

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 16 February 2016
Report Subject	Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Report Author	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide a progress report on the creation of an apprentice academy and seek approval to enter into a service level agreement with Future works, who will employ the apprentices and manage the scheme in partnership with the council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet is asked to agree that the Council enters into a service level agreement with Future works, a community interest company, who will employ and provide apprentices in Flintshire, branded as Future Works Flintshire, for an initial period of five years commencing in March 2016.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS TRAINING ACADEMY
1.01	<p><u>Background</u> In October 2015, Cabinet approved the creation of an Apprentice academy to maximise the creation of skilled local jobs, arising (initially) out of the Council's major housing construction and refurbishment programmes over the next five years.</p>
1.02	<p>Council construction contracts always place a requirement on the contractor to provide apprentice opportunities and to recruit local labour, however contract lengths and the scope of works contractors are commissioned to provide can make completion of a full apprenticeship challenging.</p>
1.03	<p>The Council has agreed that it wants to ensure that employment opportunities and community benefits are maximised and that commitments to offer full apprenticeships can be made and delivered.</p>
1.04	<p>The Council plans to spend circa £150m on housing construction over the next 5 years and this creates the opportunity for some 50 completed apprenticeships to level 2 (with a number of these achieving level 3 and beyond). The type of job roles needed include plumbing, joinery, plastering, gas and electrical, bricklayers; but also Tenant Liaison Officers, Clerk of Works, Quantity Surveyor. In addition there could be opportunities to tie in with Building schools for the Future programme and the Councils own commissioned capital programmes.</p>
1.05	<p>The Council has an ageing Trades team workforce and needs to plan for succession in the next few years. In addition, maintenance of the WHQS standard after 2020 will provide for an ongoing significant investment programme annually and as additional borrowing capacity is released in the HRA for further new build then the need for skilled trades people locally will continue.</p>
1.06	<p>The Council also wishes to see a good programme in place to offer new and additional work placement opportunities for those furthest away from the work place such as NEET and those with learning disability or mental health challenges. Work placements and evidence of successful completion could lead to further work opportunities and apprenticeships for some.</p>
1.07	<p>Work has been underway since formal approval to set up a scheme in October, to review the options to take forward the establishment of "an academy" and this report identifies the options available with recommendations as to the preferred way forward.</p>
1.08	<p>Appendix 1 provides a summary of four options to take this scheme forward and the recommended route is to work with Future Works.</p>
1.09	<p>Future Works has the relevant experience, the right culture and values to be a close partner to the Council and working with a third party reduces significantly the cost of scheme administration for the council and any</p>

	employment risks sit outside the Council.
1.10	Future Works has committed to having a Flintshire base and will establish a legal entity Future works (Wales). The scheme placement officer will be employed by Flintshire council but seconded to work on the Future Works Flintshire programme.
1.11	A common set of values and leadership style which reflects Flintshire's is important for this scheme to be successful, and Future Works fits this neatly. A SLA has been developed and is being modelled on one initially developed and agreed by Scarborough Council. (Future Works initial contracts were in Yorkshire). There will be no financial transactions as part of the SLA between the council and Future Works.
1.12	Future Works will employ the apprentices and will in turn charge the construction companies for the apprentices placed with them. Future Works will have contracts in place with the construction companies appointed by the council. Future Works will ensure that apprentices are provided in the numbers needed at any one time, will work jointly with Flintshire staff to recruit apprentices. They will also work closely with Coleg Cambria (and any other FE providers) to ensure that students are working successfully through their training qualifications.
1.13	<p>A project board has been established to provide governance for the programme. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration is a member of the board, along with a range of staff from across the council with the relevant skills to support scheme set up and ongoing leadership/over sight.</p> <p>A smaller officer project team is working closely with Future Works on set up.</p>
1.14	<p><u>Current position</u></p> <p>Recruitment has taken place for the first cohort of apprentices and local labour. Wates are due to start their first scheme and be on site by the end of February. There has been a good level of interest in the apprentices on offer and Coleg Cambria are comfortable to switch any successful full time students to part time.</p>
1.15	An Apprentice Fayre is being held on 16 th March as part of National Apprentice week. Flintshire Secondary schools have committed to send young people to the event. Key note speakers including apprentices have been arranged and businesses will take stands to promote their own schemes and employment opportunities alongside opportunities for young people to "Try a Trade", get advice on CV's etc.
1.16	The Council is also exploring opportunities to establish a "skills centre" as part of the significant construction contracts being delivered across the Council. This could be developed as a partnership between the council, contractors, Coleg Cambria and Future Works and could provide an opportunity to offer work placements to those some way from education or being "work ready", such as NEET and those with learning disabilities and mental health challenges. Trainees would gain work experience on site, which could lead to opportunities to enter apprenticeships or other work opportunities.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Cabinet has already agreed that a Project Manager would be appointed for the programme. Further analysis has identified that a preferred role would be for a “Placement Co-ordinator”. This would be at a salary which is lower than a project Manager leaving sufficient budget to also appoint an apprentice to support delivery and management of the scheme.
2.02	Communities First may also be able to support the costs of the placement co-ordinator providing a more effective use of resources.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Trade Unions are supportive of the scheme and plans to implement it.

4.00	<u>RISK MANAGEMENT</u>
4.01	This scheme presents an exciting opportunity for the Council. There are a number of risks but these can all be managed to an acceptable level.
4.02	There would be a cost to the Council in being a direct employer of the apprentices both a direct cost and Corporate support costs. This can be mitigated by employment contracts being with a third party, which is the recommendation in this report.
4.03	The second area of risk is that there is insufficient interest from local people to take up the significant number of apprentices on offer. This is being addressed in a number of ways, including briefing sessions at local colleges with those who are already on construction training programmes advising them of forthcoming opportunities. Additionally holding an apprenticeship fayre to raise awareness of apprenticeships. There has been discussions at Secondary Heads Federation who have agreed to support and encourage attendance.
4.04	Contractors and delivery partners are also going to be working with the Council’s education service to put on events at Flintshire schools to help raise aspirations and promote the benefits of apprenticeships. These will run throughout the year.
4.05	A third area of risk could be insufficient jobs for qualified trades staff at the end of their apprenticeship. This should not materialise due to ongoing new build programmes, WHQS investment schemes and a need to replace those due to retire in the council’s trades team.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Summary of and analysis of options.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Clare Budden, Chief Officer, Community & Enterprise Telephone: 01352 703800 E-mail: clare.budden@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>WHQS – Welsh Housing Quality Standard</p> <p>NEET – Not in employment, education, or training</p> <p>HRA – Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>SLA – Service Level Agreement</p>