

Effective Organisation Overview & Scrutiny Committee 28 April 2010

‘CYC Apprenticeships & Other Work Based Learning Opportunities’ Scrutiny Review – Progress Report

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents a suggested timetable for the review, and provides information relating to the first two objectives. Members are asked to identify recommendations relating to these objectives and agree how to progress this review.

Background

2. At a meeting in February 2010, the Committee considered a topic registration form submitted by Cllr Gunnell which proposed carrying out a review of the existing arrangements for traineeships at the Council. The Committee recognised that some of what Cllr Gunnell was proposing fell outside of the remit for this Committee and a decision was therefore taken to receive an officer report which focussed solely on the role of the Council as an employer, rather than its role as a provider of services to all young people across the city who are looking to receive work based training.
3. That report was presented to a meeting of this Committee in March 2010, and it was agreed to carry out a review based on the following remit:

Aim

To identify improvements to the Council’s provision of apprenticeships and other work based training

Objectives:

- exploring the current arrangements
- identifying any external funding opportunities, particularly the targeting of specific vulnerable groups e.g. those with learning disabilities and NEETs
- identifying a reporting structure to measure the effectiveness and outturn of apprenticeships and other work based training

Consultation

4. Officers within Human Resources have been consulted on the information contained within this report.

Objective 1 – The Current Arrangements

Information Gathered

5. In November 2008 City of York Council (CYC) signed the Skills pledge. It committed the council to encouraging staff to gain work-based qualifications, and to raise skill levels particularly those below level 2 (GCSE level). This initiative began by promoting new funding aimed at getting our employees to gain National Vocational Qualifications, and improve literacy levels through 'Train to Gain' and 'Skills for Life'.
6. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)
Taking an NVQ is appropriate for members of staff who already have skills and want to improve them, or for those starting from scratch. They are designed to help staff develop their skills and knowledge to do a job effectively and provide the opportunity to learn practical, work-related tasks, leading to a 'competence-based' qualification.
7. Based on national standards for various occupations, these standards say what a competent person in a job could be expected to do. As a staff member progresses through their course, they can compare their skills and knowledge against the national standards to see what they need to do to meet them. City of York Council currently has no mechanism for recording the number of staff across directorates, who are currently undertaking an NVQ. Work is ongoing to provide a central register, by Summer 2010. York Training Centre provides information to all staff to encourage the take up of training (see paragraph 17 below). However, this does not preclude staff from accessing NVQs through other providers, such as York College.
8. Train to Gain
This national skills service encourages employers to realise the benefits that learning and skills can bring whilst recognising that different sized businesses (or businesses from different sectors) face different challenges. It is tailored to meet individual business needs, offering advice on everything from basic skills through to leadership and management training, and will help a business to:
 - get the essential skills to boost business performance
 - improve business efficiency and increase profits
 - help staff grow in motivation and confidence
9. The service offers access to skills and training advice via a number of different routes - Business Link Advisers, Colleges, or Training Providers. Whatever route taken, they will take on much of the hard work - identifying:
 - the training and other skills that will drive a business forward

- the employees who will benefit most
 - local training providers - If appropriate, they will source local providers who can work on site, minimising disruption to a business
 - provide advice on financing training e.g. if a business is eligible for partial or full funding or subsidies, a Business Link Adviser will help access the support
 - evaluate a business's training programme, making sure it will have an impact on a business's success
10. CYC staff can access the Train to Gain service through York Training Centre, which is part of CYC.
11. Skills for Life
'Skills for Life', are also referred to as 'Basic Skills' - the two terms mean the same thing, and refer to the same qualifications. They are designed to help develop the skills used in everyday life, such as reading, writing or maths. They can also help an individual boost their CV or move on to further study.
12. A Skills for Life qualification can be taken by someone over 16 years of age who has left compulsory full-time education without an up-to-date qualification at level 2 on the National Qualifications Framework (such as a GCSE). In some cases, schools also offer Skills for Life qualifications for 14 to 16 year olds. Skills for Life Certificates are available in:
- adult literacy
 - adult numeracy
 - information and communications technology (ICT)
 - English - for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
13. At CYC, the issue of recruitment is devolved down to departmental service level, and therefore with no central register of ongoing recruitment it is not possible to quantify the numbers of young employees accessing these qualifications, or those applying for vacancies at the council who have previously accessed these qualifications in an effort to find employment. Directorates are responsible for all recruitment and work based training, and are expected to identify suitable posts, and with support, set in place actions to recruit and train apprentices. The provision of other education-into-work opportunities such as work experience, are also left to the discretion of Directorates - working within the general guidelines laid down in CYC's HR Manual (with the exception of the graduate development programme - see paragraph 26 below).
14. CYC Workforce Plan
The council's first Workforce Plan is currently being drafted for the period 2010-12, with the aim of ensuring the right staff with the right skills are employed in the right places, to deliver the right services to customers.
15. The Workforce Plan has 5 strategic objectives:
- Transformation & Cultural Change
 - Efficiency
 - Diversity

- Partnerships
- Customers

16. The strategic objective specific to this scrutiny review is 'Diversity' and in particular the actions to increase the number of young people (under 25) working for the council, which includes commitments to:

- Work with the local universities, colleges and schools to encourage young people to apply for CYC jobs, and placements
- Develop a programme to offer 3 – 6 month internships for local graduates and young unemployed.
- Increase the number of young apprentices and apprentices from under-represented groups in all areas of the council.
- Provide an internal careers advice service for young employees
- Develop in-house graduate talent by offering structured work experience opportunities across different services.

The Committee may wish to consider these actions in support of this review. The Workforce Plan is due to be presented to the Executive later this year, and Members may wish to be consulted on the 'Diversity' objective beforehand in order that their views can be taken into consideration by the Executive.

17. York Training Centre

Practical expertise in the council resides within York Training Centre (YTC) in City Strategy. City Strategy manages the operational relationship with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which helps give the council a flexible and fast response to new opportunities and priorities. For example, City Strategy provides a practical one stop shop for managers thinking of recruiting apprentices. HR and City Strategy have also recently actioned a structured communications campaign to engage all staff called 'Skills for you'.

18. City Strategy Apprenticeship Scheme

City Strategy started an Apprenticeship Scheme in September 2008. Six young people (all 17–18 years old) were recruited as Administration Apprentices on a fixed term two year contract, as paid employees on Grade 2. The six apprentices move around six departments within City Strategy on a rotational basis, spending four months in each. Within each department they then experience a range of jobs and sections. At the end of the first year, all apprentices successfully completed the Apprenticeship programme at Level 2. Now in their second year, they are half way through the Advanced Apprenticeship at Level 3.

19. To date no other directorates have chosen to replicate the City Strategy Apprenticeship Scheme, although there has been a regular take-up of individual apprentices by some directorates over a few years, averaging about 5–8.

20. Placements for those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

It has already been recognised that the demographic of the workforce is not representative of the City, with only about 337 employees under the age of 25. The Workforce Plan will therefore include supporting actions to increase the

number of young people under 25 years old working for the council e.g. to develop a programme of short internships for local young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) and to increase the number of apprenticeships offered to young people.

21. Directorates have been asked to consider offering placements for young people who are NEET and currently registered under the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme with York Training Centre.
22. This programme is available to young people aged 16 - 18 years who are not participating in any form of post-16 learning, if it is an appropriate option which will enable them to progress to an apprenticeship, further learning or a job. Older young people under the Extended Guarantee can also participate in E2E at local LSC discretion, provided the young person is not eligible for New Deal and their programme of learning can be completed by their 25th birthday.
23. It is recognised that there can be no 'quick-fix' for many of the young people who will enter E2E. Therefore, it is not time-bound, but is based on the needs of each individual. Some may need a relatively short period of time to prepare for entry to an Apprenticeship, employment, or further vocational learning opportunity. If they have more complex personal and social needs they may require a much longer period before being ready to enter and sustain suitable training and employment.
24. Learners may start by attending for 16 hours a week, but must build this up to at least 30 hours as soon as possible, depending on their learning capacity, aspirations, needs and progression choices. Participants are expected to undertake learning in three interdependent core areas:
 - basic and key skills
 - vocational development
 - personal and social development
25. Since 30th June 2008 all eligible learners taking an LSC funded E2E programme are entitled to the maximum EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) of £30 a week regardless of their household income. With no central register, it is not possible to identify the number of young people on placements across directorates.
26. National Graduate Development Programme
The council is currently providing a 2 year traineeship to three graduates from the National Graduate Development Programme. These graduates each have three placements within different directorates. The graduates compete for the programme and for a place at York. They are not necessarily local graduates.

Objective 2 - External Funding Opportunities

Information Gathered

27. York Training Centre (YTC) in City Strategy, has a contract with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This joint contract with Adult and Community Learning, enables YTC to claim funding for 'Entry to Employment' (E2E), 'Train to Gain' and apprenticeships on behalf of the Council.
28. City Strategy manages the operational relationship with the LSC, which helps give the council a flexible and fast way of accessing new funding streams, and help staff to accessing funding for NVQs. However, with the transfer of responsibilities from the LSC to successor organisations on 1st April 2010, YTC will be funded for 16-19 Apprenticeship delivery by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).
29. Most recently the focus of funding and government priorities has reverted to apprenticeships. As a result, Human Resources (HR) put in place a mechanism for accessing funding through Skills 4U. They also put in place an Apprenticeship Project Manager to provide information on available funding for specific initiatives e.g. Creative Apprenticeships in Libraries.
30. They also provided a light touch corporate framework approach to apprenticeships, offering advice and support to enable Directorates to decide for themselves where to place apprentices and an appropriate number of apprenticeships to offer. However, Directorates have struggled to set themselves these targets and HR have recognised the need for a clearer more strategic approach.

Progressing the Review

31. A suggested timetable for completing this review, is shown below:

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Workplan</u>
12 May 2010 (provisional – to be agreed)	To consider information being gathered in relation to the third objective of this review - identifying a reporting structure to measure the effectiveness and outturn of apprenticeships and other work based training. Information on how other Local Authorities manage recruitment, apprenticeships and training etc to be provided, in order to identify a best practice approach
24 May 2010 (provisional – to be agreed)	To consider and agree the draft final report arising from this review

32. If the Committee wish to complete this review by the end of this municipal year, the two further meetings required will need to be held before 27 May 2010.

Options

33. Members may choose to:
 - a. Request additional information in relation to the first two objectives;
 - b. Amend the suggested timetable for the review, as shown above

Implications

34. **Equalities** - The diversity objective in the Workforce Plan helps us to meet our Inclusive City objectives
35. **Financial** - Any changes to the current recruitment and training arrangements recommended as a result of this scrutiny review would need to be funded, as would any changes to the management arrangements.
36. There are no known HR, Legal or Other implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Corporate Priorities

37. This review supports a number of the aims within the Council's corporate strategy i.e. making York a 'learning city', 'inclusive city' and 'effective organisation'.

Risk Management

38. There are no known risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

Recommendations

39. In regard to the first two objectives of this review, Members are asked to
 - i) note the contents of this report
 - ii) Identify what if any further information is required
40. If no further information is required, Members are asked to identify any appropriate recommendations relating to the first two objectives.
41. In order to progress this scrutiny review, Members are asked to agree:
 - iii) the two additional meeting dates suggested in paragraph 7 above
 - iv) whether they wish to be consulted on the action plans included within the 'Diversity' strategic objective of the draft Workforce Plan

Reason: To progress this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols

Contact Details

Author:
Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Andrew Docherty
Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services

Scoping Report Approved

Date 16 April 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: N/A