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To: Personnel Committee

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Subject: Apprenticeship Programme

Classification: Unrestricted

SUMMARY: This report informs Personnel Committee of KCC's significant contribution to the Kent wide aspiration on the number of apprenticeships to be created contained in Towards 2010 and future plans to increase further. The report also makes reference to the support provided to partners to employ apprentices.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Towards 2010 contains an aspiration to create 250 apprenticeships by 2010. This target was subsequently increased to 300. Increasing the number of apprenticeships and young people employed by KCC is a key priority within our Workforce Strategy. In addition to Towards 2010, Kent Success (KCC's apprenticeship programme) supports a number of organisational objectives:

- Youth unemployment is rising during the recession. KCC recognises its role in reducing the number of NEETs (not in Employment Education & Training) both as a major employer and through influencing partners.
- Workforce demographics – influencing and changing the age profile of employees and more fully reflecting the Kent communities. In common with the public sector KCC has an ageing workforce with 40% of its workforce aged 50 plus.
- Talent Management – attracting, recruiting and developing talent, succession planning and providing a talent pipeline that will contribute to replacing older employees who will exit the organisation.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS – KCC KENT SUCCESS

2.1 Kent County Council has already exceeded not only its original target of 250 apprentices but also the revised target of 300. To date a total of **310** apprentice starts have been achieved within KCC of which 91 are currently in training. The majority of apprenticeships so far have been in business administration and customer service. The Performance Indicator for the number of employees aged under 30 has increased from 15.1% to 16.85% since April 2008, indicating that apprentices and other initiatives to attract more young people into the County Council have been successful.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS – KENT PUBLIC SECTOR

- 3.1 KCC has led by example to influence the Kent Public Sector. A significant amount of work has been invested in working with partners to share our best practice and support employers in developing their own schemes. This has contributed to a commitment to deliver **940** apprenticeships across Kent & Medway during 2010/11. In addition KCC is supporting the private sector in employing apprentices for example through the ThanetWorks programme.
- 3.2 Kent County Council is recognised as a leader nationally and across the region in its strategies to increase apprenticeships and the employment of young people evidenced by invitations to speak at various forums, for example to elected Members from across the South East Employers Region, and having been shortlisted for a national talent management award alongside private sector employers.

4. FUTURE PLANS TO INCREASE APPRENTICESHIPS

- 4.1 Having exceeded targets, KCC now faces even more significant challenges. Currently 1 in 20 learners aged 16 -18 take up an apprenticeship. The national target is for this to increase to 1 in 5 by 2020 and in Kent we aim to achieve this by 2014/15. This equates to 9600 apprenticeships across the public and private sectors in Kent of which 3840 (40%) are targeted from the public sector 20% from the public sector workforce and 20% through procurement.
- 4.2 Personnel & Development has therefore been exploring new approaches to recruitment to achieve a step change in the number of apprentices and also graduates employed by Kent County Council. A proposal has been presented to the Apprenticeship Steering Group (Chaired by Amanda Honey, Managing Director Communities and including Cabinet Member, Mike Hill) to establish a talent pool of 200 apprentices and 100 graduates from which managers will recruit when a vacancy arises at our first 5 entry level grades (KR 2 – 6). While awaiting appointment, apprentices will gain work experience in Business Units across the County Council which have forecast turnover. In addition to training provided through the apprenticeship, apprentices would also receive training in employability skills that will support them moving into a job. Apprentices will receive the apprenticeship rate while gaining work experience and until the end of the apprenticeship. An executive summary of this proposal is attached as an appendix.
- 4.3 The proposal has been agreed by the Apprenticeship Steering Group and subsequently endorsed by the Leader. At the request of the Leader, a letter has been sent to government recommending this be piloted as a blue print for public sector recruitment whilst reducing the skills shortage facing the nation and tackling youth unemployment. Apprenticeships will be provided in national skill shortages including health and social care. In recognition of this and the Council's strong track record of achievement in employing apprentices and young people, government funding has been sought for the programme (£1,022,000). A response is awaited. Detailed work on implementing this approach is currently being undertaken.
- 4.4 This approach represents the step change necessary to achieve the new targets within KCC. Success will depend on:
- recruiting the right people into the pool

- ensuring that there is a high level of coherence between this and other initiatives to attract under-represented groups into KCC
- engaging managers across the Authority
- being robust and consistent in the priority of this approach, given the decreasing size of the workforce and numbers of service revisions and restructures likely to result from the severe budget pressures facing KCC.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 Kent County Council has made significant achievements in delivering apprenticeships having exceeded targets, recognised as a leader nationally and across the region, and is also influencing and supporting the public and private sectors. Personnel & Development continues to develop new approaches and has made an innovative proposal that will contribute to achieving future challenging targets.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Personnel Committee is asked to note the significant achievements to date and future proposals.

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Executive Summary

Recruiting Young People – Delivering Stretch Targets in KCC

This paper explores a new approach to recruitment in order to achieve a step change in the number of apprentices and graduates employed by KCC.

Key Points

1. It is proposed that apprentices and graduates are recruited to a talent pool (300 per year is suggested as an indicative figure).
2. Recruited twice a year (through recruitment campaigns) during October and April commencing with the first intake in October 2010.
3. Successful candidates to be recruited as trainees and held in a talent pool. The expectation is that trainees would spend no longer than 6 months in the talent pool awaiting appointment.
4. While in the talent pool apprentices receive the apprenticeship rate of £105 / week and graduates receive an internship rate of £105 / week.
5. KR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 posts recruited through the talent pool unless an exception is agreed by the relevant managing director.
6. When a suitable vacancy arises trainees would be offered a trainee role and appointed 'against' the post. Confirmation in post would follow successful completion of the apprenticeship and probation period.
7. Every business unit will be required to forecast the number of posts required at KR 2 – 6 over the next 4 years and integrated into business plans. This paper provides data to support these forecasts including turnover, historical data on posts appointed at KR2 – 6, number of employees expected to retire plus an indication of business needs.
8. The financial implications of this approach are contained on page 6.
9. Typically apprentices have been recruited to supernumerary posts. While the expectation is that managers will have less capacity to do this in the future, these will continue