

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

**FINAL REPORT OF THE
AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL –
APPRENTICESHIPS**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the final report of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel following its investigation into apprenticeship programmes.

AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

2. Middlesbrough Council, like all public sector organisations, has a duty to ensure the effective delivery of apprenticeship programmes. The timely announcement made by the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2017 (shortly after the commencement of the Panel's review) solidifies this, where it was indicated that, as part of the Enterprise Act 2016, the public sector would be set the target of a further 200,000 apprentices to be recruited by 2020 (Local Gov, 2017).

As part of its investigation, the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel sought to:

- a) Ascertain the Council's current position and work being undertaken in respect of apprenticeship programmes;
- b) Identify the systems, processes and procedures presently in place to support apprenticeship programmes; and
- c) Evaluate the success of a positive outcome being achieved for all stakeholders involved in apprenticeship programmes (i.e. apprentices, the Local Authority and its wider public and private sector partners).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

3. The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Panel's investigation were as follows:
 - a) To investigate the processes of how apprentices are recruited and retained by the Council.
 - b) To examine the number of apprentices employed within the Council and the service areas and costs involved.
 - c) To consider how the different apprenticeship programmes are managed and objectives achieved.

- d) To examine how the Council's apprenticeship programmes link in with wider organisations and businesses across Teesside.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Defining 'Apprenticeships' and 'Apprentices'

London Councils and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) (2017) offer the following definitions:

"An apprenticeship is a nationally recognised training programme combining work with learning and training, both on and off the job. They combine the development of theoretical knowledge regarding a particular occupation or range of occupations with practical experience gained from doing the job."

"An apprentice is an individual who undertakes a formalised and accredited training programme, in a work based environment...The individual can be a new or existing employee and will meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Over 16 years of age;
- Lives in England;
- Is not in full time education;
- Must have a contract of employment; and
- Be paid a salary."

SETTING THE SCENE

5. In order to ascertain the Local Authority's current position regarding apprenticeship programmes, the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel held meetings on 16 January 2017 and 13 February 2017.
6. Supplementary information received from Acklam Grange School, which was obtained after the 13 February 2017 meeting in response to a series of questions that were forwarded to the school, has also been referred to in this report.
7. The Panel was provided with information/evidence from the following representatives:
- C Kemp – Community Learning Service Manager, Middlesbrough Council;
 - R McGurrell – HR Manager – Acklam Grange School; and
 - A White – Apprentice and Work Skills Co-ordinator, Middlesbrough Council.

The Panel also received information/evidence from three current apprentices, referred to as Apprentice A, Apprentice B and Apprentice C within the report/minutes shown at Appendix 3.

8. The information conveyed to the Panel has been considered in reflection of the agreed terms of reference for the investigation, presented as follows:

TERM OF REFERENCE A: TO INVESTIGATE THE PROCESSES OF HOW APPRENTICES ARE RECRUITED AND RETAINED BY THE COUNCIL

9. At the 16 January 2017 meeting, the Panel was appraised of the various methods employed in recruiting apprentices. The Panel notes that the Middlesbrough

Community Learning Service (MCL) is responsible for the delivery of Government-funded apprenticeships for Middlesbrough Council.

10. The Panel understands that the services of external recruitment agencies are not utilised during the recruitment of apprentices. Rather, the Council advertises its apprenticeship vacancies via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the North East Jobs websites, the latter of which provides a link for applicants to make an application via the former.
11. In addition to advertisements, the Panel recognises that referrals often provide a route in for potential apprenticeship candidates. At the 13 February 2017 meeting, for example, evidence received from three current apprentices indicated that referrals from family, friends and the Department for Work and Pensions proved paramount to their applications. Although this is positive in that referrals are being successfully utilised, the Panel had expressed some concern that these three referrals were made from outside of the secondary education system. In light of this, the Panel requested that further contact be made with Acklam Grange School in order to further understand the engagement activities that secondary schools were having in promoting apprenticeship programmes to their students.
12. The Panel understands that employees of MCL undertake annual visits to schools in the Teesside area, generally in respect of Year Groups 9 and 10, in order to provide assistance to students in the provision of CV or interview technique advice. This is undertaken in response to requests from school staff. The Panel supports this work, particularly as the more presence and interaction that is achieved with young people, the more opportunity there is for information about the Council's apprenticeship programmes to be conveyed.
13. The Panel was advised that MCL staff both organise and participate in regular recruitment days and events, for example: a fortnightly recruitment day is held at the Multi-Media Exchange in Middlesbrough. It is at events such as these that potential candidates can be assessed of their readiness for undertaking an apprenticeship.
14. In terms of assistance being offered to unsuccessful apprenticeship applicants, this can include such activity as providing guidance around CV preparation and interview techniques. The Panel heard that there is a high level of uptake for this support, and recognises that this activity does support these individuals well, as it may also encourage them to consider wider training/employment options that they would not necessarily have considered previously. Alternative training and other initiatives are also available to individuals who are unsuccessful in obtaining a place on an apprenticeship programme. Reference was made to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), for those aged 15-29, which involves substantial mentoring activity in supporting young people, particularly in terms of developing their interview skills and preparing them for vocational work. The initiative has received a large take-up, with 230 individuals currently enrolled.
15. The Panel was informed that the standard timescale for completing Level 2 programmes is twelve months, and for Level 3 programmes, eighteen months. The term 'retention' is multifaceted: one aspect relates to retaining apprentices for the duration of their programme, and another to the retaining of apprentices within the Local Authority once programmes have been completed.
16. The Panel was provided with information regarding the retention of apprentices within the Council. For 2015/2016, the retention figure was 92%; these statistics are regularly monitored. An eight-week grace period is applicable to all new apprentices;

if an individual leaves their placement during this time, this would not impact upon the Local Authority's retention statistics. In 2015/2016, 9% of apprentices left their programmes due to personal extenuating circumstances. At the 13 February 2017 meeting, the Panel heard that, with regards to apprentices employed at Acklam Grange School, only one had left mid-way through their programme, feeling it to be unsuitable for them.

17. Regarding employment opportunities being made available to apprentices upon completion of their programmes, the Panel understands that neither promises nor guarantees can be given to any apprentice in this regard, unless an employer has specifically recruited an individual, is paying them the full-rate for that position and has enrolled them onto an apprenticeship programme. Owing to a number of varying factors, such as the availability of budgets and the performance of the respective apprentice, the Panel appreciates that permanent employment cannot be guaranteed.
18. The Panel was informed at the 16 January 2017 meeting that national changes to apprenticeship programmes will be implemented from 6 April 2017. Part of this change will see the introduction of a Government-set, new-start apprenticeship target figure. For Middlesbrough Council, this will be 120 per year. In light of this, the Panel feels that there could be potential implications for employment opportunities in the future, which may present an issue at some stage.
19. With regards to the opportunities available to apprentices for progression within the Local Authority, the Panel understands that apprentices, as employees, are eligible to apply for internally-advertised vacancies. Of the three apprentices that provided evidence at the 13 February 2017 meeting, Apprentice B was due to commence full-time employment with Cleveland Police in April 2017, and Apprentice C with Middlesbrough Council. The Panel feels that this not only demonstrates the hard work, effort and commitment put in by apprentices, but also that the Council's apprenticeship programmes link in positively with wider organisations and businesses across Teesside (see paragraphs 49-58 for further information in respect of this).
20. At the Panel meeting on 13 February 2017, Members heard that apprentices at Acklam Grange School commence their programmes at Level 2, with progression to Level 3 dependent upon such factors as successful completion of Level 2, and the availability of funding. Full-time employment is always strived for, and a number of apprentices had successfully been offered full-time employment; however, this too is subject to funding and the successful completion of both levels of the apprenticeship.

**TERM OF REFERENCE B:
TO EXAMINE THE NUMBER OF APPRENTICES EMPLOYED WITHIN THE
COUNCIL AND THE SERVICE AREAS AND COSTS INVOLVED**

The Present Situation

21. At the 16 January 2017 meeting, Members were informed that MCL recruits, on average, 120 apprentices each year, of which approximately 70 are young people aged 16-18.
22. Apprenticeships are offered across all service areas of the Council, with the current Framework model of programmes being made available in the following topical areas:
 - Business Administration (Level 2 and Level 3);
 - Customer Service (Level 2 and Level 3);
 - Environmental Conservation (Level 2);

- Leadership & Management (Level 3);
- Local Environment Services (Level 2);
- Support in Teaching & Learning (Level 2 and Level 3); and
- Team Leading (Level 2).

Members heard that, to date, there have not been any difficulties encountered in terms of programme delivery, and recruiting apprentices to specific departments of the Council. However, it is important to ensure that candidates hold the appropriate pre-requisites in order to achieve successful allocation to, and progression within, apprenticeship programmes.

23. The Panel notes that the apprenticeship programmes running within the Council are funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), with two budget lines currently in place. The first consists of approximately £84,000 for apprentices aged 19+ (who are usually pre-existing employees of the Council undertaking training within the context of an apprenticeship scheme), and the second consists of approximately £300,000 for apprentices aged 16-18 years. It is anticipated that the national changes around apprenticeships, scheduled for introduction on 6 April 2017, will alter these funding arrangements significantly.
24. At present, in light of the funding received from the SFA, the only single expense to the Council regards salary payments made to apprentices, which are based on the age and training level of the apprentice. For example: the commencing rate of pay for a Level 2 qualification is currently £3.40 per hour; which is the minimum amount that gradually increases as the apprentice's age and experience increase. This is illustrated in the table shown at Appendix 1.
25. At the 13 February 2017 meeting of the Panel, Members discussed the matter of financial compensation with three current apprentices. All three indicated that the amount received is sufficient to their needs and that they are satisfied with it, particularly having progressed directly from school into salaried apprenticeship programmes.
26. The Panel notes that the current salary arrangements for apprentices reflect the Government's minimum payment guidelines. Successful candidates embarking upon apprenticeship programmes seldom have the practical experience associated with a particular job role; the Government has identified that a minimum payment of £3.40 per hour can be set in order for that experience and associated qualifications to be gained. However, all of Middlesbrough Council's apprentices are considered to be internal employees and therefore, in respect of vacancies, should a suitable position become available within their respective department, they would be eligible to apply for that role, and have the opportunity to continue on with their qualification until completion, if successfully appointed.

National Changes to be introduced on 6 April 2017

Funding

27. At the 16 January 2017 meeting, it was explained to the Panel that, at present, budgets utilised for the payment of training apprentices are the responsibility of the training providers. From 6 April 2017, however, that funding will be transferred to large employers with a salary bill of over £3 million. This is known as the Apprenticeship Levy.

28. The Panel understands that, as part of the Apprenticeship Levy, the Council will be taxed on 0.5% of its total payroll amount, which equates to £500,000. The allocation will be held in a virtual digital account and then subsequently spent on the delivery of apprenticeship programmes. There is a view that there are complications around this arrangement, with reference being made to maintained schools. The Panel notes that, of the £500,000 total, £300,000 is calculated from Council employees and £200,000 from maintained school employees. The allocation of this funding to apprenticeship training is complex, as theoretically £200,000 could be utilised by schools; however, the Panel recognises that the practicalities of recruiting, training and funding apprentices may extend beyond this.

Public Sector Targets and Framework Model Changes

29. In reflection of the target of 200,000 additional apprentices to be employed within the public sector by 2020, the DfE has set targets based on the size of companies. Middlesbrough Council's target is 120 new-start apprenticeships each year, which does not include those that are continuing their apprenticeships (progression from Level 2 to Level 3, for example).
30. At the 16 January 2017 meeting, the Panel was appraised of the planned changes to the structure of apprenticeship programmes. The current Framework model of an apprenticeship encompasses three components (i.e. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), Technical Certificate (the knowledge element) and Functional Skills/Key Skills Certificate – London Councils, 2017), all of which require completion in order for full accomplishment of the applicable Framework to be achieved.
31. The Panel understands that, from 6 April 2017, Frameworks will become known as Standards, which may not encompass qualifications, but instead other elements, such as a list of competencies that the apprentice will need to fully address in order to complete the (potentially very extensive) Standards. In some cases, this could double the timescale of an apprenticeship, for example: a management programme apprenticeship at Level 5 currently takes one year to complete; after April 2017, the time taken will increase to two years.
32. The Government has identified costs associated with each Standard, which vary considerably. The Council's target of 120 new-start apprentices is felt to be achievable; however, the cost of some of the Standards, such as those related to the areas of Law and Planning, for example, are particularly high. This may result in significant challenge for the future in terms of managing the delivery of programmes, and will therefore require close monitoring.
33. At present, in terms of the types of apprenticeship programmes currently being undertaken at the Council, the majority of these are at a lower level, for example: Business Administration Level 2 and Customer Service Level 2; each apprenticeship at this level provides £3,983 in funding. In relation to the higher costs of some of the Standards, the Panel was advised that should the Council exceed its Levy allocation, it will be expected to pay a 10% contribution cost for the apprenticeship; close budget monitoring will therefore be required.
34. The Panel is of the view that, in respect of the Government's target of 120 new apprentice starts each year, an increase to the Council's salary payments may be seen within two years of the introduction of the changes. This will therefore require on-going monitoring/analysis.

35. In terms of the costs involved in completing the more expensive apprenticeships, such as those incorporating Planning and Legal Standards, the Panel heard that these would generally take two years to complete, will be pitched at a higher level, and may evolve into professional qualifications once completed.
36. The Panel was advised that, in all likelihood, the Apprenticeship Levy would be utilised for funding the 120 new-start apprenticeships at the varying programme levels; however, any additional requirements beyond this may, at some stage, impact upon the cost to the Council.

**TERM OF REFERENCE C:
TO CONSIDER HOW THE DIFFERENT APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMMES ARE MANAGED AND OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED**

37. The Panel notes that the Council's apprenticeship programmes are managed by MCL. Support to apprentices is offered by qualified and professional Training Centre staff, who are based in the Town Hall. The Panel recognises the work being undertaken in order to achieve set objectives, such as those relating to enrolment and completion figures, and highly supports this activity.
38. The Panel feels that some excellent outcomes have been achieved regarding the apprenticeships undertaken, e.g. 81% of those completing apprenticeships in 2015/2016 had progressed into permanent employment. The service has been a very positive provider, with MCL being rated as 'good' by Ofsted following inspection in February 2016, 'outstanding' in some areas.
39. The Panel was informed at the 16 January 2017 meeting that, in light of the impending national changes and the replacement of the current Framework model with those of Standards, the Workforce Development Team has been heavily involved in the development of the apprenticeship service, with discussions being held with the Council's Leadership Management Team.
40. The Panel heard that the scope of the Council's apprenticeship programmes may widen in the future; for historical reasons, seven different programmes (as identified at paragraph 22) are offered at present. A further eleven areas are currently being considered.
41. The Panel was informed that, in terms of the assessment and development work undertaken as part of an apprenticeship, apprentices attend the Training Centre for classroom-based sessions for one morning or one afternoon per week. Progress reviews are undertaken every 10-13 weeks, with workplace observation activities also being carried-out. The three apprentices present at the 13 February 2017 all indicated that they feel strongly supported by both staff in the Training Centre and within their respective departments. It is envisaged that this practice will continue beyond April 2017; however, the Panel understands that increased involvement from employers in terms of the completion of Standards will be required (see paragraph 45).
42. The Panel was advised that, although the Council has a high number of apprentices placed across multiple service areas, the apprenticeships tended to be predominantly Customer Service and Business Administration-based. It is acknowledged by MCL staff that one particular challenge arising from the impending changes revolves around the preparation of managers in changing their perspectives of apprenticeships. Work is currently on-going between MCL and the Workforce Development Team in this regard which has, to date, included meeting with managers and promoting the need for apprentices within their respective service

areas. Consideration needs to be given to matters such as career strategy and long-term goal planning for those undertaking apprenticeship programmes.

43. The Panel recognises that there are varying levels available within apprenticeship programmes. Apprentices generally commence at Level 2, with Level 3 being made available for progression (subject to the needs of both the employer and the apprentice, as well as the availability of funding). In cases where an apprentice defers commencing Level 3 of their programme, they would continue to work within their respective department during the interim period in order to increase their knowledge, experience and understanding of their role. Level 1 refers to pre-apprenticeship programmes and the Council has operated these previously; however, they are part of a separate scheme to main apprenticeships, and therefore funding for these is obtained from an alternative source. The changes due in April 2017 are not expected to have any impact on the number of Level 1 pre-apprenticeships being undertaken within the Council.
44. Regarding the target-related increase in the number of new-start apprentices from April 2017, and the potential impact that this may have upon managers and the continued provision of good service, the Panel heard that, because the vast majority of service areas do not recruit a high multitude of apprentices at any one time (as managers want to manage them appropriately, e.g. through the provision of correct training and assignment of a suitable mentor), the impact is expected to be minimal.
45. In terms of the training offered to managers in preparing them for the employment of apprentices, the Panel was informed that MCL undertakes an induction with both the employer and the apprentice in order to ascertain the requirements and expectations of both parties. Following the national changes in April 2017, there will be an increased level of ownership bestowed upon managers, as apprenticeships will become competency-based. As the person responsible for supporting the apprentice, managers will be required to sign-off these competencies; continued 1-to-1 and group support will be made available to managers in respect of this.
46. In relation to recruitment and achieving target objectives, at the 13 February 2017 meeting, the Panel heard that Acklam Grange School organises an annual 'Shine Event' for its Year 11 students. This involves a large variety of employers attending the school to operate stalls and showcase the different apprenticeships that they offer (see paragraph 58 for further information regarding this).
47. Regarding the management of the different apprenticeship programmes within schools, the Panel was informed that, at Acklam Grange School, some of these are classroom-based. Like other practical training programmes, the Panel feels that these can offer apprentices excellent insight into their chosen career field, and offer opportunity to determine their suitability to it. The Panel acknowledges that classroom-based work can provide significant challenge, particularly with regards to apprentices working in challenging behaviour environments. The Panel is assured that this is managed professionally, with managers and experienced members of staff working alongside the apprentice at all times; lone working is never undertaken.
48. At the 13 February 2017 meeting, the three apprentices present all indicated to the Panel that they are enjoying their experiences, are happy with the support being provided, and that the programmes are being operated well. Upon being questioned by the Panel, the apprentices did not identify any negative aspects of their programmes, or note any matters from their perspective, that could be changed or developed.

**TERM OF REFERENCE D:
TO EXAMINE HOW THE COUNCIL'S APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES LINK
IN WITH WIDER ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESSES ACROSS TEESSIDE**

49. The Panel was informed that, following the implementation of the changes in April 2017, MCL will, in addition to the delivery of Council-based apprenticeships, continue to work with external SME employers.
50. Apprenticeship funding for SME businesses will continue to be routed through providers with the caveat that they have to contribute 10% to the cost of delivery. Therefore, the Council will deliver and receive payment for the apprenticeships, but the apprentices will work for external employers.
51. As SME businesses are exempt from the Apprenticeship Levy, training for their apprenticeships will only be attainable via the historical route of approaching providers. In reflection of this, two separate funding routes will be put in place from April 2017: one relevant to SME businesses, and one relevant to Apprenticeship Levy-affected businesses.
52. MCL will continue to support apprentices working for public sector organisations, such as Cleveland Police and the NHS, after 6 April 2017.
53. The Panel was informed that various financial incentives are likely to be made available to businesses that are both affected and unaffected by the Apprenticeship Levy. For example: it is anticipated that payments will be available to providers recruiting apprentices aged 16-18 years, and to those recruiting apprentices from certain postcode areas. The exact incentive amounts payable to the Council are unclear at the present time, as the only guidance currently available relates to data from the previous year (2015/2016). The view of the Panel is that this is potentially a payment by results scheme and that, at some point, the Council may need to make upfront payments before receiving reimbursement at a later date.
54. It was highlighted to the Panel that any external apprenticeships would not be included in the Government's 120 new-start target figure.
55. Regarding both maintained and Academy schools, the Panel heard that there are currently 20 apprentices on the Support in Teaching and Learning programme, and 20 on the Business Administration programme, making a combined total of 40 apprentices across the two different school types. Some of the apprenticeships within the schools are being undertaken by pre-existing employees. The Panel heard that one of the fundamental advantages of the new system relates to facilitated staff re-training and development, which will be of particular benefit to schools. There will be no age limit placed on these programme placements. In order to meet the Government's target of 120 new-starts from April 2017, 40 apprentices from schools will be required.
56. For further information in respect of the Scrutiny Panel's investigations and findings, arising from Panel meetings, please see **Appendices 2 and 3** - Minutes of Panel meetings.

SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE RECEIVED

57. Following information being received at the 13 February 2017 meeting, further contact was made with Acklam Grange School to ascertain additional details around the work undertaken with students, in terms of promoting apprenticeship programmes.
58. The details received indicate that the school actively undertakes an array of activities throughout the year, including:
- The annual 'Shine Event' – in 2015/2016, 38 organisations and over 350 students attended; in 2016/2017, 36 organisations and over 550 students attended. Invited organisations represented the Higher Educational, Vocational, Apprenticeships and Public Service sectors;
 - Provision of support pertaining to the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) curriculum – activities cover Years 7-11 and are supported by a full time member of the support team staff (no portion of this role is spent teaching); and
 - Dedicated assembly spots are made available for a wide range of provision including Apprenticeship talks/colleges/National Citizen Service (NCS), etc., which provides students with information on a whole year capacity.

The Panel is appreciative of this work; however, Members are of the view that further activity could be undertaken in order to promote Middlesbrough Council's apprenticeship programmes to students.

CONCLUSIONS

59. The Scrutiny Panel reached the following conclusions in respect of its investigation:
60. The evidence presented provides a clear indication that, nationally, apprenticeship programmes are under-going a period of significant change. The Panel is of the view that, until the changes are fully implemented, it is difficult to ascertain the full extent to which these will impact upon the Council and its apprenticeship programmes.
61. The Panel supports the work that is currently being undertaken and feels that Middlesbrough Council's apprenticeship programmes are meeting the needs of the local area well - through the offering of permanent, full-time employment being made to apprentices, for example.
62. The Panel welcomes the high level of support that MCL and Training Centre staff are providing to apprentices. The achievements made by the three apprentices that attended the 13 February 2017 reflects the support being given. The Panel are highly encouraged by the commitment and dedication being given by apprentices, and congratulate them on their achievements.
63. Although MCL and other apprenticeship providers/employers visit local secondary schools to engage with students in respect of apprenticeship opportunities, it was evident from the three apprentices present at the 13 February 2017 meeting that they had not been referred to their programmes from their schools. The Panel is of the view that there may be further opportunity for schools to assist in this regard.
64. The Panel recognises that the apprenticeship programmes offered by Middlesbrough Council are linking well with wider organisations and businesses across Teesside. Taking the matter of permanent employment being offered to apprentices, this has been achieved in respect of both public (e.g. Cleveland Police and NHS) and private sector (e.g. SME) organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

65. As a result of the information received, and based on the conclusions above, the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel's recommendations for consideration are as follows:
- i) That MCL undertakes further work with secondary schools to increase pupils' awareness of, and engagement in, Middlesbrough Council's apprenticeship programmes.
 - ii) That an update in respect of this topic be provided in November 2017, when the revised national apprenticeship structure has been firmly established and the first autumnal intake of apprentices undertaken.
 - iii) That the information, as provided, be noted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

66. The Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel would like to thank the following for their assistance with its work:
- Apprentices A, B and C, Middlesbrough Council;
 - C Kemp – Community Learning Service Manager, Middlesbrough Council;
 - R McGurrell – HR Manager – and staff, Acklam Grange School; and
 - A White – Apprentice and Work Skills Co-ordinator, Middlesbrough Council.

ACRONYMS

67. A-Z listing of acronyms used in the report:
- CEIAG - Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
 - CV – Curriculum Vitae
 - DfE – Department for Education
 - HR – Human Resources
 - IDeA - Improvement and Development Agency
 - MCL – Middlesbrough Community Learning Service
 - NCS – National Citizen Service
 - SFA – Skills Funding Agency
 - SME – Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
 - YEI – Youth Employment Initiative

BACKGROUND PAPERS

68. The following sources were consulted, or referred to, in preparing this report:
- Reports to, and Minutes of, the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel meetings held on 16 January 2017 and 13 February 2017.
 - HM Government, 2017, '*Apprenticeships: Everything You Need to Know*', <https://www.getingofar.gov.uk/apprenticeships> - accessed various dates.
 - HM Government, 2012, '*The Richard Review of Apprenticeships*', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships> - accessed February 2017.

- LocalGov, 2017, '*Local Authorities to Hire 'Thousands' of New Apprentices*', <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Local-authorities-to-hire-thousands-of-new-apprentices/42390> - accessed January 2017.
- Middlesbrough Council, 2016, '*Apprentice and 'Grown Your Own' Talent Policy: The Procedural Guidance*', UK.
- Mirza-Davies, J., 2016, '*Apprenticeship Statistics: England*', Briefing Paper Number 06113, House of Commons Library, UK.
- National Apprenticeship Service, 2016, '*A Guide to Apprenticeships*', https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/601511/A_guide_to_apprenticeships.pdf - accessed January 2017.
- Not Going to Uni, 2017, '*Apprenticeship Guide*', <https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships-223> - accessed January 2017.

**COUNCILLOR JEAN SHARROCKS
CHAIR OF AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL – 2016/2017**

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel, in respect of this investigation, was as follows:

Councillors J Sharrocks (Chair), D Davison, J Hobson, L Lewis, T Mawston, L McGloin, G Purvis, D Rooney and B Taylor.

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Middlesbrough Council Apprentice Rates of Pay

From 1st October 2016

Apprenticeship Level	Age of Apprentice	Amount
Level 1 (up to 6 months)	All Ages	Government Traineeships – Travel/expenses only
Level 2 (up to 1 year)	All Ages	£3.40. per hour
Level 3 2 nd year of training	Under 19	£4.00. per hour
Level 3 2 nd year of training	19 years	National Minimum wage applies £5.55. per hour
Level 3	21 – 24 years	National Minimum wage applies £6.95. per hour
Level 3	25 and over	National Minimum wage applies £7.20. per hour

ALL RATES ABOVE ARE BASED ON A 37 HOUR WORKING WEEK

AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel was held on 16 January 2017.

PRESENT: Councillors J Sharrocks (Chair), Davison, J Hobson, Mawston, McGloin, G Purvis and D Rooney.

OFFICERS: C Kemp, C Lunn and A White.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Lewis.

APPRENTICESHIPS

The Chair welcomed Members and invited representatives to this first meeting of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel's investigation into apprenticeship programmes within Middlesbrough Council. C Kemp, the Council's Community Learning Service Manager, and A White, the Apprentice and Work Skills Co-ordinator, were in attendance to provide the Panel with information pertaining to the topic.

It was explained to the Panel that, at present, the apprenticeship programmes running within the Council were funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). It was anticipated that national changes scheduled for introduction on 6 April 2017 would alter these arrangements significantly; however, two budget lines were currently in place. The first consisted of approximately £84,000 for apprentices aged 19+ (who were usually pre-existing employees of the Council undertaking training within the context of an apprenticeship scheme), and the second consisted of approximately £300,000 for apprentices aged 16-18 years.

Members heard that, on average, the Middlesbrough Community Learning Service (MCL), which was responsible for the delivery of Government-funded apprenticeships for Middlesbrough Council, recruited 120 apprentices each year. It was highlighted that some excellent outcomes had been achieved for the apprenticeships undertaken, e.g. 81% of those completing apprenticeships in 2015/2016 had progressed into employment. It was felt that the service had been a very positive provider, with reference being made to the figures outlined in Appendix 4 of the submitted report to support this.

MCL had been inspected by Ofsted in February 2016, where overall it was found to have been performing 'good', although 'outstanding' in some areas. Members requested that a copy of the report be circulated for information.

In response to an enquiry, the Panel was informed that, at present, in light of funding from the SFA, the only expense to the Council was the salary payments for apprentices, which were based on the age and training level of the individuals concerned. For example: the commencing rate of pay for a Level 2 qualification was £3.40 per hour; this was a minimum amount that gradually increased as the apprentice's age and experience increased.

A Member made reference to the Council's Living Wage policy and queried how the current pay arrangements reflected this. In response, it was explained to the Panel that those embarking upon an apprenticeship programme had no practical experience of a particular job role. The Government had identified that a minimum payment of £3.40 per hour could have been set in order for that experience and those qualifications to have been gained. However, it was highlighted that all of Middlesbrough Council's apprentices were considered internal employees and therefore, in respect of job vacancies, should a suitable position have become available within their respective department, they would have been eligible to apply for that role, and still have completed their qualification, if successful.

With regards to the impending national changes to apprenticeships, Members were informed that the first change related to funding. At present, budgets utilised for the payment of training apprentices were the responsibility of providers. From 6 April 2017, however, that funding was being transferred to large employers with a salary bill of over £3million. This was known as the Apprenticeship Levy. As part of this, the Council would have been taxed on 0.5% of its total payroll amount, which equated to £500,000. The allocation would have subsequently been held in a virtual digital account, and then spent on the delivery of apprenticeships. It was felt that there were complications around this arrangement,

with reference being made to maintained schools. It was explained that, of the £500,000 total, £300,000 had been calculated from Council employees, and £200,000 from maintained school employees. The allocation of this funding to apprenticeship training was complex, as theoretically £200,000 could have been utilised by schools; however, the practicalities of recruiting, training and funding apprentices may have extended beyond this.

The second change revolved around the introduction of public sector targets for apprenticeships. It was explained to Members that targets were based on the size of the company; the Council's target was 120 new-starts every year (those that were continuing their apprenticeships would not have been included in this figure).

The third change revolved around standards. Members heard that, at present, apprentices worked towards a framework, which included a number of qualifications and/or specific requirements that required completion in order for full accomplishment of the framework to be achieved. From 6 April 2017, frameworks would become known as standards, which may not have encompassed qualifications, but other elements such as a list of competencies that the apprentice would need to have fully addressed in order to complete potentially quite lengthy standards. It was indicated that, in some cases, this could have doubled the length of the apprenticeship, for example: a management programme apprenticeship at Level 5 currently took one year to complete; after April 2017, this would have increased to two years.

It was highlighted to the Panel that the Government had identified costs associated with each standard, which varied considerably. It was felt that the Council's target of 120 new-start apprentices was achievable, however, the cost of some standards, Legal and Planning-related for example, were particularly high. It was felt that this may have resulted in significant challenge for the future in terms of managing the delivery of programmes. Reference was made to the types of apprenticeships currently undertaken at the Council. It was indicated that the majority of these were at a lower level, for example: Business Administration Level 2 and Customer Service Level 2; each apprenticeship at this level offered approximately £3,000 in funding.

Mention was made of schools and the further work that was required in ensuring the effective delivery of apprenticeships within those in the future.

Members considered the potential impact of the Government's target of 120 new apprentice starts each year, particularly in relation to the Council's salary payments. It was felt that an increase may have been seen within two years of the introduction of the changes, but this would have required further monitoring/analysis as time elapsed.

A Member made reference to the higher costs of some of the standards and queried the impact of total fund expiration. In response, it was indicated that businesses could have employed as many apprentices as they wished; however, they would have been expected to have paid 10% of the overall apprentice cost. Consideration was given to the Apprenticeship Levy allocation and the utilisation of the funds across the different areas of the Local Authority.

A discussion ensued in relation to schools. In response to an enquiry regarding the number of apprentices currently in schools, it was indicated that there were 20 on the Support in Teaching and Learning programme, and 20 on the Business Administration programme, making a combined total of 40. These figures referred to a combination of both maintained and Academy schools. Members were informed that some of the apprenticeships within the schools were being undertaken by pre-existing employees. It was felt that one of the fundamental advantages of the new system related to facilitated staff re-training and development, which would have been of particular benefit to schools. It was indicated to the Panel that no age limit would have been placed on this. The Panel was advised that in order to have met the Government's target, 40 apprentices from schools would have been required.

Members heard that, in light of the impending changes, the Workforce Development Team had been heavily involved in the development of the service, with discussion also being held with the Leadership Management Team. It was felt that the Council's apprenticeship programme offering could have been widened (for historical reasons it currently offered seven different programme types); consequently, a further eleven areas were currently being considered.

A discussion ensued in relation to the recruitment of apprentices. It was explained to the Panel that external agencies were not used. The Council advertised its vacancies via the SFA website; a notice had also been placed on the North East Jobs website to request that potential apprentices follow a link

to the SFA website in order to apply. Reference was made to referrals and requests for further information that had been made by individuals in relation to apprenticeship vacancies. It was explained that schools in Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar, as well as recruitment fairs, were visited on an annual basis, and a fortnightly recruitment day was held at the Multi-Media Exchange in Middlesbrough.

Regarding school visits, it was explained to Members that these were undertaken annually, generally in respect of Year Groups 9 and 10. School staff often requested that visits be undertaken in relation to the provision of CV or interview technique advice, which was often agreed to as it was felt that the more presence and interaction that was achieved, the more information young people would have received about the Council's apprenticeship programmes.

A Member queried the assistance provided in relation to the support offered to unsuccessful apprenticeship applicants (e.g. assistance with CV preparation), and the uptake of this. In response, it was indicated that there was a high level of uptake for this support. It was felt that this activity had supported individuals well, as it may have also encouraged them to consider wider training/employment options that they would not have necessarily considered previously.

It was conveyed to the Panel that, at the Multi-Media Exchange recruitment days, individuals were assessed of their readiness for undertaking an apprenticeship. Reference was made to foundation training programmes and a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) programme, for those aged 15-29, which were also available.

With regards to the YEI programme, it was explained that this had involved substantial mentoring activity in supporting young people, particularly in terms of developing their interview skills and preparing them for vocational work. The initiative had received a large take-up, with 230 individuals currently enrolled. The Community Learning Service Manager agreed to ascertain the statistics in terms of how many of those involved in the initiative were recruited via the recruitment days. Mention was made of the funding received from the Government with regards to participation in the YEI, including access to travel payments for interview attendance. It was felt that the initiative had offered a very positive approach in supporting young people.

With regards to the assessment and development work undertaken as part of an apprenticeship, it was explained to the Panel that apprentices attended the training centre for classroom-based sessions for one morning or one afternoon per week. Progress reviews were undertaken every 10-13 weeks, with workplace observation also being completed. It was envisaged that this practice would have continued beyond April 2017; however, increased involvement from employers in terms of the standards work would have been required.

Members were advised that, following the implementation of the changes in April 2017, in addition to the delivery of Council-based apprenticeships, MCL would have continued to work with external SME employers (who would not have been affected by the Levy changes). It was explained that the Council would have delivered and received payment for the apprenticeships, but the apprentices worked for external employers. Mention was made of current apprentices that worked for organisations such as Cleveland Police and the NHS. In response to an enquiry, the Panel was advised that any external apprenticeships were not included in the Government's 120 new-start target figure.

The Panel was informed that the Apprenticeship Levy payments were only applicable to businesses with a salary bill of over £3 million. Consideration was given to the SME businesses within Middlesbrough that would not have been required to pay a Levy. It was explained that the only way that those businesses could have attained training for their apprenticeships would have been via the historical route of approaching providers. It was indicated that two separate funding routes would be in place from April 2017: one relevant to Apprentice Levy-affected businesses and one relevant to the SME businesses. Mention was made of the availability of different financial incentives around both areas.

A Member queried whether, via the incentives available, this was a payment by results scheme. In response, it was indicated that there were a number of incentive payments available, e.g. payment if providers recruited apprenticeships aged 16-18 years, and payments in relation to recruitment from certain postcode areas. It was unclear at present as to exactly how much the Council would have received in incentive payments, as the only guidance currently available was data from the previous year. Reference was made to the processes involved in forwarding payment claims to the Government, and the frequency that these were paid. It was felt that this was potentially a payment by results scheme.

and that, at some point, the Council may have needed to make upfront payments, prior to receiving reimbursement at a later date.

A Member queried the retention of apprentices within the Council. In response, it was indicated that the retention figure was high at present (for 2015/2016 it was 92%), and was regularly monitored. It was explained to the Panel that an eight-week grace period was given to new apprentices; if an individual left their placement during this time, this would not have impacted upon the retention statistics.

A discussion ensued in respect of employment opportunities being made available to apprentices at the end of their programmes. It was explained to the Panel that neither promises nor guarantees could have been given to any apprentice in this regard, unless an employer had specifically recruited an individual, were paying them the full-rate for that position, and had then subsequently enrolled them onto an apprenticeship programme. It was explained that work could not have been guaranteed, as this would have been dependent upon a number of factors, including the availability of budgets and the performance of the respective apprentice. Consideration was given to the Government's new-start target figure and the potential impact upon employment opportunities in the future; it was felt that this may have caused an issue at some point. To date, there had not been any guidance issued as to the penalties that would have been faced had the target not been met. Consideration was given to the example scenario of the Apprenticeship Levy being spent, but only 100 (albeit high calibre) apprentices being recruited. Reference was made to Appendix 2 of the submitted report, which detailed Middlesbrough Council's apprentice destinations for 2011-2016.

A Member referred to the costs involved in completing the more expensive apprenticeships, such as those that incorporated Planning and Legal standards. It was indicated to the Panel that these were generally two years in length, were pitched at a higher level, and may have evolved into qualifications when completed. Reference was made to the funding difference between apprenticeships that, following the introduction of the new regime in April 2017, may have had significant implications in relation to programme and financial management. Members were advised that the Apprenticeship Levy would have most likely been utilised for paying for the 120 apprenticeships at the varying programme levels; however, it was acknowledged that any additional requirements may have impacted upon the cost to the Council, at some point.

A Member queried whether there had been any difficulties encountered in the recruitment of apprentices to any particular department. In response, the Panel heard that there had not been any difficulties in recruiting to any departments; however, it was important to have ensured that candidates held the appropriate pre-requisites, in order to have ensured successful allocation and progression. It was indicated that, at present, there had not been any problems encountered in terms of what was being delivered.

It was explained to Members that although the Council had a high number of apprentices placed across multiple service areas, they were the same generic types of apprenticeships - e.g. Customer Service and Business Administration. It was felt that one particular challenge of the new regime revolved around the preparation of managers in thinking differently of apprenticeships. Work was currently on-going between MCL and the Workforce Development Team in this regard (which included meeting managers and promoting the need for apprentices within their respective service areas). It was felt important that consideration be given to matters such as career strategy and long-term goal planning for those undertaking apprenticeship programmes. In response to a Member enquiry, it was indicated that apprentices had been allocated to Environment Services, and had also undertaken environmental conservation work.

A discussion ensued regarding the varying levels that were available within the apprenticeship programmes. It was indicated that apprentices generally commenced at Level 2, with Level 3 being made available for progression (as appropriate to the needs of both the employer and the individual completing the apprenticeship). In instances where apprentices had deferred commencing Level 3 of a programme, e.g. for a one year period, during that time they would have continued to work within their respective department in order to increase their knowledge, experience and understanding of their role.

It was indicated to Members that Level 1 referred to pre-apprenticeships: the Council had operated these previously, but they were part of a separate scheme to the apprenticeship programme; payment for these placements was received from an alternative funding stream. In response to an enquiry, Members were advised that the changes due in April 2017 were not expected to have had any impact on the number of Level 1 pre-apprenticeships being undertaken.

Consideration was given to the Council's management structure. A Member queried whether the impending changes would have created potential difficulties for managers, particularly in relation to the increase in the number of apprentices, and the continued provision of good quality service. In response, it was felt that the vast majority of service areas would not have recruited too many apprentices at once, as managers would have wanted to manage them appropriately - e.g. providing them with the correct training and assigning them to a suitable mentor.

In response to an enquiry regarding the training offered to service areas in preparing them for employing apprentices, it was indicated that MCL would have undertaken an induction with both the employer and the apprentice in order to ascertain the requirements and expectations of both parties. It was indicated that, within the new system, there would have been an increased level of ownership on managers, as it was competency based, i.e. as the person supporting the apprentice, managers would have been required to sign those competencies off; continued 1-to-1 and group support would have been made available in relation to this.

The Chair thanked the Council's Community Learning Service Manager and the Apprentice and Work Skills Co-ordinator for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

During discussion, Members agreed that, in terms of progressing the review, a selection of current apprentices be invited to the next Panel meeting in order to share their experiences.

The Panel considered wider Middlesbrough in the context of the review, with reference being made to external businesses and organisations. Mention was made of Community Councils and the potential forwarding of apprenticeship programme information to them, for increased circulation around the wider community. Members discussed the role of schools in respect of apprenticeships; it was agreed that a school Careers Adviser be invited to the next meeting of the Panel for discussion around this.

A Member suggested that, in light of the impending changes, the Panel should re-visit this topic again in the future.

AGREED that:

1. A copy of MCL's Ofsted inspection report would be forwarded to the Panel Members for information.
2. The Community Learning Service Manager would provide the Panel with statistics regarding the YEI programme, specifically to ascertain how many of the 230 individuals involved in the initiative were recruited via recruitment days.
3. A selection of current apprentices would be invited to the next Panel meeting in order to share their experiences of undertaking an apprenticeship.
4. A school Careers Adviser would be invited to the next meeting of the Panel to discuss the role of schools in apprenticeships.
5. That the information, as provided, be noted.

*****Please note that the following minutes are draft until approved at the next meeting of the Panel*****

AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel was held on 13 February 2017.

PRESENT: Councillors J Sharrocks (Chair), Davison, J Hobson, Lewis, Mawston, McGloin, G Purvis, D Rooney and Taylor.

PRESENT AS OBSERVER: Councillor P Purvis.

OFFICERS: C Lunn.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Apprentice A – Middlesbrough Council
Apprentice B – Middlesbrough Council
Apprentice C – Middlesbrough Council
R McGurrell – HR Manager, Acklam Grange School.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were no apologies for absence.

APPRENTICESHIPS

The potential terms of reference for the investigation were tabled for Members' consideration; these were as follows:

1. To investigate the process of how apprentices are recruited by the Council.
2. To examine the number of apprentices employed within the Council and the service areas and costs involved.
3. To consider how the different apprenticeship programmes are managed and objectives achieved.
4. To examine how the Council's apprenticeship programmes link in with wider organisations and businesses across Teesside.

Members agreed that terms 2, 3 and 4 were suitable and did not require any amendments.

Regarding term 1, Members requested that an additional reference be made to incorporate the retention of apprentices. The amended term would read as follows:

“1. To investigate the processes of how apprentices are recruited and retained by the Council.”

A Member queried the available support/guidance that would be offered to an apprentice if a permanent position within the Local Authority was not available to them. It was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would contact the Apprentice and Workskills Co-ordinator for a response to this, and circulate it to the Panel Members once received.

The Chair welcomed R McGurrell, HR Manager at Acklam Grange School, and three current Middlesbrough Council apprentices to the meeting. Copies of case study reports pertaining to the three apprentices were tabled for Members' perusal.

The Panel was informed that a number of apprentices currently worked at Acklam Grange School. Apprenticeship opportunities within the school were advertised via two pathways: the first was through the placement of advertisements on local job websites, which would have resulted in applications being returned directly to the school, and the second was through partnership working with MCL. MCL placed recruitment advertisements on apprentice recruitment sites, and also forwarded details of potential applicants (that were held on file) to the school.

The Chair explained to the representative that the Panel had sought information in relation to the

school's students, and the work that was being undertaken to raise awareness of apprenticeships and the opportunities that existed for them within Middlesbrough. In response, it was indicated that the school organised an annual 'Shine Event'; a large variety of employers attended to operate stalls and showcase the different apprenticeships that they offered. All Year 11 students attended this event. The representative advised that any specific queries relating to the work undertaken by Acklam Grange, in this regard, could be forwarded to an appropriate person within the school for a response. The Chair and Democratic Services Officer would follow this up and circulate the information received to the Panel Members accordingly.

In response to an enquiry, it was explained that a range of apprentices were currently employed within Acklam Grange School. These included:

- Teaching & Learning apprentices, who were classroom-based;
- Apprentices based within the school's Reflect Unit (for challenging behaviour);
- Apprentices based in off-site education provision; and
- Apprentices based in customer service and finance.

Apprentices commenced at Level 2, with progression to Level 3 dependent upon such factors as successful completion of Level 2, and the availability of funding. It was indicated to the Panel that the school had retained a number of its apprentices. Mention was made of three who had been offered full-time employment, which was always strived for; however, this too was subject to funding and the successful completion of both levels of the apprenticeship.

A Member sought clarification with regards to the role of apprentices employed within the school's Reflect Unit, particularly as there would have been substantial responsibility associated with this. It was explained to the Panel that the Reflect Unit consisted of individual booths, where students on a C5 behaviour grading would have completed their work (behaviour was assessed on a scale of C1-C5). Apprentices would not have undertaken lone working at any time; a Behaviour Manager and an experienced member of staff would always have been present. It was highlighted that an apprentice had recently been appointed to a permanent role within the Unit.

A Member queried the role of classroom-based apprentices in relation to that of Teaching Assistants. In response, it was explained that apprentices would not have had the full responsibility of Teaching Assistants. Apprentices received Level 3 Certification in Teaching and Learning at the end of their programmes, which would then have allowed them to progress onto the Teaching Assistant qualification. It was highlighted that this route would not only have offered Teaching Assistant candidates an insight into this career area, but also significant classroom experience should they have wished to pursue it further.

Regarding the timescales involved with apprenticeship programmes, Members heard that the duration for Level 2 was twelve months, and for Level 3, eighteen months.

Reference was made to retention and a query raised as to the potential reasons why apprentices may have left mid-way through their programmes. In response, it was explained that only one apprentice had vacated a programme at Acklam Grange – the reason for this was that they had felt unsuited to it. Reference was made to an apprenticeships-related event that would be held at the school in the near future. The Panel was advised that statements received from all of the current apprentices, in preparation for this event, indicated that they had felt supported and were enjoying their programmes.

A Member considered financial compensation in respect of apprenticeships and queried the level of pay being given to apprentices undertaking programmes at the school. In response, it was indicated to the Panel that payments were in line with legislation; the basic apprenticeship wage was made, although Level 3 payments were reflective of the apprentice's age.

The Chair thanked the HR Manager for her attendance and contribution to the meeting, and invited the three apprentices to discuss their experiences of completing apprenticeships within Middlesbrough Council.

The apprentices raised the following points:

- The reasons why they had chosen to undertake an apprenticeship;
- How they had been notified of apprenticeship opportunities - Members heard that Apprentice A had been referred by a friend; Apprentice B by a parent who had worked with an apprentice outside of the Council, but within the Middlesbrough area; and Apprentice C via the Job Centre;
- The induction process and support offered by the Training Centre;
- The tasks undertaken, responsibilities given, and positive experience gained; and
- The opportunities that had arisen for progression to full-time work - Members were informed that two of the apprentices had been offered full-time permanent employment – one with Cleveland Police and one with Middlesbrough Council.

Members gave consideration to the role of schools in promoting apprenticeships. The Panel felt that further engagement work may have been required in this regard, particularly as the three apprentices had attended different secondary schools and referrals had been made from outside of the education system.

A Member asked the apprentices whether the level of financial compensation they received was sufficient for their needs. In response, all three indicated that they were happy with the salaries awarded, particularly as they had progressed directly from school into salaried programmes.

A Member queried whether there were any negatives to the apprenticeship programmes that were being offered, and whether anything could have been changed or developed from their perspective. In response, all three apprentices indicated that they had enjoyed their experiences, were happy with the support that had been provided to them, and that the apprenticeship programmes were being operated well.

The Panel thanked the apprentices for attending the meeting and congratulated them on their excellent achievements. Members felt that they were a credit to the Local Authority and were both reassured and inspired by their positive experiences. The apprentices and representative of Acklam Grange School left the meeting at this point.

Members discussed the opportunities available to apprentices for progression within the Local Authority, with mention being made of their eligibility to apply for internally-advertised vacancies.

A discussion ensued with regards to the progression of the investigation and the evidence that had been received to date. The Panel was happy with the information presented and discussed potential conclusions and recommendations arising from the review. Members agreed that a recommendation be made for an update to be provided in November 2017, when the revised national apprenticeship structure was firmly in place and the autumnal intake of apprentices had been undertaken. The Panel felt that, in light of the evidence received from the apprentices, further engagement from schools in respect of apprenticeship programmes may be required. This would form a second recommendation of the Panel's report, subject to the content of the additional information received from Acklam Grange School.

Members agreed that a further meeting of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel in respect of this topic would not be necessary. Responses to the questions forwarded to Acklam Grange School would be circulated to the Panel Members once received. A copy of the draft final report would be circulated to Members for feedback, prior to submission of the final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

AGREED that:

1. The Democratic Services Officer would contact the Apprentice and Workskills Co-ordinator for information regarding the support/guidance made available to apprentices, in instances where permanent employment within the Local Authority was not possible. This would be circulated to the Panel Members once received.
2. The Chair and Democratic Services Officer would forward specific queries relating to the work undertaken by Acklam Grange School in raising awareness of apprenticeships amongst its students to an appropriate person for a response. Information received would be circulated to the Panel Members.
3. A draft final report would be produced and circulated to the Panel Members for feedback in line with the discussion points raised at the meeting. A subsequent final report would be forwarded

to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

4. The information, as provided, be noted.