

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 28 JUNE 2019

Councillors Present: Dennis Benneyworth, Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Nassar Kessell, Garth Simpson (Chairman) and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Tracy Sherriff (Apprenticeship Co-ordinator), Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager) and Abi Witting (HR Manager)

PART I

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 15 April 2019 and 21 May 2019 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

5. Update on Apprenticeships and Work Experience Policy (P3705)

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4) which provided an update on the use of the Apprenticeship Levy since April 2017, set out the direction of travel for apprenticeships in the emerging Workforce Strategy and set out how the work experience programme would support recruitment of apprentices.

Abi Witting in introducing the report stated that she was pleased to report that the Council was developing a culture which looked favourably on apprenticeships. Tracy Sheriff had been permanently appointed as the Apprenticeship Co-Ordinator. She was working with the Council's leadership teams as well as schools to support this important area of work. Part of the role was to provide opportunities to upskill new and existing employees while making use of the apprenticeship levy fund. This could have a positive impact on staff retention. There was currently £840k in the pot of which £610k had already been committed.

She noted that the report included a recommendation that all vacancies up to Grade F should be considered as a potential apprenticeship opportunity and services were being asked to demonstrate a business case for not making a role an apprenticeship.

Councillor Jeff Brooks queried whether the recruitment paperwork included a requirement for the recruiting officer to state whether or not they had considered an apprenticeship. Officers confirmed that this was not currently the case. The Committee requested that this step be added to the paperwork thereby adding a constant reminder to those recruiting to positively consider an apprenticeship where roles were vacant. **(HR to Action)**. Members also asked that recommendation 2 of the report be amended to ensure that services had to provide a business case as to why an apprenticeship had not been considered.

Councillor Brooks noted that there was circa £240k in the levy which had not been spent or was not already committed. He asked that some detailed analysis around the

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expenditure be undertaken. He noted that in addition to the social benefits, this use of funding could also have an impact on National Insurance contributions and he would like this to be included in the analysis. Ms Witting said she would look into getting this information together and would bring it to the next Apprenticeship Steering Group meeting which was scheduled to take place on the 01 August 2019. **(AW to Action)**.

Councillor Howard Woollaston commented that the scheme was successful and was producing good results especially in Social Services. He felt that it would be beneficial for the Council to publicise its successes and he would work with the Communications Team to achieve this.

Abi Witting stated that one of the areas they would be focussing on was creating opportunities for young disadvantaged members of the community and in particular the Council's Looked After Children. Collaborative work was being undertaken with the Education Business Partnership (EBP), the School Improvement and Governance team, and local training providers such as West Berkshire Training Consortium and Newbury College. Greater links were also being established with local schools, colleges, charities and social care.

Opportunities were being sought to align work experience with apprenticeships to raise awareness amongst young people of the Council as an employer.

The majority of the 118 apprenticeships were in Adult Social Care. As such this area provided an opportunity for the Council to become a registered training provider in its own right and this was an area that Officers were currently exploring. This would enable the Council to draw down funds from the levy as the training provider and would enable the delivery of the apprenticeship that suited the Council's business needs. It would also enable the Council to deliver apprenticeships to other organisations. This training was not currently being provided by the Council's partners and presented a gap in the market.

The Committee was very supportive of making more use of apprenticeships and commented that it was essential that there was buy in to this from the top of the organisation. They thanked Officers for the work they were doing.

RESOLVED that the direction of travel be approved as follows:

1. **A pro-apprenticeship culture be developed across the Council and the use of apprenticeships be embedded within the workforce strategy at corporate and service level. This should also include sufficient resource is provided within HR to facilitate this. This would include:**
 - **Attending service SMTs to promote apprenticeships and to make sure managers are aware of the available options;**
 - **Attend school admin briefings and the Senior Manager Seminars to share successes, best practice and information in relation to apprenticeships.**
 - **Celebrate and promote apprenticeships through Reporter articles and case studies on our website.**
2. **All vacancies up to Grade F to be considered as a potential apprenticeship opportunity and services be required to demonstrate a business case for not making a role an apprenticeship.**

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3. **A range of advertising channels to be used in accordance with the target market such as Facebook and Twitter.**
4. **Collaborative work be undertaken with local training providers such as West Berkshire Training Consortium and Newbury College, plus greater links be established with local schools, colleges, charities and social care. Involvement at recruitment fairs and attendance at other apprenticeship events.**
5. **A structured rolling work experience/work taster programme to encourage young people into the Council, identifying potential employees/apprentices and raising awareness amongst young people of the Council as an employer.**

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 10.56 am)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature