were fed back to the apprenticeship working group and HCFE representative to determine the appropriate course of action. This has resulted in 4 placements with the Council not being confirmed and the Apprentice referred back to HCFE, 2 Apprentices having their probation extended whilst receiving additional support and 16 apprentices successfully continuing with their apprenticeship.
- 5.3 It is worth noting at this point that the college have responded promptly to any issues raised and taken the appropriate action. Where this action has resulted in the placement of the apprentice not being

confirmed, the college have offered the Council the opportunity to replace the apprentice to ensure programme continuity.

- 5.4 Overall the partnership arrangement appears to be working well however, it is still early days and some of the operational procedures have yet to be fully embedded.

## **6. RECRUITMENT 2012**

- 6.1 During Apprenticeship week in February 2012, the college intend to undertake a recruitment campaign to promote apprenticeships across the town and would like to be able to mention the Council in the campaign. It is not intended that specific opportunities will be identified in the campaign. As the joint portfolio meeting will take place after the commencement of Apprenticeship week, discussions have taken place with the College to ensure their relationship with the Council is accurately portrayed. If continuation of the Partnership is supported, the Apprenticeship Working Group will start work on identifying the number of apprentices required for the 2012.
- 6.2 Adult Education also intends to promote their Apprenticeship opportunities during Apprenticeship week and intend to mention the successful provision of Apprenticeships to the Council in the past.

## **7. ADULT EDUCATION**

- 7.1 Questions have previously been raised as to why HCFE are delivering the Council's Apprenticeship Programme and not Adult Education, the Council in house provider. The primary reason for this is that whilst it is acknowledged that Adult Education have a contract in place to deliver an Apprenticeship Programme for HBC, this would not result in any salary savings being achieved as, in essence, the apprentice would be employed by HBC and therefore the existing HBC Apprentice salary rate detailed in Table 1 would need to be applied in line with the Council's strategy to minimise/eliminate equal pay risks.
- 7.2 HCFE is also able to deliver the majority of apprenticeship frameworks required by the Council (previous requirements are detailed in Table 2).
- 7.3 Whilst Adult Education are currently able to deliver the Business Administration and Customer Service Apprenticeship frameworks mentioned above, further investigation is needed to establish if they would be able to deliver the additional frameworks in house or via a sub-contract arrangement.
- 7.4 However, for existing Council employees who may wish to demonstrate their competence and have it accredited via an NVQ, Adult Education



would be the preferred provider and are currently delivering a number of programmes across the authority.

## 8. SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE CONCERNS

8.1 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee recently expressed a number of concerns regarding the new apprenticeship arrangements and have requested a written response from the Regeneration and Economic Development and Skills / Children's Services / Adult's and Public Health Services Portfolio Holders.

8.2 These concerns are detailed below along with a proposed response which is being checked with the relevant portfolio holders.

Concern	Response
Debaring of those not on a college course of becoming an apprentice	Individuals apply for the apprenticeship and not a college course therefore the apprenticeship positions are open to everyone (advertised via HBC and the National Apprenticeship Service website) subject to them satisfying the entry requirements
Entry requirements	Entry requirements are based on guidance from the Qualification Awarding Body and reflect the levels required to successfully achieve the associated qualification.
What is being done for those who don't meet the entry requirements	Any applicant who doesn't meet the entry requirements for a HBC Apprenticeship position is offered the opportunity to undertake an alternative programme via HCFE. These include: Pre Apprenticeship Programmes, GCSE re-sits and Employability Skills Programmes.
What is the Council doing specifically for young people to ensure a clear pathway of access to job opportunities (including apprentices)	Please see attached at <b>Appendix 1 and 2</b> , departmental response which will be forwarded to the relevant portfolio holders in order for them to respond directly to scrutiny co-

	ordinating committee.
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## 9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Joint Portfolio Holders note the progress made to date regarding the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement between the Council and Hartlepool College of Further Education.
- 9.2 The Joint Portfolio Holders agree to the continuation of the Apprenticeship Partnership arrangement for the recruitment and placement of apprentices in 2012/13.

## 10. CONTACT OFFICERS

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