



To: Executive Councillor for Waste and Environment
Report by: Head of Streets and Open Spaces
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment 26th June 2012
Wards affected: All

Environmental Apprenticeship Scheme Non Key Decision

1. Executive summary

1.1 Streets and Open Spaces ran an Apprenticeship Scheme in Environmental Cleansing during 2011. 12 young people were given the opportunity to join the scheme. 8 completed and attained the full educational achievements available under the scheme. 1 apprentice has gone on to secure full time employment within the cleansing team.

There have been benefits for all involved in the scheme including apprentices, workforce and the partner organisation Nordic Pioneer.

This report highlights the success of the scheme and recommends that the scheme is undertaken again in 2012.

1.2 It is requested that receipts from Fixed Penalty Notices be used to part fund the scheme to the value of £9000.
The further £21,000 funding required will be met from existing staffing budgets.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended:
- a) To note the achievements of the Apprentice scheme that ran in 2011.
 - b) To approve a further scheme for 2012.
 - c) To approve the use of receipts from Fixed Penalty Notices to the value of £9000.

3. Background

3.1 This report provides an overview of the apprenticeship scheme managed by Cambridge City Council with Nordic Pioneer Limited. The scheme commenced in 2011. It explains the background to the project and what the respective parties gained from the scheme and also the scope for future schemes in the city.

3.2 The media have been highlighting for some time public concerns about national youth unemployment levels. These levels were reported to have topped the 1 million mark on 16 November 2011. Specific concerns relate to how the 16-24 year old unemployed youth age range appears to be the most difficult to reach.

3.3 Nordic Pioneer Limited had developed and successfully implemented 'young apprenticeship' programmes across the broad range of local authority environmental services. These include 'street scene' services, grounds maintenance, housing management and refuse collection services.

3.4 Approval was given at the Environment Scrutiny Committee of 15th March 2011 for a pilot Apprenticeship scheme with Nordic Pioneer to be undertaken and outcomes reviewed.

3.5 The apprenticeships offered solutions to address those nationally felt concerns at local level. Nordic Pioneer had a success rate being of over 95%, in reaching that specific, seemingly 'hard-to-reach' age range.

3.6 The original proposal for a Cambridge City Council apprenticeship programme was prepared in January 2011. It followed a series of partnership development meetings between officers of Cambridge City Council, and Nordic Pioneer Limited. Two phases of the apprenticeship programme were implemented in June and September 2011.

3.7 The broad concept was to establish an apprenticeship scheme in Cambridge, to employ 8 – 12 local young people, ideally in the 16 – 24 year old age range. These people would then be required to undertake high value and highly visible environmental services work activities, throughout the city. After six months, the young people would have received a wealth of operational services training and guidance at the hands of council experts. This 'on-the-job' experience was to be founded on an initial, intensive period of work-specific training, conducted by Nordic Pioneer Limited.

3.8 On commencement of the scheme initial training was designed to prepare apprentices for the work environment, as relates to a major public sector employer. As such, apprentices received the following training before they are allowed into the work place:

Apprentices' Induction Training

Make sure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety (H&S legislation, dealing with hazards, reporting, risk assessments);

Communicate effectively with customers and others (customer service, diversity, equal opportunities, bullying in workplace, keeping calm when dealing with difficult customers, body language, open/closed questions);

Develop Yourself (1:1 appraisal, personal development, SMART targets);

Working with others and follow reporting procedures (team work benefits, when and how to report work matters);

Clean external surfaces and areas (includes graffiti removal, weather, visual inspection, looking after tools and equipment);

Dealing with Routine Waste (what is routine and hazardous, clinical etc different ways to handle/ dispose of waste, PPE)

Perform Street Cleansing manually (legislation, different brooms and tools how and why we use them, standards of cleansing, public/private land);

Conflict management - (signs verbal and non verbal and what actions to take- respond but not to react);

Sharps Handling and Disposal (where you will find sharps, how to pick up safely, disposal, diseases that can be transmitted, action to take if stuck by needle and where to go for advice).

3.9 On completion of the apprenticeship programme, the young people were trained, and able to undertake an entry level role in the operational work force – should such a valuable opportunity exist. At the very least, the apprentices have acquired sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to make them much better placed to enter full-time employment. It is pleasing to note that an apprentice has been successful in securing a permanent post as a Cleansing Operative through the Council's vacancy and recruitment process.

3.10 In addition to the practical experience, and just as important, apprentices have gained the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at A-E level. On completion of the scheme the main academic achievements are:

City and Guilds Level 2 Certificate in Cleaning & Support Services Skills (QCF = Qualification and Credits Framework)

City and Guilds Level 2 Award in Cleaning Principles (QCF)

NCFE Level 1 Key Skills in Application of Number

NCFE Level 1 Key Skills in Communication

NCFE Level 2 Certificate of Sharps Handling and Disposal

3.11 The stated aim of the project was to ensure that young people in Cambridge achieve an apprenticeship in six months, whilst supporting the council policy and aspiration to be a cleaner, greener and safer city.

This has been achieved with both phases of the scheme.

3.12 The scheme objectives were:-

To recruit and maintain young people to become neighbourhood assistants in Cleansing Services within Cambridge City Council.

To assist the Council to achieve it's objective to keep the city clear of litter and graffiti.

To assist the Council to achieve it's objective to maintain public realm, footpaths and cycle ways to a high standard of cleanliness.

To support young people into employment and enhance their ongoing employment chances, either with the council or elsewhere.

To attract a more diverse age range into the workforce.

3.13 Partnership Requirements

Nordic Pioneer were required to:

Advertise, recruit and employ the apprentices.

Provide 10 days initial on-site training for apprentices.

Complete assessor visits (at least two per candidate).

Complete paperwork and apply for the qualification and certificates for apprentices.

Participate in media / awards ceremony for young people.

Cambridge City Council were required to:

Provide suitable training venues and refreshments.

Provide apprentices' uniform and other personal protective equipment.

Develop and provide operational services work and supervision programme.

Fund the apprentices' weekly salary.

3.14 The broad conclusions of the scheme are:

- There had been appreciable difficulties in recruiting the optimum numbers of young apprentices for each phase of the programme. These have been addressed. The reasonable expectation is that any future recruitment process outputs will improve with the benefit of practical, local experience.
- Those apprentices who were recruited have quickly become valued and valuable members of the operational services work force, albeit on a short-term basis.
- Suitable work place supervision and mentoring systems have been implemented and developed, and these contributed in making the scheme a success. Further improvement would be of benefit and this is a shared responsibility, between Cambridge City Council and Nordic Pioneer Limited.

- Apprentices benefit most from being introduced to a variety of work activities, as part of a structured development programme. This needs to include simply observing or 'shadowing' related work colleagues or activities.
- Apprentices have been noticed and welcomed by local residents and the general public.
- Apprentices wear council uniform with pride and appreciate the opportunity of being associated with a major, local employer.
- The majority of apprentices were able to complete both the practical and academic aspects of the apprenticeship programmes with 8 out of 12 apprentices completing all educational attainments.
- A Cambridge City Council apprentice was one of only a select few who achieved distinction or merit awards for part of their studies.
- Partnership working between Cambridge City Council and Nordic Pioneer Limited has been very effective and continues to grow.
- There are clear economic and social benefits from engaging in apprenticeship programmes aimed at the 16-24 year old age group.

3.15 It is felt that the scheme has been of incredible benefit to all participants. The effect on the existing workforce has been positive. Some team members have learnt new skills including mentoring, coaching and training and many have enjoyed the very positive experience of sharing their knowledge. The introduction of young people into the existing workforce altered some dynamics but again in a positive way with existing employees being refreshed by the presence of young people. There were no adverse effects from the scheme.

3.16 It is recommended to continue with the Apprenticeship Scheme with Nordic Pioneer for 2012/13 and offer a further 12 young people this great opportunity.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The cost of the scheme for 2012/13 will be £30,000. £9000 of which will be funded from the receipts of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for littering, flytipping and abandoned vehicles. The use of Fixed Penalty receipts in this way falls within DEFRA guidelines. The remaining £21,000 will be funded from existing budgets.

(b) Staffing Implications

Staff are not involved in 1-2-1 training with individual young people. Many of the team are already CRB checked however existing staff would not be put in a position where this would be an issue. No complaints about the scheme were received from any existing team member during the two phases of 2011/12.

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

Within the Service Delivery Team we have an ageing workforce. The introduction of young people brings diversity into the team that is missing.

(d) Environmental Implications

The Apprenticeship scheme has a positive impact on the environment with the use of a resource which would not otherwise be available to us.

(e) Consultation

There are no direct consultation implications for this report.

(f) Community Safety

The work of the Apprentices in clearing up areas that are overgrown or heavily littered contribute to the feeling of well being for residents and will instil a sense of pride in the environment for the apprentices.

5. Background papers

Environment Scrutiny report 15th March 2011

6. Appendices

7. Inspection of papers

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