

Report of:	Director of Culture and Communities - Adam Allen, Executive Member for Culture & Communities – Cllr Mick Thompson
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AGENDA ITEM 6

Submitted to:	Executive – 2 October 2018
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Subject:	Opportunity Middlesbrough Strategy
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Summary**Proposed decision(s)**

That Executive approves the Opportunity Middlesbrough strategy to strengthen the Council's commitment to staff training and volunteering by delivering high quality career and voluntary pathways.

That executive approves the change in apprenticeship terms and conditions to NJC.

That executive approves the increase in apprenticeship pay to the national under 18 rate of £4.20 an hour.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
Decision / discussion / information	Yes	No	Non Urgent

Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan

Business Imperatives	Physical Regeneration	Social Regeneration
Looking at new ways of delivering our services. We will have one approach for anyone that wants to be involved with Middlesbrough council be it employment, work experience or volunteers.	The strategy creates opportunities so that people will have a greater satisfaction of the place they live and work in.	This strategy will improve the opportunities for local people to access work/ volunteering experience and employment.

Ward(s) affected

All wards are affected as the opportunities are for the people of Middlesbrough and can be

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

located in any ward where the council is working.

What is the purpose of this report?

To improve how the Council delivers work experience, apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities. This will be achieved by introducing a clear commitment to trainees and volunteers through new charters and by changes to apprenticeship terms and conditions.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

This report and associated strategy is suggesting a change in the way the council works with volunteers, work placements and apprenticeships. The report is also suggesting a change to the terms and conditions of all apprentices employed within the council.

The suggested changes have a small budgetary and structural impact which will be absorbed within existing budgets and resources.

Report Background

The council has always shown a strong commitment to apprenticeships, providing high quality training and experience. The Council has always shown that it values volunteers that work with us helping the community and the Council continue to deliver work experience opportunities. This Opportunity Middlesbrough strategy is a step change in how we deliver these opportunities. The strategy improves the terms and conditions of apprentices, it commits to providing a set number of high quality work experience opportunities and it establishes a charter for volunteers and increased support.

The strategy also recognises the Council's social responsibility by actively targeting those that maybe disadvantaged in the jobs market and providing additional support such as mentoring and a guaranteed reference to help them gain employment.

A key driver for the development of the Opportunity Middlesbrough strategy is the need to recruit a constant stream of high quality volunteers and apprentices to support the councils work. The second driver is the social need to support and develop high quality work placements in order to improve the employment chances for school leavers and unemployed adults. The recruitment of work experience candidates is closely aligned to the need for good apprentices as these are the apprentices of the future.

Currently the three functions of Volunteers, work experience and apprenticeships are separate entities within the council's structure. This strategy brings them all together so that individual applicants can be managed and supported more effectively so we can better meet theirs and the Council's needs. The strategy has a vision of one entry point or portal into the council for all prospective volunteers, work experience or apprenticeships. Opportunity Middlesbrough is suggesting a clear charter for the management of volunteers and work experience candidates. This work will open up these experiences to all aspects of the community including adults, long term unemployed and children in care. Finally the strategy will ensure that apprentices within Middlesbrough council are seen as a good career opportunity for anyone by improving conditions and pay.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

- 1) That Executive approves the Opportunity Middlesbrough strategy as a means to develop high quality career and voluntary pathways
- 2) That executive approves the change in apprenticeship terms and conditions to NJC
- 3) That executive approves the increase in apprenticeship pay to the national under 18 rate of £4.20 an hour

Why is this being recommended?

Middlesbrough council are in competition for the number of young and talented people it needs to recruit in order to meet its objectives. Good apprentices are hard to recruit and it takes time visiting schools and promoting these positions. This strategy proposes a focus on providing high quality work experience placements to help feed the talent pipeline. The council is approached by schools, FE institutions and the general public on a regular basis to provide work experience placements. Traditionally a small number of these requests have been met with placements that vary greatly in the value to the participant. This strategy is proposing that we identify and promote high quality work placements that people can apply for and meet our Social responsibility by increasing the number of Work Experience opportunities and Apprenticeships for those that find it difficult to gain employment. All placements will have an agreed role description and provide a varied experience of working in the local authority. For the people that attend these placements we will provide a reference to be used for employment applications.

Every participant under this 'Opportunity Middlesbrough' Strategy will be assigned a work mentor to support them.

Volunteering is a key component of the structure we need to support the communities we serve. The value that volunteers bring to the community is beyond monetary calculations with their experience and enthusiasm. The social value to an individual becoming a volunteer is high with the volunteer feeling part of something.

All volunteers should be supported with a mentor and the training needed for their role. This strategy has the ability to centralise the application and support process for all apprentices, work experience and volunteers so that we can more effectively monitor and support these people.

Currently Apprentices are directly managed by the community learning team. Volunteers are managed through both Community Learning and Community Infrastructure. Work experience has no lead department. The Strategy is recommending that Community Learning manage this process for the council so that the application and support of every applicant is standardised based on the charters within the document. The teams and resource needed to deliver this strategy exist in similar functions within Community Learning.

A number of council departments and LMT have been involved in the ongoing development of this strategy.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

It was considered that we could leave apprenticeship terms, conditions and pay as it currently stands.

Redcar and the northern authorities have increased what they pay apprentices. The business development team are reporting that young people are very focussed on the pay and rewards whilst employed. For the council to be on an equal footing when recruiting young people, we need a good offer with good terms and conditions.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

The council has a public sector recruitment target for apprentices that have to be annually reported back to the Department for Education. The target is based on overall headcount and is approximately 110 apprentice starts every year. Apprentices are legally entitled to the national under 18 wage of £3.70 per hour.

Financial

The financial implications of this strategy are focussed on the change in terms and conditions of the apprenticeship population. This has an impact on sickness absence maternity pay and their hourly rate. The strategy is suggesting that apprentices are treated and managed the same as permanent council staff. Only two apprentices in the last two years have left work for maternity reasons. The suggested difference in pay is from £3.70 to £4.20 for a first year apprentice. This is an additional cost of £975 per apprentice per year. Based on the current number of first year apprentices this would be a global increase of £31,200 which will be absorbed by individual services that are employing the apprentices.

Policy Framework

Paragraph 5 of the pay policy statement will need amending if the decision on apprenticeship pay is approved. "Apprenticeships have been excluded as the salaries attributable to apprenticeships are in line with those set out within National Minimum Wage legislation".

Equality and Diversity

The aim of Opportunity Middlesbrough is that any person from any background can be involved in the work of the council. The actions within this strategy are about including marginalised groups rather than excluding them.

Risk

The main risks are:

- That the council is unable to meet its future talent pipeline requirements.
- The council is unable to meet the Public sector recruitment target.

The penalties for failing to meet the public sector target for recruiting apprentices is as yet unclear other than being published as an underperforming authority.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

The attached Opportunity Middlesbrough Strategy includes a developing action plan to drive these changes forward.

Appendices

Appendix A Opportunity Middlesbrough Strategy

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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