Apprenticeship Scheme

PURPOSE

1. To advise the Executive of the proposed introduction of an Apprenticeship Scheme for the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Executive notes the report and comments from the trade unions and recommends to Council that the Scheme as attached is approved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. The Council has a central role in co-ordinating efforts to address worklessness across the Borough, chairing Burnley Action Partnerships Partners Group. This is primarily responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Borough's contribution to the Lancashire LAA targets on worklessness, but is also heavily involved now in ensuring co-ordination of services to residents affected by the economic downturn. The Council's apprenticeship scheme will be an important contribution to that work.

The scheme also supports the Council's workforce plan.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

4. Apprentices will normally be paid at the national minimum wage for 16-17 year olds, currently £128.00/week for their first year of employment and subsequently the minimum wage for their age subject to satisfactory progression. However some services may pay apprentices at the lower rate of £100 per week if there is a significant amount of additional in house training, for example in Leisure Services. However all apprentices who have reached the aged of 19 and completed one year of service must be paid at the minimum wage.
The rate of pay has been set following comparison of apprentice pay in other local authorities and specifically Lancashire County Council who pay significantly more than the national minimum wage. The standard minimum wage for apprentices will be £95.00 from August 2009.

5. All service units should aim to have an apprentice post in their structure and create career pathways as part of their workforce planning. Vacant positions, which fall into the grade 1-5 pay ranges must be considered for recruitment on the basis of an apprenticeship. Where this cannot be achieved managers will be encouraged to restructure their services to add an apprentice or trainee post to their structure.

6. The proposal does not guarantee employment at the end of the apprenticeship but does includes a Prior Consideration Scheme. This would allow some ringfencing for apprentices who have over 21 months service in relation to posts up to and including grade 5 which are not required for other redeployment/alternative employment or “at risk” employees.

In order to be eligible for the prior consideration scheme apprentices will need to have completed or about to complete their NVQ and demonstrate a satisfactory attendance record and appropriate conduct.

7. Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 benefit from:
   • undertaking a fully funded and accredited nationally recognised qualification taking between one and two years to complete;
   • developing confidence and broadening of career aspirations;
   • work based learning, developing their skills to enable them to apply for and secure permanent employment within the Council, the Burnley Area Partnership or other local employers;
   • a paid while you learn alternative to full-time education.

8. Existing employees benefit from having the opportunity to mentor young people and contribute to their development. This would be supported by additional training. Managers will have responsibility for ensuring that an appropriate support and a suitable work programme is provided.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION**

9. Salaries will be accounted for from within establishment budgets including provision to accommodate minimum wage increases and increases in relation to the age of the apprentice.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

10. The Prior Consideration Scheme will not impact on the existing Redeployment policies
DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

11. Trade Unions

12. Consultation has taken place with the trade unions and they have confirmed their support for the scheme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

13. None

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT: Heather Brennan, People & Development Manager, Ext 2160

ALSO:

Appx 1