

Report to Cabinet
12 December 2012
Report of Executive head of strategy, people and democracy
Subject Norwich City Council Apprenticeship scheme

Item

6

Purpose

To approve an apprenticeship framework across the council.

Recommendation

To approve the use of the new apprenticeship framework and agree that apprenticeship opportunities are identified and established wherever it is practicable and efficient to do so.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priorities “Prosperous city” and “Value for money services”.

Financial implications

All work related to this framework will be met from within existing budgets

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member(s): Councillor Arthur - Leader and Cllr Waters - Deputy leader and resources portfolio holder

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. The council's current employee age and grade profile indicates a previous incapacity to recruit younger and/or less qualified or experienced employees. Currently only 3.2% of our employees are aged 25 or under. This compares with the Norwich area in which 16-24 year old people constitute 25% of the working age population. As a consequence the organisations ability to recruit employees who can be developed to meet the council's current and future talent needs is more limited. However, over the last four years the council's recruitment activities have been very limited due to the need to deliver significant savings and the council's approach to managing vacancies and using redeployment to avoid compulsory redundancies as part of the savings process which will have impacted on the council's current employee profile.
2. An apprenticeship is a work based learning programme for an employee to gain a nationally recognised qualification. Apprenticeships offer an opportunity to recruit and develop less skilled and experienced employees, and offer them a recognised programme of training, aligned to the council's talent needs. Apprenticeships may also contribute to addressing the imbalance in the council's age profile, by providing opportunities which are attractive to younger people. As such apprenticeships have the capacity to form a substantial part of the council's future workforce strategy.
3. Apprenticeships also provide an opportunity to support employability in the local community, through the development of skills and learning, in line with the council's economic development activities.
4. The government through the National Apprenticeship Service supports the development of apprenticeship opportunities. It is proposed that the council takes advantage of available support and looks at ways to establish apprenticeships opportunities across services and appropriate roles.
5. An initial assessment of the council's establishment and structures would indicate that there are current posts which have the potential to be developed into apprenticeship opportunities. Officers will therefore be asked to consider the potential for creating apprenticeship opportunities when seeking to recruit to vacant posts. Similarly, when developing proposals for the reorganisation of their services, officers will be asked to give consideration to also creating new apprenticeship opportunities.
6. Other local authorities in Norfolk have established generic apprenticeship opportunities. These tend to focus on the development of entry level skill sets, rather than professional or technical training. Typical apprenticeship opportunities include business administration, customer service, health and social care and IT. In these examples the apprenticeships are for the same fixed term period, with equivalent levels of training and qualification requirement.
7. Given the relatively broad range of specialisms within the council, and the comparatively small number of posts in each area, it is proposed that we look to establish apprenticeships within existing structures. These would then be based on established areas of activity. As a consequence this would mean that there would

need to be a range of training requirements and at different levels. This would also mean that the apprenticeships may vary in duration.

8. Once we have established apprenticeships within the council, and dependent on any future changes in areas of direct service delivery, it may be appropriate to consider the establishment of some core apprenticeship programmes.
9. Appendix 1 sets out a proposed framework for the assessment of roles as potential apprenticeship opportunities.
10. Appendix 2 sets out a proposed outline apprenticeship scheme. This is based on the approach set out in more detail below.

Support from the National Apprenticeship Service.

11. The National Apprenticeship Service provides more than 250 apprenticeship frameworks, which are estimated to cover more than 1,200 different job roles. They have confirmed that they have frameworks appropriate for the majority of local authority roles
12. Currently they also have funding available to wholly or partly cover the apprenticeship training costs. This is dependent on the age of the apprentice however.
13. Where the apprentice is aged 16-18 the National Apprenticeship Service are able to fund 100% of the cost of training. Where the apprentice is aged 19-24, then a contribution of up to 50% of the training cost may be available. If the apprentice is aged 25 or above, there may still be a contribution to the training cost, although the government's position is that resources should be directed more towards supporting apprenticeships for younger workers.
14. There are currently three levels of apprenticeship under the National Apprenticeship Service framework. These relate to different levels of equivalent educational attainment. They are:
 - Intermediate:** equivalent to 5 GCSE's grades A-C
 - Advanced:** equivalent to 2 A Levels
 - Higher:** equivalent to a foundation degree and level 4 qualifications.
15. Dependent on the particular framework, the training requirement could consist of a single nationally recognised professional qualification, an appropriate NVQ or a combination of both.
16. The National Apprenticeship Service will support the location of an appropriate training provider. This provider will then work within the apprenticeship framework, for the provision of professional and/or vocational training.

Pay

17. It is up to each employer to set the remuneration for the apprenticeship, although the government has established an apprenticeship national minimum wage which is currently £2.60 per hour. This applies to apprentices under the age of 19 or

apprentices 19 or over who are in the first year of their apprenticeship. Once they have completed the first year of their apprenticeship, they are entitled to receive the national minimum wage or the appropriate wage for the job.

18. However, It is proposed that any role identified by the council as an apprenticeship opportunity be graded using the council's job evaluation system and protocols. As a consequence, the apprentice would be paid the appropriate "rate for the job" from the commencement of their apprenticeship by the council. All other payments which may be due to the apprentice should also be made in accordance with the council's national and local agreements applicable to all other employees. This is consistent with the council's position on the living wage.

Recruitment

19. Whilst the government openly supports apprenticeships for younger workers, it is still a contravention of anti-age discrimination legislation, for the employer to place any age restrictions on the apprenticeship opportunity.
20. Any incentives that are provided, regarding the employment and training of people from a particular age group, may only be considered once the appointment has been made.
21. The employer is however permitted to legitimately encourage interest from prospective employees from a particular age group. This is providing that the words, terms and selection methods used could not be seen to disadvantage candidate who fall outside that age group.
22. Similarly, restricting applications to people from a particular geographical area may also be considered discriminatory, if the distribution of protected characteristics (people from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities or the age profile etc) does not mirror the wider community.
23. Other than this, there is no particular requirement about how or where the employer should advertise their apprenticeship opportunities. It may therefore be appropriate to augment normal recruitment arrangements by advertising opportunities through particular publications, e-networks or institutions in order to encourage interest from local communities. In addition The National Apprenticeship Service has its own web site where opportunities may be advertised or signposted. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the identified training provider to advertise for apprentices on behalf of the council.

Duration of apprenticeship

24. Apprenticeships can vary in duration, dependent on the type of training to be undertaken, and how long it would reasonably take to achieve the nationally recognised qualification(s). The apprenticeship should be for the minimum period to allow for completion of the training. In reality, this would need to be for a minimum of one year, although two years would be a more appropriate duration in most cases. This would give the apprentice the opportunity to fully reinforce and apply their learning by carrying out the full range of appropriate "in work" activity. Where the apprenticeship relates to the attainment of a higher level of professional or technical qualification and competence, then apprenticeship duration of up to five years would be appropriate.

25. Prior to the commencement of the apprenticeship, consideration should be given to what measures, if any, might be put in place to support the apprentice's continuing employment, once the apprenticeship has concluded.
26. Apprentices have most, but not all the rights of a fixed term employee. Failure to retain a fully trained apprentice does not constitute a redundancy, and there is no legal duty on the council to attempt to seek alternative employment for an apprentice at the end of the apprenticeship.
27. This would mean however that we would be potentially losing valuable knowledge and experience, attained at some cost to the council. As such, the council will look at appropriate opportunities for the apprentice and as a minimum they will be given an opportunity to go onto the council's redeployment register prior to their leave date. This will enable them to seek suitable alternative employment with the council.
28. In certain circumstances, consideration may be given to making the successful apprentice a permanent employee upon completion of their apprenticeship. This may be appropriate where the apprenticeship is over an extended period of time, leading to a higher level or professional qualification, or the apprenticeship relates to a hard to fill role. In such a case, consideration would need to be given to how the employee would be incorporated onto the council's establishment, and what long-term financial provision would need to be put in place at the point of recruitment.

Contractual position

29. An apprenticeship agreement, specifying the skills, trade or occupation for which the training is provided, must form part of contractual relationship between the employer and the apprentice. This is in addition to the normal contract which exists between employer and employee.
30. It is possible to terminate an apprenticeship early in circumstances such as very serious misconduct. There may be a presumption however that the employer should be more lenient or permissive in relation to an apprentice, than to a substantive employee. It is potentially more difficult to terminate an apprenticeship early on grounds of capability than it is an established employee. In such a circumstance, the employer would need to demonstrate that the apprentice is "un-teachable".
31. If the termination of an apprenticeship is judged unfair then they may receive a higher than normal compensatory award, to include loss of wages, status and training. In such circumstances it may be appropriate to consider delaying the completion of the apprenticeship rather than going straight to termination.
32. Appendix 3 sets out a proposed apprenticeship agreement between the council and employees appointed under an apprenticeship scheme.

Establishing apprenticeship opportunities

33. Apprenticeships will need to be funded from existing budgets or from agreed bids for growth. Managers are asked to review vacancies and determine if there are posts which could be converted to apprenticeship opportunities. Similarly, when developing restructuring proposals, managers are asked to build in apprenticeship posts where appropriate. This does mean that the introduction of apprenticeships will have an impact on the council's staffing structures and that they will not be in addition to the council's establishment.

Appendix 1

Potential Apprenticeship Opportunities: Framework for assessing the suitability of roles

Anyone who is appointed to an apprenticeship role obtains employment rights for the duration of the apprenticeship. Dependent on the duration and nature of the apprenticeship, the employee upon successful completion of their apprenticeship, may also attain permanent rights of employment with the council. Under an apprenticeship arrangement, the council commits to provide the apprentice with suitable training, resulting in a nationally recognised qualification.

Work activities carried out in support of the delivery of services, are secondary to the requirement to provide training and development to the apprentice, leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

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| | | |
| 1 | Will this apprenticeship support the council's capacity to address an area of skills shortage or hard to fill activity? | |
| 2 | Is the post funded? – It is unlikely that the council will be eligible for any external contribution towards the employment costs of the apprentice. | |
| 3 | Is the role suitable to support a programme of training and development leading to at least one nationally recognised qualification? Further advice can be sought from the National Apprenticeship Service regarding appropriate training frameworks, and potential training providers. | |
| 4 | What qualification(s) will the apprentice achieve by the completion of apprenticeship arrangement? | |
| 5 | How long will it take to attain the qualification(s)? This will determine the minimum length of the apprenticeship. | |
| 6 | Is the relevant qualification(s) sufficiently broad in scope and relevance to significantly contribute to the apprentice's future employability? | |
| 7 | Can the training be fully funded from available resources? Dependent on the age of the apprentice, external funding in support of the training costs may be available. | |

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|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 8 | <p>Are the duties sufficiently flexible to allow the apprentice sufficient time to support their learning and development? It is expected that time spent on learning and development should equate to a minimum of 1 day per week.</p> | |
| 9 | <p>Are the requirements of the role sufficiently flexible to allow the apprentice to commence at a level requiring potentially minimal skills or knowledge, then to develop their understanding, expertise and ability and to increase the level of responsibility placed upon them during the course of the apprenticeship?</p> | |
| 10 | <p>Is there a suitably trained and experienced manager/supervisor in place to take responsibility for managing the apprentice? It should be taken into consideration that apprentices may be under age 18, and this may entail additional management and legal responsibilities.</p> | |

Norwich City Council Apprenticeship Scheme

We are fully committed to providing opportunities for people seeking to establish a career in local government.

We offer employment and training in a variety of roles across the full range of our services. If you are entering the workplace for the first time, or are looking to establish a new career, our apprenticeship scheme could be your first step on the road to a successful future in local government.

Our offer to you

We offer you the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised qualification whilst developing your skills and ability through hands on experience.

As an apprentice with Norwich City Council, you will earn whilst you learn and you will receive the appropriate salary for the job from day one of your employment with us.

Who can apply?

To be considered for an apprenticeship, you will need to have a positive attitude towards working and learning, and be enthusiastic about the opportunity to establish your career in local government.

We guarantee an interview to disabled applicants who meet or appear to meet the criteria for any vacancy.

You will not necessarily have formal qualifications at the commencement of the apprenticeship. Where these are required, they will be specified in the information when the role is advertised.

How to apply

Our apprenticeship vacancies are advertised on our internet site www.norwich.gov.uk and can be found following the link to job vacancies.

What are the benefits of becoming an apprentice with Norwich City Council?

Our apprenticeship scheme will give you a great opportunity to gain valuable skills, knowledge and experience and to attain a nationally recognised qualification.

By the end of your apprenticeship with us you could have all the necessary skills and work experience to give you the best possible start to your career in local government.

As an apprentice, you will be enrolled onto a bespoke learning and development programme. This is designed to give you the training and practical experience necessary to pursue your chosen career path. You will spend part of your time working wholly on your learning and development and the attainment of a nationally recognised qualification.

As an employee of Norwich City Council, you will be entitled to 25 annual leave days per year. You will also be eligible to join the local government pension scheme.

What will I be paid?

We offer apprenticeships in a variety of areas and at a number of levels.

Apprenticeships can vary substantially in their requirements, involving different skills, knowledge and levels of responsibility.

Each apprenticeship opportunity will be evaluated, according to the activities that will be undertaken and the skills and knowledge that the apprentice will need to develop and demonstrate. This means that from day one of your apprenticeship, you will receive the appropriate rate of pay for the role you are undertaking.

The pay rate for the particular apprenticeship will be included with other information about the role when it is advertised.

What support will I receive?

As a new employee you will receive a full induction with the council. You will be supported by your manager and other colleagues who are fully experienced in the area of work you will be undertaking.

You will also be supported throughout your apprenticeship by experienced learning and development professionals, and will have dedicated training days.

There will also be the opportunity for you to undertake other face to face and on-line learning with the council

Supporting your future employment

As an apprentice, you will be employed by the council on a fixed-term contract. This means that you will be employed for a defined period of time. How long the apprenticeship will last will be specified when the role is advertised.

The apprenticeship will however be long-enough to enable you to develop all the necessary knowledge, skills and experience and to attain the appropriate nationally recognised qualification, relating to your chosen role. Apprenticeships will vary in length between two years and five years. This is dependent on the nature of the role and the type of qualification that is undertaken.

Towards the end of your apprenticeship, you will be given the opportunity to apply for other permanent or long-term temporary roles with the council.

In certain cases, successful completion of the apprenticeship, will lead to an automatic offer of a permanent post with the council. This will relate to long-term apprenticeships (over three years) leading to the attainment of a professional or technical qualifications. If this should form part of a particular apprenticeship offer, this will be made clear when the role is advertised.

Questions and answers

- **Q: What is an apprenticeship?**

An apprenticeship is an opportunity to work within an organisation – gain experience and training, and be paid at the same time.

- **Q: I have never worked before. Can I still apply?**

Yes. Previous work experience is not a requirement, but we are looking for drive, enthusiasm and a commitment to working for the council.

- **Q: I have no qualifications. Can I still apply?**

Yes, dependent on the apprenticeship you are interested in. Commitment to attaining the necessary skills, knowledge and experience in order to be successful in the role are however essential. Where there is a requirement for certain qualifications this will be made clear when the role is advertised.

- **Q: What kind of areas will I be working in?**

Potentially these could be in any areas of council activity. They may also include engagement with our contractors or partner organisations. We do not have a single intake of apprentices, and opportunities will be advertised at various times throughout the year.

Appendix 3

Apprenticeship agreement.

Purpose

This agreement forms an appendix to your contract of employment (*apprenticeship*).

This apprenticeship arrangement relates to a planned programme, consisting of:

- Training in order to achieve the qualification of (*please insert*),
- The development of knowledge and experience through the carrying out of actual work activity,
- On the job support and assessment (insert if appropriate - in order to achieve an NVQ – title and level).

The primary purpose of this agreement and the relationship between Norwich City Council and yourself is for the purpose of training, in order for you to achieve (*state skill, trade, occupation or profession*)

Working hours

Your working hours are (*from/to*) Monday to Friday, however on every (*specify day or alternative day that may be advised during the academic year*) you are required to attend at (*institution*), in order to undertake formal training and assessment. On days when the (*institution*) is closed you are required to attend at your normal place of work.

Duration

Your apprenticeship and this agreement shall be in place for (*specify period months/years*),

and will end on (*specify date*)

Arrangements at the end of the apprenticeship

Your apprenticeship will normally end on (*date*), at which date your employment with Norwich City Council will cease **or**

Your apprenticeship will normally end on (*date*). For the three month period prior to this date, you will be placed on the council's staff transfer list. During which time you will be given a preferential opportunity, along with other employees on the staff transfer list, to apply for any suitable vacancies which may arise. If you have not been successful in obtaining alternative employment by this date, then your employment *with Norwich City Council will cease. or*

Your apprenticeship will normally end on (*date*).

If you have successfully completed your apprenticeship by this date, your employment with the council will be confirmed as permanent. There will be no change in your

salary or terms and condition at this point, other than a change in your employment status from fixed term to permanent.

Should any suitable designated vacancy arise in your service area, then you will be given a preferential opportunity, along with other eligible employment, to apply for this role.

Training provision

During the course of your apprenticeship you will be expected to carry out the required training, assessments and or associated course work in order to achieve the following nationally recognised qualifications (*specify*)

1 Training will be provided through day release (*specify institution or other method of delivery*)

2 Training and verification will be carried out through in work assessment

Formal training will be delivered primarily by an external provider (*named*) Mentoring, and informal learning and development opportunities will however be provided from within the council.

Or

Formal assessment will be primarily be carried out by an external provider (*named*). Mentoring, and informal learning and development opportunities will however be provided from within the council

General duty

As an employee of Norwich City Council you are expected to conduct yourself appropriately, and apply yourself to the achievement of the required qualifications and other learning outcomes. Where you fail to comply with these requirements, consideration may be given to early termination of this agreement and your employment with the council.

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

Report author to complete

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|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Committee date: | 12 December 2012 |
| Head of service: | Dawn Bradshaw , Head of HR and learning |
| Report subject: | Norwich City Council apprenticeship framework. |
| Date assessed: | 23 November 2012 |
| Description: | To agree the approach to implementing an apprenticeship scheme across the council. |

| | Impact | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate) | Neutral | Positive | Negative | Comments |
| Finance (value for money) | <input type="checkbox"/> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contributes to the development of a robust workforce strategy: develop of internal skills and capacity. |
| Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact | <input type="checkbox"/> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | Potential impact across all services through recruitment and development of skills. |
| ICT services | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Economic development | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Supports employability in the community, for less skilled and experienced workers. |
| Financial inclusion | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Supports the development of appropriate skills, contributing to long-term employment. |
| Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate) | Neutral | Positive | Negative | Comments |
| Safeguarding children and adults | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Human Rights Act 1998 | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Health and well being | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate) | Neutral | Positive | Negative | Comments |
| Relations between groups (cohesion) | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | Impact | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Eliminating discrimination & harassment | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Advancing equality of opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contributes to the pool of employment opportunities, for less skilled, experienced and qualified workers. |
| Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate) | Neutral | Positive | Negative | Comments |
| Transportation | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Natural and built environment | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Waste minimisation & resource use | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Pollution | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sustainable procurement | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Energy and climate change | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| (Please add an 'x' as appropriate) | Neutral | Positive | Negative | Comments |
| Risk management | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Recommendations from impact assessment

Positive

Implementation of proposal supports internal capacity for the delivery of services.

Provides opportunities for the development and employability of workers who might otherwise be excluded from long-term appropriate employment.

Supports the council's capacity to establish a living wage.

Negative

Neutral

Issues