

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member – Corporate Services  
Cabinet Member – Childrens Services

**DATE:**

**SUBJECT:** Apprenticeships within the Council – ‘Passport to Move On’

**WARDS AFFECTED:**

**REPORT OF:** M.H. Fogg, Personnel Director

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Emma Finnigan, Work-based Learning Manager, ext. 2264

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:**

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

Following the publication of the Central Government Strategy ‘World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All’ in February 2008, this report seeks support for a corporate Apprenticeship programme for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

- Support the local authority commitment to the reduction of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Enhancing the quality of post 16 vocational learning provision and providing employment pathways for the local community.
- Supporting the local area agreement targets

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

It is recommended that the proposal described in Section E of this report be approved.

**KEY DECISION:**

**FORWARD PLAN:**

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Ongoing

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

Cease to support the programme

**IMPLICATIONS:**

Not achieving the LEA target for NEET would result in a reduction of funding from Central Government which estimated at £800,000.

**Budget/Policy Framework:****Financial:**

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2006/ 2007 £</b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:****Risk Assessment:**

- The risks associated with undertaking an apprenticeship programme include failing to provide high quality placement opportunities and failing to engage with partners who provide the associated development opportunities. We intend to mitigate the risk by communicating with host departments and engaging with partners with a proven track record in providing high quality development opportunities.
- By implementing an ineffective programme we risk appointing inappropriate apprentices to the available positions. This in turn may affect retention and attainment which will affect the relationships with the local training providers. To mitigate this risk we intend to undertake a robust recruitment process and we have included a period where the young person will progress on to a programme led

apprenticeship.

- There is undoubtedly strength in a diverse workforce which reflects the community it serves. By failing to provide entry-level opportunities to a wide range of young people we risk exacerbating the age profile of the organisation and potentially increase the impact when some of our older employees reach retirement age.

**Asset Management:**

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<b><u>Corporate Objective</u></b>		<b><u>Positive Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Negative Impact</u></b>
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

## RECRUITMENT OF APPRENTICES – “PASSPORT TO MOVE ON”

### A PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. Following the publication of the Central Government Strategy ‘World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All’ in February 2008, this report seeks support of a Corporate Apprenticeship Programme for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

### B BACKGROUND

2. The local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy 2007 articulated the need for Local Government to address recruitment issues through a wide range of tailored interventions. It suggests that with more than 30% of the local government workforce due to retire over the next 15 years, authorities need to develop strategies for actively managing succession planning as part of its workforce strategy.
3. In January 2004 the Employers Organisation in conjunction with regional employer’s organisations undertook its annual recruitment and retention survey. The survey identified ten services within which 23% or more of the employing authorities reported having recruitment difficulties. The ten occupational areas are listed in descending order of the percentage of Local Authorities that reported recruitment difficulties.

1	Social Care
2	Occupational therapy
3	Environmental health
4	Trading standards
5	Planning
6	Building control
7	Educational psychology
8	Teaching
9	Libraries
10	Legal

4. In February 2007, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) published the Government’s Strategy for the future of Apprenticeships in England entitled ‘World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All’. The report states that the Apprenticeship programme has undergone a renaissance in the past decade, with the numbers of Apprentices in learning having risen dramatically since 1997, and with completions at unprecedented levels. The country’s leading companies (including Rolls Royce, British Telecom and Tesco) today offer sizeable Apprenticeship programmes.
5. The Government has introduced a requirement for all young people to be in education or training until the age of 18 by 2015. It will be extremely difficult to achieve this without significant expansion of the Apprenticeship programme. To help achieve this target, the Government has introduced an entitlement to an Apprenticeship place for each suitably qualified young person from 2013.
6. The recently published central government strategy promises to offer apprenticeships as a mainstream option for 16 to 18 year olds and will ensure that by 2013, every suitably qualified young person who wants to take up an Apprenticeship place will be able to do so. To deliver this entitlement, Central Government have already announced that they will increase the number of 16 to 18 year old Apprentices significantly by 2013.
7. A skilled workforce is vital for meeting the challenges of the global economy in the 21st century. The Public Sector is no exception to this and, with many critical skills shortages and

an ageing workforce, it faces serious skills and recruitment difficulties. The age profile of Sefton reflects this as one third of Sefton employees are aged 55+ and will retire within the next ten years, whereas only 4.2% of employees are aged 25 and under (see Appendix 1).

8. Apprenticeships are considered to be a proven way of dealing with both current and future workforce issues. They enable employers to attract high-quality recruits and improve the skills and productivity of existing employees.
9. Because of their success, the expansion of the Apprenticeships programme is a high priority for the Government; and over the past few years there has been a huge rise in the number and range of businesses offering Apprenticeships as a way of tackling their skills shortages .
10. Yet, within the Public Sector an opportunity is being missed. The sector accounts for some 20 per cent of the national workforce, but employs less than 10 per cent of all apprentices.
11. Many more organisations could be taking advantage of the benefits that Apprenticeships bring, as a way of unlocking talent within their local communities and ensuring that they have a workforce equipped with the skills it needs for today and tomorrow.

#### **C WHAT ARE APPRENTICESHIPS?**

12. Apprentices learn through a combination of on and off the job training and education. On the job they work alongside your staff and the training is delivered from a local training provider. Apprenticeships help organisations across the Country to stay competitive by developing the kind of people their business needs for the future, 'growing their own'.
13. Apprenticeships are available in over 180 different sector areas ranging from Business Administration to Engineering - see Appendix 2 for a detailed list. There are two levels of Apprenticeships – Apprenticeships (Level 2) and Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3).
14. Apprenticeships can last up to 12 months and they work towards a National Vocational Qualification at Level 2, Key skills and in most cases a technical certificate.
15. Advanced Apprenticeships can last up to 24 months and apprentices work towards a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3, Key skills and a technical certificate.
16. For any apprentice, the Individual's starting point is determined by their current skill set and experience and an initial assessment.

#### **D SEFTON'S CURRENT POSITION**

17. The work currently being undertaken on the Workforce Development Strategy reflects Central Government aspirations. By supporting an apprenticeship programme we will be able to respond to existing and future recruitment and retention issues. The strategy we are looking to adopt is as follows:
  - Develop a range of tailored recruitment routes that are suitable for the skill set that is being recruited to and support the Councils Employment & Skills Strategy
  - Maintain the Council as an 'employer of choice' for existing and potential employees
  - Recognise high performance and tackle under performance using a range of policies and interventions
  - Anticipate future workforce requirement (including succession planning) through effective workforce development planning
18. In May 2005, Sefton Council approved the establishment of a corporate apprenticeship programme. This included a fixed-term post of Apprenticeship Co-ordinator (funded for 12 months by the LSC). The successful applicant took up her post on 5 September 2005: her initial focus was current employees under the age of 25. By the end of November 2005, 37 young people were signed up to an apprenticeship in a wide range of areas. The early success demonstrated the benefits of a dedicated resource co-ordinating and managing the process. The fixed term post became permanent from April 2006.

19. The success has continued. To date 121 employees have been converted to apprenticeships. In addition, a further 232 staff have been able to access Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications through Train to Gain and Public Sector funds.
20. The monetary value of the training that has and is being accessed amounts to some £526,400. Given the constraints that many departments face in relation to their budgets, it is unlikely that such a programme of development could have otherwise been provided.
21. The non-monetary value is the increased productivity and additional responsibilities being undertaken by the young people.
22. The Council benefits from having motivated, committed and enthusiastic young people who are being actively encouraged to develop and to aspire to more challenging job roles. Not only are the individuals benefiting, but they also are role models for their peers who may not currently work for a local authority and their local communities.
23. This success is enabled through the dedicated support of a partnership involving the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator, the apprentice, their line manager and the training providers. This includes programmed, regular reviews of the apprentice's progress and time and effort being spent on building and maintaining effective relationships.
24. The work to date has resulted in Sefton MBC achieving the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) 'Greater Merseyside Apprenticeship Employer of the Year' 2008. We have also had individual successes such as:
  - Michelle Gillespie, Street Lighting – Association Public Service Excellence (APSE), Highways & Street Lighting Apprentice of the Year 2008
  - Gary Moore, Leisure – LSC Apprentice of the Year 2008

## **E PROPOSAL**

25. We propose to establish 101 apprenticeship posts across the Authority with an initial 51 posts being appointed by December 2009 and the remaining apprenticeships being appointed during the period from January 2010 – March 2010. As one of the target groups is young people not in employment, education or training who may not be ready to start an apprenticeship, we have also devised a progression route.
26. The proposal would represent 1.89% of the total number of staff employed by the Council. The information contained in the table below indicated the preferred destinations of the established of apprenticeship vacancies within the Council. Every effort is being made to ensure that the allocation of these posts is proportionate to the size of the department. The model incorporates flexibility that can allow these numbers to be moved within the 101 quota.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>	<b>Number of Apprentices</b>
Chief Executive	227	6
Children Services	2100	30
Combined Business Support Unit	41	1
Environmental Services	737	18
Finance	297	5
Housing Market Renewal	14	1
Legal and Admin	96	2
Leisure Services	871	18
Personnel	50	2
Planning	398	3
Health & Social Care	457	13
Technical Services	35	1
Tourism	36	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5318</b>	<b>101</b>

27. The delivery models for apprenticeships will vary depending on the occupational area; each apprenticeship framework is different (details of which are attached in Appendix 2). However in general we anticipate that the apprenticeship will last for a maximum of 51 weeks, full time (36 hours per week) with at least 7 hours per week dedicated to training and development. Appropriate training providers will deliver the training; relationships with these training providers have already been established through our current model.
28. During the 51 week period the Apprentice will be expected to complete the whole programme which consists of Accelerated Programme Led Pathway (Pre-Apprenticeship) in full, Programme Led Apprenticeships and Employer led Apprenticeships (refer to appendix 4). The Apprenticeship will be confirmed once the young person starts on the Employer Led aspect of the programme.
29. Should the apprentice complete the 51-week period without securing employment then their Apprenticeship will be terminated. The notice period for this termination will be given at week 41. Included in the programme model is an exit strategy that will incorporate robust employability skills training to support the Apprentice in progressing into employment.
30. It should be noted at this point that the training allowance for apprenticeships is agreed nationally and reflects the allowances paid by other Merseyside authorities. This reduced rate reflects the fact that these posts are trainees and would not be expected to undertake the full role and responsibilities of a member of staff in a non-trainee role. Host departments will be expected to fully support the apprentice in all activities relating to the achievement of their qualifications.
31. It is proposed that the Council targets young people who are not in education, employment or training and we anticipate liaising with colleagues in Children's Services to maximise this.
32. The second target area will be young people currently being supported by our Leaving Care Team within Children's Services. This team currently has a caseload of approximately 173 young people who have been looked after by Sefton Council and who now require qualitative training opportunities that will progress these young people into sustainable employment. The proposed apprenticeship programme will support our role as corporate parent to these young people and provide them access to sustainable employment and training within the Council and to support their economic well being. This proposal also links and supports the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
33. The programme is designed to support the five objectives of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, but is designed specifically to target achieve economic well being, providing an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community.

## **F RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **34. Financial Implications**

The total cost per apprenticeship is £95.00 per week; this allowance is in line with nationally agreed rates. The total cost per apprentice ranges from £2,850 - £3,705 per apprenticeship. The apprenticeship model does not incur any additional on-costs.

Financial arrangements for Looked After Children will have to be explored and financial arrangements will have to be reviews to ensure they are not excluded from these opportunities.

### **35. Staffing Implications**

The proposed Apprenticeship Programme will be centrally co-ordinated within Corporate Learning and Development, however, it will require a dedicated Programme Co-ordinator to manage and monitor all aspects of the programme. It is proposed that this appointment should be a 12 month fixed term post or open for a secondment. The total cost for this



appointment would range from £32,944 - £34,874 depending on experience and subject to job evaluation (see appendix 5 and 6).

The Learning and Skills Council will transfer a number of staff into the local authority from April 1st because of government changes and transition of responsibility for 16 - 19 planning and funding. Therefore there is an opportunity for one of the individuals to be seconded to Corporate Learning and Development to manage and monitor this programme.

## **G CONCLUSIONS**

36. The Government has introduced a requirement for all young people to be in education or training until the age of 18, by 2015 with their recent strategy ensuring that every suitably qualified young person who wants to take up an Apprenticeship place will be able to do so by 2013. Added to this recent workforce planning activity has indicated that the profile of the organisation is generally ageing and that some areas are experiencing recruitment difficulties.
37. By re-introducing an apprenticeship programme we will increase the range of entry level opportunities available to people who wish to work for the Council. We also have the potential to impact upon our performance in relationship to young people not in employment, education or training and to support our obligation as corporate parents to our looked after children.

## **H RECOMMENDATIONS**

38. It is recommended that the proposal described in Section E of this report be approved.