

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:**                   **THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2013**

**REPORT BY:**           **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

**SUBJECT:**               **APPRENTICESHIPS, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**1.00   PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01   To update the Lifelong Learning and Overview and Scrutiny Committee with progress in relation to creation of Apprenticeships and Training Opportunities.

**2.00   BACKGROUND**

2.01   The County Council and Local Service Board (LSB) partners have set the creation of additional apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities as a priority area for development work. This is because we need to:

- extend and improve the education, employment and training opportunities available for young people;
- improve the employment and life prospects of local people;
- meet the skills needs of local employers;
- help young people to successfully transition from education to employment; and
- place and retain more young people in work.

The commissioned work is organised around three themes. They are:

- protecting and promoting the well-being of our employees, volunteers & the community;
- supporting lifelong learning and employability of our employees and volunteers; and
- improving the education, training & employment prospects for young people up to 25 years of age.

In 2013/14, the County Council and partners are committed to:

- working with the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience opportunities;
- launching the Employer's Promise in the public sector to promote and enhancing our roles as employers.
- setting a marketing strategy to communicate the range of apprenticeship and training programmes available;

- identifying apprenticeship opportunities to meet local employer skills needs, alternative programmes and investment in training;
- supporting the development of the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network;
- continuing to develop and increase the number and range of Communities First Job Club programmes; and
- implementing skills development programmes in partnership with local employers.

Achievement will be measured through:

- reducing the percentage of 16 to 24 year olds claiming job seekers allowance;
- continuing to secure high levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training;
- improving the local skills base to improve employability and earning prospects;
- increasing the number of people who successfully establish and grow businesses;
- increasing the number of apprenticeships in the public and voluntary sector; and
- increasing the number of new work experience and apprenticeship opportunities

Risks to manage include:

- ensuring that employer places match current and future aspirations and needs;
- ensuring capacity to support paid work placements and other programmes;
- ensuring capacity to support paid work placements and other programmes;
- strengthening the links between Schools, Colleges and employers;
- ensuring that education providers participate fully; and
- ensuring that there are resilient arrangements to promote successful outcomes following apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities (including planning ahead with participants).

Key definitions include:

- *Employers' Promise* – employers committed to working together to create additional training, apprenticeships and work opportunities
- *Communities First Job Club programmes* – work to support adults into employment
- *Young Entrepreneur Programme* – an opportunity for young people to work with mentors on their business ideas
- *Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network* – employers working together to support Entrepreneurship Programmes.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **3.01 Summary of main progress/achievements to date**

##### **Launch the Employer's Promise in the public sector to promote and enhance our roles as employers**

- The Employer's Promise has been developed (see Appendix 1) and has been agreed by the LSB. A formal launch of the Employer's Promise is due to take place shortly.
- Most delivery work to date has been focused around the third sub priority:- Improve the education, training and employment prospects for young people up to 25 years of age (see key issues below).
- At its last meeting the Local Service Board commissioned HR representatives from each partner agency to develop a broader joint work programme encompassing joint work on workforce planning and organisational change.

##### **Work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience opportunities**

- The Apprenticeships, Entrepreneurships and Work Experience (AEWE) Project Board has gathered data to help inform and develop a baseline of information for 2011, 2012 and 2013 around the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience placements within each partner organisation.
- Further LSB partners have been invited to join the AEWE Project Board and contribute to the project.
- Communities First, working in partnership with Business Supporting Communities and Groundwork are looking to take forward the Jobs Growth Wales and Young Recruits Programmes with employers who have been identified to support young people on work placement. Opportunities to link the Jobs Growth Wales & Young Recruits Programme with potential businesses on Deeside Industrial Park are currently being explored.
- Planning is now advanced for the launch of a construction industry led apprenticeship scheme to create at least 50 additional apprenticeships per year, with national sector led funding and tied to the community benefits commitments of the new North Wales Capital Procurement Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools.

##### **Set a marketing strategy to communicate the range of apprenticeship and training programmes available**

- It is recognised amongst young people and practitioners that there is confusion over the range of vocational learning opportunities and funding streams. In some cases, this is leading to inappropriate advice or missed opportunities.
- The AEWE Project Board has reviewed various marketing and

communication models available that will help to promote the work of the AEWE and communicate the range of apprenticeships and training programmes available to young people.

- A website based on the “Inform Swansea” Model is to be developed.
- Opportunity for a graduate placement are being explored to develop the website addressing the current confusion and complexity over the range of funding streams and programmes available to young people.

### **Identify the skills gaps for an increased number of apprenticeship and alternative programmes and investment in training**

- Apprenticeship numbers continue to increase. Flintshire County Council had a record intake of apprenticeships last year and recruited 32 apprenticeships over 8 different disciplines. A target of 25 apprenticeships was set for this year. The Council has already exceeded this target and matched last year’s intake.
- We have also increased the number of apprenticeship disciplines from 8 to 12 to help meet specific skills needs.
- FCC was one of the three finalists (alongside BT and Airbus) for a Welsh Government Award for Apprenticeships – Macro Apprentice Employer of the Year Award. Flintshire County Council was the only public sector finalist for this award.
- Communities First are working in partnership with “Reaching Higher, Reaching Wider” to look at funding for future STEM (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics) events.
- Work has been undertaken with the Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ) to engage businesses to work closely with schools around the STEM subjects including workshops to identify business needs and those of young people.
- DEZ is also exploring the potential for a similar development to the North Wales Construction Industry Scheme to make Apprenticeships more accessible to small and medium size employers.
- A Skills gap survey was completed in May 2013; analysis of the information will inform future planning.

### **Support the development of the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network**

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Business Entrepreneur Network’s (BEN) Dragon’s Den Event in North East Communities First Cluster took place in September 2013.
- An Enterprise Club has been established and meets every two weeks. A second Club was opened in June 2013 following the success of the first Enterprise Club and identification of unmet need.

- Welsh Government is very supportive of the BEN and often brings speakers to the meetings. A variety of themed workshops are planned including; Mentoring, Researching the Market Place, Business Planning, Business Accounting, Self Development, Negotiating, Up & Running, Psychology of Selling, Small Claims, Presentation Skills, Entrepreneurial Skills, Social Media, Idea Generation, Problem Solving and Elevator Pitch.

### **Continue to develop and increase the number and range of Communities First Job Club programmes**

- Communities First are working with three local employers who all have low level skill vacancies. An Employability Club has started in August 2013 aimed at supporting young people 16-24 back into employment with a focus on retail.
- There are currently two Jobs clubs (John Summers Campus and Connah's Quay Library) in operation, running on a weekly basis and are well attended. A third Jobs Club located in Sealand is due to be launched this month.
- An education programme has also been developed and employability workshops run alongside the Job clubs.
- A Jobs and Careers Fair took place on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at Deeside Leisure Centre.

### **Implement skills development programmes in partnership with local employers**

- Phase 1 of the North Wales Advanced Manufacturing Skills and Technology Centre (NWAMSTC) feasibility study has been completed to develop a skills pipeline in partnership with Welsh Government, HE, FE and private industry.
- Phase 2 NWAMSTC feasibility study to be completed. This is dependent on release funds from Welsh Government.

## **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 The next key "milestone" steps include:

- resolving the project management capacity issues – November 2013;
- continuing to form the baseline of information with further LSB partner input – November 2013;
- formal launch of the Employers Promise November 2013;
- develop website to communicate and promote opportunities – November 2013 to March 2014;
- launch third Jobs Club – October 2013;
- launch construction agency scheme – November 2013.

Scrutiny is invited to commission a further progress report in six months time.

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 There are no new financial implications arising from this report.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 There are no environmental impact implications arising directly from this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 There are no equalities impact implications arising directly from this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 The Employee Promise sets out reasonable expectations for progressive and positive employer practice.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None at this stage.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Stakeholder consultation (including with Employer and Provider representatives has been undertaken in developing priority plans).

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 - Employer Promise

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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