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To: Personnel Committee **Date:** 8 March 20233

Subject: Apprenticeships and Young People

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report updates Committee on the progress of the Apprenticeship agenda in KCC as well as other elements of the of the KCC Early Careers development programme.

1. Background

1.1 Our People Strategy will shape the future of work at our Council for the next five years. Our approach will create an environment that people want to be part of, continuously improving and delivering for the people of our County. A crucial part of our strategy is to build a workforce that meets current and future skills needs by attracting, developing, and retaining diverse individuals who desire to deliver meaningful work with purpose.

1.2 To achieve the outcomes of our strategy, we must have clear pathways to encourage young people into our organisation. By introducing and strengthening our existing Early Career Programmes, we will mobilise and sustain opportunities for young people aged 16-25 to access careers within the Council.

1.3 KCC has recently concluded a review of the education and training provision for young people aged 16-19 in Kent; the findings from which are detailed in the KCC 'Pathways for All' report. As one of the largest employers in Kent, providing entry routes for young people within the Council is an integral part of our approach and will support the delivery of the report's recommendations. Our approach will help to improve our resident's skill and career aspirations, tackle disadvantages, support NEETs into work and encourage Kent's young people to make the most of opportunities to learn and prepare for their future.

1.4 In addition to standard recruitment, the Council offers two main routes for young people to enter employment.

2. Apprenticeships in KCC

2.1 Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 KCC has utilised this to develop a significant workforce development offer for new and existing staff; enabling career and professional development.

KCC supports colleagues to access all levels of apprenticeship training and since 2017, 1083 individuals have commenced apprenticeship programmes, of these 426 are currently studying, utilising 30 different courses.

2.2 Examples of KCC apprenticeship training

- Level 2: Accounting, Children and Young People's support, Adult care worker, Customer care.
- Level 3: Supporting teaching and learning; Early Years education; Lead adult care worker; Operational delivery; Payroll.
- Level 4: Project manager, Regulatory compliance, Commercial procurement, Business improvement, Data analysis, Accountancy; Children Young People & Families practitioner.
- Level 5: Leadership and management; Care leadership and management; Children Young People & Families manager, HR management
- Levels 6&7: Social work degree, Occupational therapy degree, Project manager; Laboratory scientist, HR management, Finance,

2.3 All apprenticeship training is funded from the KCC apprenticeship levy contributions with salaries being funded by the relevant business unit. The learner is expected to spend 6 hours per week learning new knowledge and skills to support their apprenticeship learning.

2.4 In November 2022 Personnel Committee agreed to a revised pay structure for KCC apprentices from April 2023; this will support attraction, retention and demonstrate KCC's continued commitment to the value of investing in young people.

2.5 Particular successes

Working with CYPE and ASCH in March 2020 a cohort of 24 Social Work Degree Apprentices (the largest cohort in the country) started their journey and are now preparing to graduate in March 2023. The apprentices were all existing staff, and were successful in the selection process that took place. This is a successful intervention to 'grow our own' Social workers and are currently recruiting for a second cohort of 33 existing staff who will commence their studies in March 2023.

Kent Scientific Services offer a carer pathway based on apprenticeship training. Opportunities are offered to A level students who initially study at diploma level and then move onto the full degree programme. The service has benefitted from 'growing their own' scientists who start their post degree work life with valuable workplace experience.

2.6 KCC financial contributions to the apprenticeship levy are calculated 0.5% of our payroll costs which equates to approximately £2.2M per year.

When the levy was introduced the government's funding model was based on the assumption that levy paying employers would only utilise 50% of their levy funds, with the intention being that the unused funding would be re-distributed to the 98% of employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy, to cover the cost of their employee's apprenticeship training.

From 2019 the government began to clawback contributions that had been in the digital account, unused for 24 months and KCC like 82% of other Councils have experienced this clawback. For the period 2019 – 2022 KCC clawback averaged 25% per year equating to only 50% of the government's expectation.

KCC have achieved this through increasing our spend on Apprenticeship training and sharing the levy as detailed below.

2.7 Sharing the Levy

Since the summer of 2018 all levy paying employers have been able to share up to 25% of their levy contributions with other employers to support apprenticeship training. KCC has been sharing levy since 2019. Robust application process is accessible via kent.gov.uk with support provided and applicants must identify how the funding for training will help to deliver KCC's Strategic outcomes by supporting either; -

- Children & young people
- Kent economic growth
- Older & vulnerable residents

2.8 KCC are currently supporting 93 employers / 230 employees to access apprenticeship training with a commitment value of £1.2m. Levels of study and professional areas are varied.

| Professional Area | Number on programme | Apprenticeship Level | Number |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Adult Social Care | 116 | | |
| Accountancy | 3 | | |
| Administration | 7 | L2&L3 | 166 |
| Carpentry and Joinery | 1 | L4 | 29 |
| Customer care | 7 | L5 | 24 |
| Construction | 1 | L6 | 5 |
| CYPF | 23 | L7 | 6 |
| Early years and Education | 40 | Total | 230 |
| Hospitality Team Member | 1 | | |
| IT | 2 | | |
| Junior Content Producer | 2 | | |
| Digital Marketing | 1 | | |
| Nursing | 6 | | |
| Plumbing and Heating | 1 | | |
| Science | 3 | | |
| Senior Leadership/Management | 11 | | |
| Sport/Health | 5 | | |
| Total | 230 | | |

Additionally, there are a further 16 employers / 35 employees to access apprenticeship training with a commitment value of £167k. Levels of study and professional areas are varied.

| Professional area | Number in pipeline | Apprenticeship Level | Number |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Adult social care | 10 | L1 | 1 |
| Administration | 0 | L2&L3 | 27 |
| Business Analyst | 0 | L4 | 5 |
| Customer care | 0 | L5 | 2 |
| Early years and education | 14 | L6 | 0 |
| Footwear Manufacturer | 0 | L7 | 0 |
| Management/Senior leadership | 0 | Total | 35 |
| Senior Culinary Chef | 1 | | |
| Production Chef | 2 | | |
| Outdoor Activity Instructor | 1 | | |
| Hospitality Team Member | 4 | | |
| Healthcare assistant Practitioner | 2 | | |
| TBC | 1 | | |
| Total | 35 | | |

3. Kent Graduate programme

3.1 In 2019 the KCC Kent Graduate programme was redesigned in order to; -

- Improve alignment to workforce development strategies.
- Establish better links with other entry points for young people.
- Change the generalist nature of the programme and transition into a 'profession-based' scheme with pre-defined pathways embedding Apprenticeship standards.
- Offer a programme of activities to support wider networking and personal development.

The KCC offer is unique in the marketplace as it offers the opportunity to develop professional learning pathways and offers a genuine role whilst training. Successful completion of the programme leads to a permanent role in the relevant professional area.

3.2 Since 2019, 6 cohorts / 31 graduates have been recruited and cohort 7 will start their programme in April 2023.

Professional streams have been established such as -

- Accountancy
- Commercial & Procurement
- Project management
- Business change
- Regulatory compliance
- Data analysis
- Software development

3.3 In recognition of the talent that these high calibre graduates bring to the organisation all have been allocated to high profile /high impact work within their business area such as;-

- Development of an App to support KCC's 'support for Homes for Ukraine' project enabling a streamlined application and support process saving time and money.
- Redesign of a suite of reporting resulting in higher levels of access leading to fact-based decision making
- Work on responsible investment (Carbon Footprint Analysis) for KCC's Pension Fund
- Automation Projects on business-critical processes/workflows improving efficiency and generating cost saving.
- Supporting our Major Capital Programme to deliver improved Highways Infrastructure in Kent
- Developing new policies to strengthen the Council's IT disaster recovery response.

3.4 KCC is recognised as the **top** Charitable, Education and Public Sector organisation in the Top 100 employers for graduates to work for (The Job Crowd) and Number 26 in the Top Graduate Employers generally.

Pre- Employment Opportunities

The KCC pre-employment offer supports the following recommendations in the **Pathways for All** report; -

- Improving outcomes for young people in terms of attainment, progression, destination and life skills.
- Improve provision available below level 2 which enables successful completers into further learning or employment

The various opportunities detailed below enable young people to experience local government. They provide a chance to learn about a job or an area of work and gain valuable insights into employability skills.

Some of the benefits offered by these programmes are; -

- Gain up to a level 2 qualification,
- Achieve functional skills in Maths and English at Level 2
- Improve life skills
- Prepare for work
- Identify a pathway to work or further learning

4. KCC Kickstart Programme

4.1 The Kickstart Scheme was introduced in September 2020 and closed to new entrants in March 2022, following an extension.

The scheme was aimed at 16 – 24-year-olds who were on Universal Credit and deemed at risk of long-term unemployment.

Employers were required to create high quality 6-month paid work placements for 25 hours a week. The placements were to support the participant to develop the skills and experience they needed to find employment following completion of the scheme.

4.2 KCC commissioned Runway training to deliver wraparound support and a development programme for our Kickstarters which focussed on areas such as; -

- Employability skills
- Personal effectiveness
- Time management
- Team working
- Communication skills

4.4 KCC had great success with the scheme and offered a total of 42 placements within KCC and 80 placements within Schools, supported by the Reconnect programme.

A range of entry level roles were created across all directorates, most of which were providing project support, due to the time limited nature of the scheme. However, 2 Trainee Ranger roles were created in Country Parks, one of which has become a permanent role.

4.5 KCC worked closely with DWP, engaging with 8 jobcentres across Kent & Medway and we were recognised for the high quality of our programme by the DWP in their Kent Employer awards 2022 category 'Kickstart – over and above'

4.6 The final Kickstarters finished their placements in September 2022 and 86% of those who undertook placements in KCC have moved to employment with us, other employers or returned to education.

5. Student Placements/ Internships

These opportunities are for students who need to complete a placement as part of their undergraduate degree or graduates who wish to gain experience prior to further study. The placement will enable the student to learn about our organisation and get exposure to the challenges of professional services, working with service users and benefiting from on-the-job learning and development opportunities.

Student placements and internships are offered in several services across the Council; there are three specific examples below; -

5.1 Social work

KCC work in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent to facilitate student placements for Social Work Degrees (MA and BA). This includes the 70-day placement which is the first placement students complete and the 100-day placement which is their final placement.

In addition, we support the two-day readiness for practice programme which students complete in the first year of their degree.

Once these students have graduated, they become our Pipeline for Newly qualified social workers.

5.2 Public Health

Public Health is active in supporting undergraduate and post-graduate work placements. Work-based placements are essential in clinical studies to allow trainees to apply knowledge to practice. Members of our Public Health Consultants are qualified educational supervisors; therefore, they oversee GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists, and PH trainees. Trainees are assigned specific projects whilst on placement (which can be from one month up to a year), such as researching and reviewing alcohol and drug plans, undertaking projects linked to our suicide prevention strategy and contributing to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

5.3 Highways

Sandwich year and shorter-term placements are offered in Highways and Transportation to Civil Engineering students either during their undergraduate programme or prior to commencing masters level study. This activity is undertaken to attract these students to one of our hard to recruit / retain professions.

The following pre-employment offers are currently in the pilot stage.

6. T Levels – Industry Placements

6.1 T Level have been introduced as part of the government's level 3 provision review; they are an alternative to A levels and apprenticeships for 16–19-year-olds. They are two-year programmes, equivalent to 3 A levels, which focus on vocational skills. T Level students spend 80% of their course at college, gaining skills employers need. The other 20% is a meaningful industry placement of at least 45 days, usually during their second year, where they implement these skills in the

workplace. They have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses, so a T Level's content meets the industry's needs.

6.2 KCC are currently working in partnership with Midkent College and have supported industry placements for the Science T Level within Kent Scientific Services. As a result of the success of these placements we intend to host another 2 science T-level students in September 2023.

6.3 Further engagement is underway with MidKent college and other Further Education establishments to explore the possibility of offering industry placements to support Digital, Childcare, Health & Social care, Business Administration, Legal and Finance T levels. Once we are clear as to the feasibility of these we will identify and work with Managers to mobilise these opportunities.

7. Traineeships

7.1 A traineeship is a skills development programme that includes a work placement for young people aged 16 – 24. It can last from six weeks to one year, though most traineeships last for less than six months. Traineeships deliver qualifications in English, maths, digital skills, and work-related qualifications that will enable the young person to access an apprenticeship, employment, or further education. Traineeship work experience must offer at least 70 hours of meaningful and high-quality work experience.

7.2 KCC are working in partnership with Kent Training & Apprenticeships (KT&A) to pilot our first a Business Administration Traineeship in ASCH (KEAH). The trainee is working towards a City and Guilds Level 2 Business Administration qualification which should enable progression to a Level 3 Apprenticeship.

7.3 KCC are currently offering 2 additional Traineeship opportunities in partnership with KT&A

8. Areas in development

Supported Internships

8.1 A supported internship is a structured, work-based study programme for 16 to 24-year-olds with special educational needs (SEND) who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and want to move into employment and need support.

The core aim of a supported internship study programme is a substantial work placement facilitated by the help of an expert job coach. These internships ordinarily last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.

8.2 KCC is forming a partnership with Kent Training & Apprenticeships (KT&A) and Kent Supported Employment (KSE) to create a tailored KCC Supported Internship programme. This will support SEND students into a variety of roles that are specific to the needs of the Council and the individual, raising aspirations and embedding supported employment.

8.3 Manager engagement will take place late spring / early summer to enable our first interns to join KCC in September 2023

8.4 The intention, where possible, would be for these individuals to transition to an apprenticeship either with KCC or elsewhere with ongoing support provided by KSE.

9. Work Experience

9.1 Work experience provides an opportunity for young people to spend time in the workplace learning first-hand about the working environment. It offers real benefits for both individuals and organisations; enabling informed decisions to be made regarding 16+ options and when considered as part of workforce planning activity it can help to identify new talent and create a pipeline.

9.2 KCC offers face to face work experience opportunities in those business areas whose working arrangements can support this. An expression of interest form is available on Kent.Gov.uk for applicants to complete from which a matching exercise will follow. This process is open throughout the year and not restricted to a particular period.

9.3 This approach will be enhanced to reflect better the challenges for young people starting their working lives with changes arising from hybrid working arrangements through the development of a virtual / online programme which when coupled with on-the-job experience will form a blended work experience offer.

10. Conclusion

10.1 Whilst the KCC Apprenticeship and Graduate programmes are established, other offerings are either being piloted or in development. We are committed to ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all, creating pathways into work either with us or other employers.

11. Recommendation

11.1 Personnel Committee is invited to note the contents of the report and endorse the further development of the KCC Early Careers Programme.

12. Contact details

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