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To: Personnel Committee

Date: 16 May 2012

Subject: Proposed development of an 18+ Programme for Kent County Council

Classification: **Unrestricted**

SUMMARY: This paper sets out a proposal to establish an 18+ Programme for Kent County Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper has been produced to discuss how KCC could attract and retain more young people to become employees of KCC, specifically those leaving school or college with A-levels or equivalent, through an 18+ Programme.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 The unemployment figures announced in January 2012 showed the number of young people looking for work hit a new record of 1.042m, taking the rate for 16-24 year-olds to 22.5%¹.
- 2.2 KCC have demonstrated a strong commitment to drive economic prosperity in Kent with the following priorities outlined in Bold Steps for Kent:

Linking skills to economic need

Business needs a skilled and motivated workforce if it is to succeed, expand and generate growth, whilst individuals should have the means to skill and reskill themselves to adapt to changing economic circumstances

Delivering a higher level skills base

We must ensure that more Kent residents have high level technical and vocational skills. Not only do they increase lifetime earning capacity for individuals and their families, but they also generate a higher level of spending power in the Kent economy.

Tackling Disadvantage

The best way to tackle disadvantage is to provide strong economic growth and job opportunities so people can earn a salary to support themselves and their families

- 2.3 KCC's Equality and Diversity policy includes a commitment to ensuring that it has a diverse workforce and one that reflects the communities that it serves.

¹ Information supplied by the BBC Website

- 2.4 The Age Discrimination Act came into effect in 2006 to make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age. This act applies to both older and younger employees. In terms of younger employees, job specifications no longer require a specific number of years experience, therefore removing some of the barriers that young people, specifically those leaving school, are faced with when applying for jobs.
- 2.5 The Employers Forum on Age have research which has shown that “Giving young people specific responsibility and offering training on the job increases self esteem and hugely increases staff engagement”²

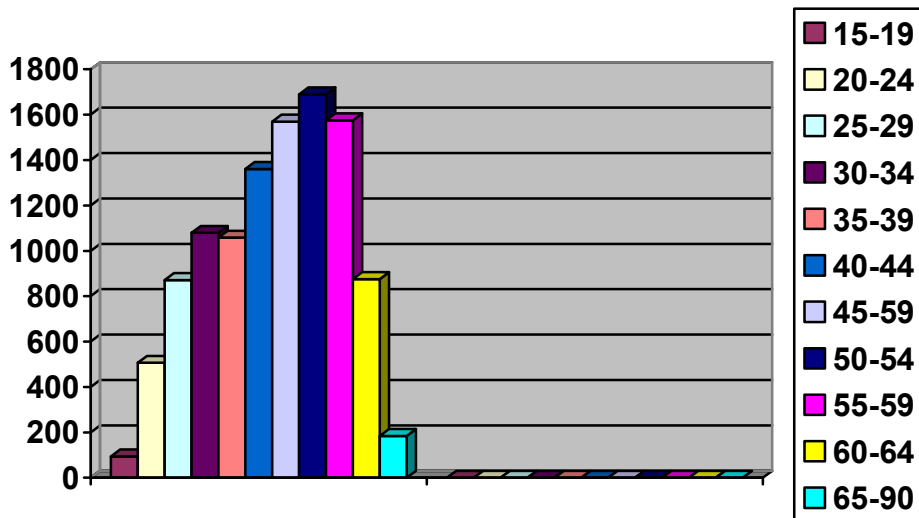
3. AGING WORKFORCE (Figures correct as at 31st March 2012³)

3.1 KCC has an ageing workforce. This can be seen through the statistics below:

- Of the 10,865 employees of KCC, 0.9% (94) were under 19 and 4.7% (507) were aged 20-24.
- In contrast, 24.3% (2635) of the workforce is over 55 with 9.8% (1060) being over 60 and therefore could all have retired within the next 5 years.

3.2 The graph below shows the number of employees by age at KCC as at 31st March 2012:

Number of employees by Age



3.3 These figures do not reflect the demographics of the working population of Kent. The 2001 census showed that 5.8% of the economically active population of Kent was under 19 and 8.5% were between 20 and 24⁴.

3.4 Staff turnover (Throughout 2011 and 2012)

² The Employers Forum on age

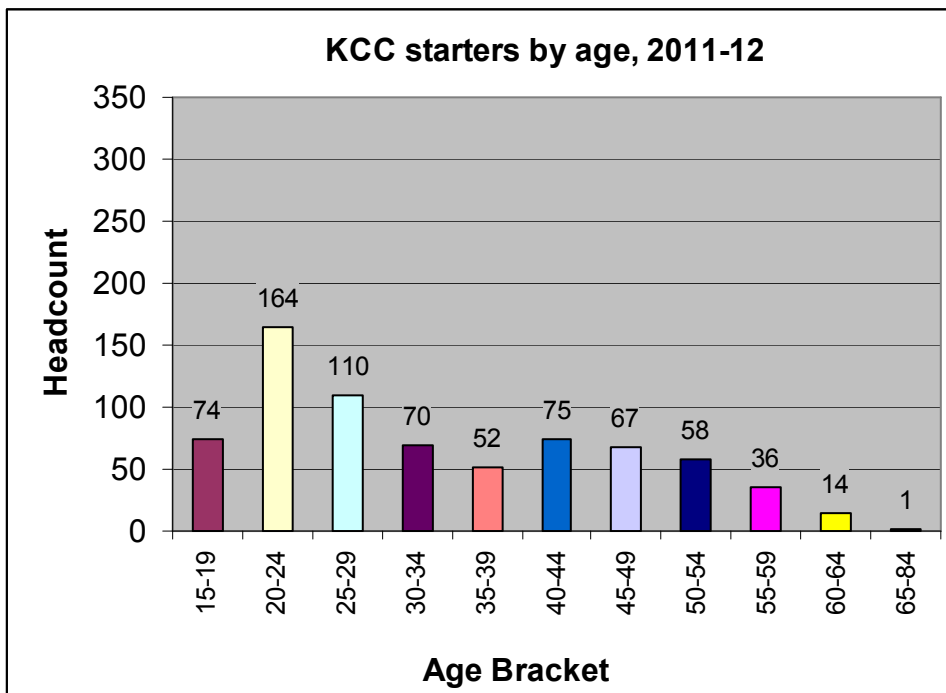
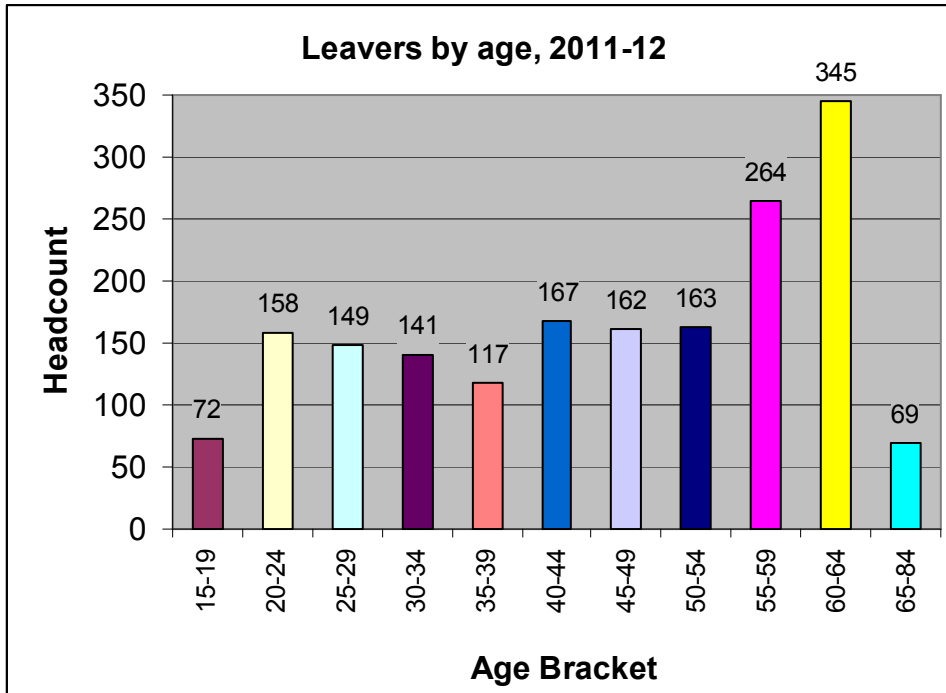
³ Excludes Schools and Casual Relief Seasonal & Supply (CRSS) staff

⁴ Office for National Statistics

3.4.1 The graphs below display the ages of new starters and leavers at KCC, and demonstrate a very small increase in young people joining the organisation:

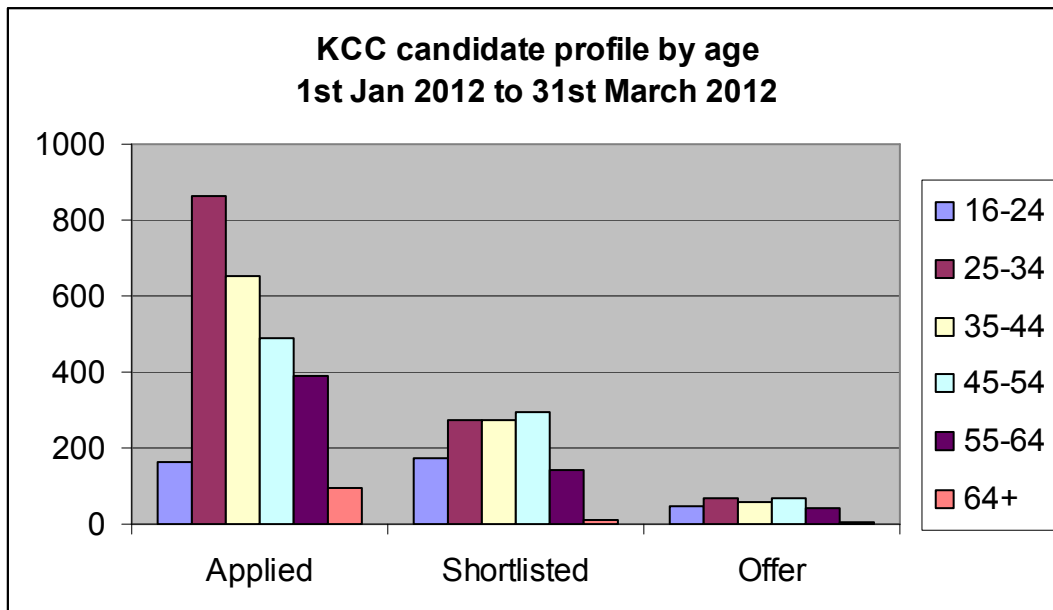
- In the 15-19 age bracket, 2 more people joined KCC than left
- In the 20-24 age bracket, 6 more people joined the KCC than left

Initiatives such as GradsKent and Apprenticeships are likely to have contributed to this.



3.5 Recruitment

3.5.1 For the period 1st January 2012 to 31st March 2012 of those young people (Aged 16-24) who did apply for posts only 174 (14.39%) were shortlisted. The graph below also shows that of the 174 applicants (Aged 16-24) who were shortlisted, only 46 (15.81%) were offered the role.



4. WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

4.1 There are currently a number of initiatives and programmes running across KCC to attract and retain young people at KCC. These include:

4.2 Work experience

4.2.1 Work experience is currently offered by the authority and the aim is to deliver a valuable and productive experience for both the student and employer. Work experience provides students with the opportunity to experience the range of careers available at KCC before they leave education.

4.3 Kent Apprenticeships

4.3.1 Kent apprenticeships is a joint partnership between Kent County Council, The National Apprenticeships Service (NAS), The Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) and Kent Association of Further Education Colleges (KAFEC).

4.3.2 The aim of Kent apprenticeships is to promote the benefits of apprenticeships and help employers overcome the barriers of recruiting apprentices.

4.4 Kent Graduate Programme

4.4.1 The Kent Graduate Programme (KGP) is designed to attract talented graduates to KCC. The Kent Graduate Programme currently offers streams in the following areas:

- Management
- Finance
- Highway Transportation

4.4.2 The length of the programme differs dependent on the stream. The Finance and Highway Transportation Stream are two years and the Finance Stream is a three year development programme.

4.4.3 This programme is delivered through the Graduate Services Team which is part of the HR Business Centre in the Business Strategy and Support directorate.

4.5 **GradsKent**

4.5.1 GradsKent was launched in order to provide a one-stop shop for employment opportunities in Kent that are suitable for students and graduates. GradsKent also advertise job and placement opportunities for interns, gap-years and sandwich-year students. GradsKent incorporates the former GIGS programme.

4.6 **Aspire (Previously known as Greenhouse)**

4.6.1 Aspire is a staff group that aims to be proactive in empowering younger members of staff to fulfil their full potential and promote the value that younger members of staff bring to the workplace. This staff group is open to all KCC employees under 30 for core membership and to any member of staff who can actively contribute to the aims of the group.

4.6.2 This group is co-ordinated through the group's core members and is currently chaired by Rebecca Shailer and Daniel Volks.

4.7 **Kent Community Programme**

4.7.1 The Kent Community Programme is for young people aged 16-19 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

4.7.2 It gives young people the practical skills that they need to help them find employment, further education or an apprenticeship. It also encourages them to become involved in their local community.

4.7.3 Groups of 8-12 young people are referred from Connexions, Youth Offending Service and other agencies for a 3 month period. During the programme they work on community focused projects learning practical, hands on skills and gaining recognised work-based qualifications. They are also supported in making a positive, realistic and achievable step after the programme.

4.8 **Kent Accountancy Training Scheme**

- 4.8.1 The Kent Accountancy Trainee Scheme provides an opportunity for A-level (or equivalent) school or college leavers to build a career in KCC's finance function.
- 4.8.2 The purpose of the scheme is to ensure an ongoing source of qualified accountants equipped with the professional skills and knowledge to become KCC's financial managers of the future.
- 4.8.3 This training scheme provides a range of work experience and is a fully funded professional training programme.

4.9 **Kent Employment Programme**

- 4.9.1 The Kent Employment Programme (KEP) is a new KCC initiative designed to create as many employment opportunities as possible for young people aged 18-24 who are currently in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). It is funded with £2m of Big Society Fund money.
- 4.9.2 The KEP will encourage employers to take on candidates by subsidising apprenticeships and graduate opportunities.

5. **18+ PROGRAMME – THE ASPIRATION**

- 5.1 The recruitment of motivated young people is an important part of KCC succession planning. Although KCC is currently doing a lot of work to attract young people to KCC (as outlined in section 4) there is not currently a generic programme aimed at young people leaving school or college with A-levels or equivalent.
- 5.2 The 18+ Programme will provide a central point of contact for A Level school/college leavers wishing to build a career within the Public Sector in Kent. As well as develop and retain school/college leavers and increasing our long-term talent pool, this programme will introduce a broader range of experiences, motivations and backgrounds into our workforce and will demonstrate our commitment to offer development opportunities to young people.
- 5.3 The aspirations of the programme are:
- To attract and retain exceptional school/college leavers with high levels of ability and motivation
 - To offer a structured scheme with a clear career path, professional and technical training, a salary and work experience
 - To place trainees in frontline roles which contribute to service delivery
- 5.4 The main focus for individuals will be acquiring technical and professional qualifications. It is proposed that a suite of qualification choices will be available to allow the individual to tailor the programme to their long-term career aspirations. Each individual will have a bursary up to the value of £2000.00 and will be required to submit a business case in order to justify their choice of qualification(s) to ensure there is both organisational fit and need.

5.5 The programme will offer plenty of support and guidance to trainees and as per the Kent Graduate Programme it is proposed that we offer:

- Mentoring support from a senior staff member to ensure that the trainees development needs are fully met
- Support from a 'buddy' who will give help, advice and guidance

6. OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOR THE 18+ PROGRAMME

A number of options have been considered and are summarised below:

6.1 Fixed term placement(s)

6.1.1 One idea for the 18+ Programme was that individuals with A-levels (or equivalent) would be employed by KCC on a 1 year fixed term contract during which they would be in one placement where they would be able to do vocational/professional training.

6.1.2 The main advantage to doing a scheme like this is that a number of young people would gain experience, skills and knowledge to set them up to gain permanent employment at KCC or another organisation.

6.1.3 The disadvantages of this approach are:

- The individuals would need to find permanent employment after the placement. This could result in low retention if there are no suitable positions available at KCC. This is a regular issue with the Kent Graduate Programme
- It is likely that the scheme would only be available to a few individuals therefore not making much difference to the number of young people at KCC.
- The majority of qualifications are longer than 1 year therefore it would be difficult for KCC to see a return on their investment

6.1.4 It has been concluded that this model should not be pursued at this current moment in time as it is likely that the retention rates of such a scheme could be low.

6.2 Work-based learning degrees

6.2.1 This option would involve KCC supporting young people through University on a part time course while employed full time by KCC. The University of Kent, University of Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church University all offer part time courses of which work based learning is accredited as part of the qualification. There are a number of courses available which range from 2 to 4 years in length.

6.2.2 The advantages of KCC supporting young people through work-based learning degrees would be:

- More highly qualified employees at KCC;

- This would attract young people who want to continue their education but would prefer to work rather than go to University.

6.2.3 The disadvantages to this option are:

- This would be a long term commitment to only a few young people therefore not making much difference to the number of young people at KCC.
- This option would require a large investment to be made to individuals on the scheme. As well as paying a reasonable salary, KCC would also have to fund the part time qualifications which could be costly.

6.2.4 It is recommended that this option is not pursued due to it requiring large investment in time and money into only a few individuals.

6.3 **Training bursary scheme**

6.3.1 The training bursary scheme would involve young members of staff being given bursaries to get extra training to develop and expand their skills and knowledge. Young members of staff who met a certain criteria (based on existing experience, qualifications and career aspirations) would apply for a bursary to fund specific training to assist them on their career path through KCC. This option is different to the others as it does not involve the creation of new jobs within KCC.

6.3.2 The advantages to this option are:

- The scheme would attract and retain more young people to work for KCC;
- This scheme does not involve the creation of new positions within the organisation;
- The scheme would benefit a large number of existing and new young members of staff.

6.3.3 The disadvantages to this option are:

- It is dependent on recruiting managers within the organisation being willing to employ young people and to demonstrate to them that there are routes within KCC for them to progress their careers.
- Line managers may wish to retain talent within their respective teams therefore an individual may not be fully supported in realising their full potential.

6.4 **Tailor the existing Kent Graduate Programme model**

6.4.1 Set up a programme that broadly follows the structure of the Kent Graduate Programme model which has been running successfully in KCC for 12 years. This would effectively replicate the Kent Graduate Programme providing 5 days per week in a placement with a number of days during the programme dedicated to development activity.

6.4.2 The advantages of using this model would be that:

- The work involved in setting up the scheme would be reduced as it could be delivered through the Graduate Services Team using the existing structure of the Kent Graduate Programme.
- A framework for reference already exists and would require only minor amendments
- More young people would obtain experience and obtain a recognised qualification

6.4.3 The disadvantages of using this model would be that:

- The individuals would need to find permanent employment on completion of the programme. This could result in low retention if there are no suitable positions available at KCC.
- This programme could be seen as 'ageist'

6.4.4 It is recommended that this model is selected for the 18+ Programme with a number of development options being available so candidates are able to tailor the programme to their long-term career aspirations. An outline for this proposal is discussed in section 9.

7. **CASE STUDIES**

7.1 Organisations offering similar programmes include:

Deloitte – Bright Start Programme

http://careers.deloitte.com/united-kingdom/students/country_custom2.aspx?CountryContentID=16912

KPMG

[http://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/SchoolLeavers'Programme/SchoolLeavers'Programme_\(1730\).aspx?pg=1730](http://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/SchoolLeavers'Programme/SchoolLeavers'Programme_(1730).aspx?pg=1730)

Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) – Accelerate School Leaver Programme

<http://www.jobs.rbs.com/accelerate>

Barclays Bank

<http://www.seemore-bemore.co.uk/school-leaver-programme/>

Santander

<http://www.santanderjobs.co.uk/pschoolleaver.asp>

Ernst and Young

<http://www.ey.com/UK/en/Careers/Students/Your-role-here/Students---Schools#fragment-2-na>

PricewaterhouseCoopers

<http://www.pwc.com/uk/en/careers/student/traininglearningdevelopment/training-development.jhtml>

8. **OUTLINE PROPOSAL FOR THE 18+ PROGRAMME**

8.1 The proposal is for an 18+ Programme open to A Level school/college leavers as a means of them gaining skills and knowledge to acquire work experience whilst gaining recognised qualifications. It is recommended that the programme could consist of a two year period of personal development and study consisting of a formal qualification and development activity. It is recommended that the role is offered on a permanent contract.

8.2 It is envisaged that a suite of qualification choices will be available to allow candidates to tailor the programme to their long-term career aspirations. Each candidate on the programme will have a bursary up to the value of £2000.00 and will be required to submit a business case in order to justify their choice of qualification(s) to ensure there is both organisational fit and need.

8.3 Entry Requirements

8.3.1 It is proposed that the entry requirements for the 18+ Programme should be as follows:

- 2 A-levels (Grade A-D or equivalent)
- GCSE English & Maths (Grade C or above) (or equivalent)
- Candidates should also possess a genuine interest in building a career in the public sector

Please see below an equivalency table for details of equivalent qualifications⁵:

Level	Examples of NQF (National Qualifications Framework) qualifications	Examples of QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework) qualifications
3	A levels - GCE in applied subjects - International Baccalaureate - Key Skills level 3	BTEC Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at level 3 - BTEC Nationals - OCR Nationals - NVQs at level 3

8.4 Recommended Grade/Salary Scale

8.4.1 On researching organisations currently offering similar programmes there was limited information available about rates of pay for these types of programmes. However, the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) have published the pay for their Accelerate School Leaver Programme as from £16845.00.

8.4.2 It is recommended that the starting salary for entry onto the programme is KR5 (£16,962). This will be subject to a regular review process with progression through the grade dependent on performance.

8.5 Structure of the 18+ Programme

⁵ http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/DG_10039017

8.5.1 It is envisaged that the programme is a two year development programme to consist of 4 x 6 month placements across KCC. The placements would be decided by a Placement Advisory Board as per the Kent Graduate Programme – Management Stream with a representative from each directorate in attendance. Placements can then be selected dependent upon the individual graduate development need and the needs of the business.

8.6 Line Management

8.6.1 The advertising, recruitment and selection of the trainees entering the stream will be managed by the Graduate Services Manager. Responsibility of line managing the trainees would sit within the Graduate Services Team with Placement Managers being responsible for the day to day line management of the trainees.

8.7 Recruitment and Selection

8.7.1 It is anticipated that KCC recruit three A Level school/college leavers. Subject to review and the continuing assessment of our workforce profile, we will continue to recruit in future years to meet the needs of the organisation.

8.7.2 It is proposed that the recruitment process for the 18+ Programme could mirror that of the Kent Graduate Programme with candidates required to complete the standard KCC application form with additional competency-based questions. Shortlisted candidates could then progress to online literacy and numeracy testing and the 30 highest scoring candidates invited to attend a one day assessment centre facilitated in house by the Learning and Development Team. The top 7-14 candidates would then be invited to attend a competency-based interview.

8.8 Recruitment Timetable

The proposed timetable for 2012 recruitment is detailed below.

Advertising Dates	Advertising w/c Monday 24 th September Closing Date: Friday 19 th October
Shortlisting	w/c Monday 22 nd October – Friday 26 th October
Online Testing (Literacy & Numerical Testing)	Candidates contacted on Monday 29 th October Completion Date & Results received for candidates: Monday 5 th November
Assessment Centre	Wednesday 28 th November (Oakwood House)
Interviews	Wednesday 5 th December, Friday 7 th December
Start Date	Monday 4 th February 2013

8.9 Testing Options

8.9.1 After researching test providers, The Test Factory⁶ have provided a quote for the sum of £12.00 per person for both numerical and literacy testing. Based on 40 candidates this equates to £480.00. A one-off set up fee of £100.00 will also apply. Alternatively, the online testing provision could be supplied by Learning and Development.

8.10 Personal Development

8.10.1 The personal development of trainees should be measured both by their attainment of a professional qualification and by a Development Tracker similar to that currently used by the Kent Graduate Programme.

8.10.2 The following suite of qualifications could be available to allow the programme to be tailored to the career aspirations of the individual. Qualifications can then be selected up to the value of £2000.00 by submitting a business case to the programme manager to ensure organisational fit and needs are considered.

Qualification	Time Commitment	Cost	Provider
CMI Level 3 Diploma in First Line Management	1 Year	Cost: £1725 (split over 2 financial years - £1125 yr 1 and £600 yr 2)	KCC
Prince 2 - Foundation level in Project Management	3 days with the exam on the final day	£750 per delegate	KCC
Certificate in Personnel/Training practice	1 Year	£1045 +CIPD fee	Mid Kent College
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) Level 2 Diploma in Accounting	1 Year	£795.00	Mid Kent College
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) Level 3 Diploma in Accounting	1 Year	£1201.00	Mid Kent College
ITIL v3 Foundation Certificate	1 Year	£549.00	ICS
ECDL Level 2	Approximately 6 months	£395 per delegate	KCC
ECDL Advanced Programme – Level 3	up to 1 year	£750 per delegate	KCC
CIPS Level 3 in Purchasing and Supply	18 months	£999 per delegate	ICS
Certificate for Legal Secretaries Level 2	1 year	£850.00 per delegate	Mid Kent College
Certificate for Legal Secretaries Level 3	1 year	£850.00 per delegate	Mid Kent College

⁶ <http://www.thetestfactory.com/thetestlibrary/numeracyandliteracytests.aspx>

(Prices correct as at 4th April 2012)

8.11 **Positive action**

8.11.1 The Age Discrimination Act contains provisions to enable employers to target specific age groups through positive action provided it can be justified by fulfilling a particular aim or specific circumstance. This would allow KCC to actively target recruitment at young people (but not positively discriminate) due to the low percentage of young people currently working in the organisation.

8.12 **Publicising the programme**

8.12.1 It is important that a scheme like this is publicised to KCC staff and the people of Kent in a consistent and open way so that everyone fully understands what the programme it trying to achieve.

8.12.2 To specifically target the programme at Kent-based school/college leavers with A-levels (or equivalent) it is important that publicity is targeted to this group. This can be achieved through promoting the scheme locally in Kent-based publications, through Kent's schools, via careers events, connexions, careers centres and www.kent.gov.uk and K-Net.

9. **BUDGET REQUIREMENTS**

9.1 Preliminary costings for salary (including on-costs), training and development are:

3 x KR5 Trainees paid at £16962 = £50,886 (£64625.22 including oncosts).

- Recruitment advertising
- Online testing – verbal and numerical
- Assessment Centre - Observer training, meeting rooms, assessment centre facilitation.
- Potential additional resource during recruitment process dependent upon number of applications received.
- Training costs (3 trainees) - £6000.00
- Expenses

The total level of investment required to run the programme on an annual basis is £107,000 per year.

10. **RISKS**

10.1 The risks of running the 18+ Programme would be:

- Young people do not see the public sector as a viable long-term career option due to the cuts in government funding;
- Opposition from members of staff not eligible for the programme;
- The programme could be perceived as 'ageist'.

10.2 These risks would be managed by:

- Piloting the scheme initially for one year so that evidence and examples can be used to demonstrate the value of the programme;
- Producing clear guidelines on the entrance requirements, selection process and possible career paths after the programme.

11. NEXT STEPS

11.1 If this proposal is accepted then the stages for setting up and delivering the programme would be as follows:

- Think of an appropriate name for the programme
- Produce a Project Initiation Document
- Develop a marketing strategy
- Produce clear and concise website content to publicise the programme and open register your interest facility using the existing KGP template
- Modify the 1, 3 and 6 month review forms
- Produce a Mentoring Handbook
- Amend existing 360 Degree Feedback
- Amend existing Development Tracker
- Design and develop the recruitment process and selection criteria for the role
 - Develop a sample application pack
 - Produce a shortlisting form
 - Develop competency-based questions for use in online application process
 - Identify resource requirements to successfully run the programme
- Develop success criteria for the programme

12. SUMMARY

12.1 This paper has explored the options for the 18+ Programme and has set out an outline proposal for the programme to be modelled on the existing Kent Graduate Programme but tailored to suit A Level school/college leavers (or equivalent). The programme will offer a suite of qualification options to allow the programme to be tailored to the individual whilst meeting the long-term needs of the organisation.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Personnel Committee is invited to consider the development of an 18+ Programme as a new route to employment modelled on the existing Kent Graduate Programme but adapted to meet the needs of A Level school/college leavers. The programme should offer a suite of development options to allow the individual to tailor the programme to meet their career aspirations as proposed in section 8.

13.2 That Personnel Committee gives consideration to adopting a directorate sponsorship option where the individuals are placed in frontline roles which directly impact on service delivery on completion of the programme.

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