



## ***FULL COUNCIL REPORT***

Date Written	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 *
Report Author	Hannah Brown
Service Area	HR & OD
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2022

*To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen*

## **Apprenticeships**

### **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

1.1 An apprenticeship scheme is an integral element of the Council's strategic approach to workforce planning. The Council faces challenges by way of an ageing workforce and so in order to be able to meet our obligations to our service users in the future, employing a long-term vision for preparing the workforce of the future is necessary.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION that**

2.1 The content of the report be noted and debated.

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

3.1 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have been offering apprenticeships for a number of years. These have been both to existing members of staff, whereby they are able to take up a qualification at the same time as their role, but also by recruiting new apprentices into the organisation to help with succession planning and training new people to become qualified in their specialist area.

3.2 Some of the areas that have benefited from apprentices have been Highways, Parks & Cemeteries and Engineering.

- 3.3 Apprenticeships are usually a 2 year programme, whereby the individual will attend college or work with a training provider to undertake a knowledge and practical element to the qualification. Within college time they will learn the knowledge elements to the role and then back in the workplace they will put into practice what they have learnt and be assessed on how well this has been applied.

## 4.0 HEALTHY ORGANISATION STRATEGY

- 4.1 The Healthy Organisation Strategy has revealed six themes which are crucial to securing the sustainable future of the Council and supporting its programme of change. These are:

- Skills Development,
- Leadership & Management,
- Culture,
- Attraction & Retention,
- Health & Wellbeing, and
- Performance Management.

*Our aim is to ensure we have 'A MOTIVATED, ACCOUNTABLE & ENGAGED WORKFORCE WHO HAVE THE SKILLS AND ABILITY TO DELIVER THE ORGANISATION'S GOALS.'*

A programme of work and action plan sits behind each of these themes, which all staff within the Council have a responsibility to contribute towards which will ensure our shared success.

### A Skills Development

- A.1 This area was developed to ensure we have focus on developing our staff to have the right skills in the right jobs.

***Aim: Our workforce is highly skilled and can develop to their full potential***

- A.2 One of the main focuses over the last 12 months for this theme has been the apprenticeship programme.

#### Apprenticeships

- A.3 In 2020 a project concept was submitted to Corporate Management Team to implement an Apprenticeship Scheme, which is centrally managed by the Organisational Development Manager within Human Resources.
- A.4 It was proposed that the Council corporately provides a contribution (salary fund pot) to the salary payable to an apprentice, to provide essential support for service areas to utilise apprenticeships.
- A.5 Service areas were required to apply for financial support to pay the apprentices salary from the salary fund pot. The scheme offered apprenticeships as an entry route into the organisation. An apprenticeship can be defined as undertaking a

period of employment whilst studying for a formal qualification at the same time. A total of 13 applications were received of which there were 18 roles as some areas asked for more than one apprentice. Set criteria was created to determine which roles would be successful in obtaining the funding required.

An apprenticeship panel was set up of CMT members who had not submitted a bid for their area to ensure fairness.

The panel reviewed all applications and scored each one using a matrix approach. The top 5 applications were offered an apprentice funded post, these were:

- Data Analytics
- Horticulture - Parks department
- Energy and Carbon
- Learning and Development
- Social Media

- A.6 The recruitment took place between May and June 2021 for all 5 posts. In addition to the 5 'Corporate funded' apprentices recruited, an additional 2 apprentices were also recruited in Parks and Building Control, and these were funded by individual department budgets. This allowed us to exceed our target of 5 apprentices to 7.
- A.7 All apprentices began employment in September and took part in a Corporate Induction programme. They have been enrolled onto an apprenticeship programme with either a college or training provider which will mentor and support them to achieve a qualification relevant to the role.
- A.8 Regular meetings take place between the apprentices, HR and line managers to ensure progress is made against their objectives for the successful completion of the apprenticeship over the 2 year period.
- A.9 The moratorium process was consulted on with the Trade Unions and has been amended to allow managers to consider an apprenticeship post before recruiting a qualified person into the vacancy. This gives managers the opportunity to think about how they can grow and develop a person into the role with the knowledge and skills they require now and for the future.

### Aspire Apprenticeships

- A.10 Since the inception of the Aspire programme in 2017, 51 apprentices have been signed up. All apprentices are signed up onto Level 3 STEAM related frameworks within the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Sector. The Shared Apprenticeship programme allows for the apprentices to rotate around our host employers giving a more well-rounded approach to learning.
- A.11 Aspire have met with key Manufacturing and Engineering employers across the Merthyr Tydfil and Hirwaun area resulting in several becoming Host Employers for the Aspire apprentices. These Host companies range from micro-Enterprises to SME's and work alongside the Aspire team to develop and upskill existing employees. In addition to the host employers, there are a number of companies

engaged with Aspire, who continue to support in the facilitation of other opportunities outside of the Shared Apprenticeship programme.

- A.12 Following on from the apprenticeships, 100% of Cohort 1 and 2 entered into FTE employment with support from MTCBC internal employability programme and 13% progressed onto further learning through a higher qualification. Higher Learning opportunities can range from HNC to HND engineering qualifications.
- A.13 Funding streams are being utilised from Merthyr College PLA provision and the LA's WSFA to support existing employees and we are currently seeking guidance on further support for the Aspire apprentices.
- A.14 Whilst the impact of Covid-19 has been felt throughout the Local Authority, the recruitment of Aspire apprentices has continued and 15 more apprentices have been secured for Cohort 5. It is also worth noting that during these challenging times, the loss of the Liaison and Mentoring Officer left the Aspire team with a reduced team consisting of 1 full time Coordinator and 1 part time administrator. However, this post has since been successfully recruited for with the appointee beginning in September 2021.

## **5.0 APPRENTICESHIP FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 On completion of the first quarter of the Apprenticeship, the OD team met with both the Line Managers and the Apprentices to carry out progress updates and discuss any obstacles they may have faced during their initial stage. Some initial feedback from the Line Managers and Apprentices have been included below:

Social Media Apprentice *"I have settled into the team really well and enjoy working with the Communications team. I have already worked on campaigns and videos and am beginning to learn to edit. Some of my highlights to date are contributing to the videos for Careers Wales, creating graphics for our social media pages and filming with Councillor Kevin O'Neil on Bonfire Night."*

Energy and Carbon Apprentice *"I enjoy working as part of a small team and have been taught by the team dedicating one on one time to work with me on understanding the duties of my job role. Projects I have been included on are collating evidence and reporting back to my team on ways to reduce energy reducing tasks based in the Civic Office."*

Building Control Apprentice *"I am finding this role incredibly enjoyable and very interesting as no two days are the same. The role works really well with my course as I can put the theory into practice. The team have been great and I have attended several site visits to be shown the different types of building work that is being completed in the Merthyr Tydfil Borough."*

## 6.0 NEXT STEPS 2022

- 6.1 In order to continually professionally develop the Apprentices, it is important to hold 'development days'. The aim is to hold 4 - 6 sessions over the 2 year programme with each session dedicated to sharing experiences and best practices, providing key training to upskill their general knowledge in areas such as presentation/communication skills, how to structure written assignments and chair meetings, as well as gaining further feedback from managers/mentors.
- 6.2 National Apprenticeship Week commences from 7<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022. In order to raise awareness and promote the Apprenticeship Programme, there will be an online campaign with supporting materials to include testimonials from some of this year's apprentices. In addition, partnering with some of our external training providers will allow opportunities for Apprenticeship workshops with our Line Managers to continually promote the benefits of an apprentice for any possible further funding opportunities.
- 6.3 Managers will be encouraged to look at Apprenticeships within their workforce plans to allow new opportunities to be utilised by employing an apprentice to grow and develop them into future roles.
- 6.4 Support and guidance will also be offered to look at Apprenticeships for existing staff to help with succession planning and growing the talent of our workforce.

## 7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The financial implications have been covered within a previous business case to allow the Council to recruit more apprentices in 2021. By recruiting new apprentices we have been able to benefit from Welsh Governments Employer Incentive Scheme which was launched during the pandemic to help encourage employers to recruit apprentices. These funds will help to develop the apprentices and also be utilised in future programmes.

## 8.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Neutral/Not Applicable
<b>1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives</b>	4 of 4	0 of 4	0 of 4
<b>2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Involvement</li> </ul>	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5

<b>3. Protected Characteristics</b> (including Welsh Language)	3 of 10	0 of 10	7 of 10
<b>4. Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	2 of 6	0 of 6	4 of 6
<b>5. Consultation and Engagement</b>	<b>Undertaken</b>	<b>Due to be Undertaken</b>	<b>Not Required</b>
	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
<b>6. Data and Evidence to inform the proposal</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>
	1 of 1		0 of 1
<b>7. Biodiversity and the resilience of Ecosystems</b>	<b>Maintained</b>	<b>Enhanced</b>	<b>Reduced</b>
	0 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
<b>Summary</b>			
<b>The main positive impacts are:</b>	The main positive impacts are enabling existing and new employees of all ages to gain valuable and meaningful qualifications either to re-enter the workplace, upskill and promote career opportunities as well as hiring new employees to assist with workforce and succession planning areas ie. skills shortages, difficult to fill posts or an ageing workforce. The proposal positively complements and will help fulfil the Council's Well-being Objectives and the 5 Ways of Working.		
<b>The main negative impacts are:</b>	No negative impacts have been identified.		

**ELLIS COOPER**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS DAVIES**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE**  
**AND RESOURCES**

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		<b>No</b>

***Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.***