

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	24 January 2011
Title:	Opportunities for Work Experience, Training and Internships
Reference:	2527
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update Cabinet on current organisational arrangements supporting the employment and preparation for employment of young people.
- 1.2. This paper also seeks approval of the proposed developments of further opportunities in the future

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 29 November 2010 that, in light of the potential impact of the recruitment freeze on school and university leavers, the Chief Executive would explore avenues to ensure opportunities for work experience, training, internships and graduate development still exist within the Council. A report was requested for Cabinet in January 2011 setting out the current organisational arrangements for young people including school leavers and graduates, and opportunities that might exist in the future.
- 2.2. As well as a longstanding commitment to develop opportunities for young people through building good relationships with schools and local communities, the Council has a long term strategy to attract future generations of talent into the organisation and to promote career opportunities in local government. Initiatives such as Work Experience placements and Apprenticeships continue to be important ways to meet both those goals.
- 2.3. There is a particular focus on appropriate support for young people who are care leavers, have previously been Young Offenders and those who fall into the Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETS) category.

- 2.4. There are 71 secondary schools in Hampshire and in 2010 there were 13,950 school leavers
- 2.5. Using national averages as a guide, it is possible to make some very broad generalisations. It is likely that over 60% of those leavers will have career plans formed before leaving school, many of which will involve some form of further education. In the region of 17% may fall longer term into the NEETs category. The remainder will successfully seek whatever relevant employment they can find or, if unable to find suitable work may take up last minute training opportunities
- 2.6. In 2010 there were 112 care leavers. It is estimated that circa 35% of them are not in employment, education or training. This equates to an estimated 40 young people per year classified as NEETs.
- 2.7. Hampshire has an exemplary record in post 16 education: 10% of all Beacon colleges in the country are in Hampshire and 3 Hampshire providers of post 16 Education are in the top 10 nationally. Per capita, Peter Symonds college sends more students to Oxbridge than any other college in the country and Sparsholt is the top agricultural college in the country. It is therefore not surprising that large numbers of young people come into Hampshire to take up post 16 Education opportunities, and this county has more young people in post 16 education than any other.
- 2.8. Nationally there are significant changes ahead: the school leaving age will rise to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015; the Department of Education has not yet confirmed whether the national programme budget for statutory work related learning (N.B. not work experience) for young people at Key Stage 4 (14 – 16) will be affected by cuts to the non schools education budget. The impact of these known and anticipated changes in relation to the employment of young people is not yet known.
- 2.9. As a large public sector employer, Hampshire Council has offered a number of employment related initiatives specifically aimed at supporting young people. These include well developed Work Experience, Apprenticeships and 'grow your own' graduate schemes, in addition to participation in national schemes such as the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) and Backing Young Britain. The County has also worked actively with local partners to enable Portsmouth University to develop a new Foundation degree in local government. This involves placements in local councils.

3. **Performance**

- 3.1. **Work Experience;** the County's scheme is aimed at 14/15/16 year olds. It is led through the Hampshire Learning Centre in Human Resources and is delivered via an extensive network of coordinators in departments. Descriptions of placement opportunities are included in comprehensive information packs which are made available to schools. The external website <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/workexperience> has been updated and relaunched this year. It now links to the Recruitment portal. The internal web pages <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/hr/hr-centres/hampshirelearningcentre/workexperienceinhcc.htm> offer guidance

and support for managers, Work Experience coordinators and staff who would like to develop opportunities in their area or simply find out more about it. For the academic year 2009/10 HCC delivered a total number of placements in HCC departments and in schools of 1,713.

Apprenticeships; In June 2009, building on the success of existing apprenticeships in PBRISIT, CMT approved pump priming funding and launched a pilot corporate scheme with 23 new apprentices following recognised NVQ training programmes over 12 – 18 months. The majority of these will conclude early in 2011. The scheme has had an extremely high retention rate (20/23) and a number of the apprentices have successfully secured permanent positions in HCC. To date of the 23, 1 dropped out before the start, 2 have left early on in the programme, 2 have found employment outside Hampshire County Council and 5 have secured employment with HCC. A further 8 apprentices will be completing their framework by the end of January 2011 and are currently seeking employment both within and outside HCC, the final 5 will be completing their framework between February and August 2011.

The cohort includes Youth Offending Team (YOT) clients and care leavers. Other apprenticeship opportunities have been developed as the pilot has progressed. Numbers of apprentices in Schools have increased steadily. Alongside delivery of the pilot scheme the underpinning support structure has been developed. This ensures consistent approaches and fair and equitable terms and conditions. Proper support for the apprentices is vital, so placements have been selected with care, managers have been well briefed and a network of mentors and regular induction/training days have been necessary for the success of the programme. Despite the current economic climate and employment challenges, the rolling target of 66 apprenticeships to have been taken up by the end of 2010/11 has been achieved. The council recently won two awards through the Hospitality Training Partnership (HTP) which provides training across the public sector: an apprentice working in Hantsdirect won the HTP Apprentice of the Year title and the Council itself won the HTP Public Sector Employer of the Year. Apprenticeships are still being developed and offered but in the current climate of downsizing this is at a more modest level than originally anticipated.

3.2. **Other initiatives;**

- a) Some areas have successful 'grow your own' graduates approaches, most notably for Accountancy and Social Work.
- b) The national schemes; Future Jobs Fund and Backing Young Britain have both now been discontinued, although there are number of participants on the FJF still completing their work here. FJF offered paid work/training or work experience for at least 6 months to 18 – 24 year olds who were long term unemployed. Backing Young Britain was targeted at the same age group and was a scheme for unpaid work experience/internship of either 2 weeks or 3 months' duration.

- c) Other than the now discontinued Backing Young Britain, there is no corporate scheme for internships. However there are a limited number of examples of them in different departments where the needs of the learner most closely match both the need of the department and what the department can offer. This has been in response to requests from individuals or universities which occur ad hoc. Nationally there is debate about the fairness of internship schemes which use relatively skilled unpaid labour for a significant length of time and this may be formalised into guidance that the minimum wage should be paid to interns.

4. **Key Learning from the initiatives**

- 4.1. the quality of the placement in any of the schemes is of paramount importance. For the young person's experience to be valuable and positive the work must be meaningful and the environment must be stable and supportive.
- 4.2. Developing and maintaining the infrastructure to support these schemes is labour intensive. All groups of young people have required considerable amounts of pastoral care, especially care leavers.
- 4.3. Many young people struggle with adapting to the working environment, not surprisingly particularly those who have been NEET for any length of time. This has required specific support both in terms of performance management advice for managers of placements and also direct teaching/coaching about appropriate workplace behaviours
- 4.4. managing placements has proved to be a good development opportunity for more junior staff
- 4.5. Young people have given feedback that unpaid, or even paid but fixed term work, may not be attractive to them and this has been borne out by some difficulties in recruiting for these schemes.

5. **Two principal challenges**

- 5.1. **Achieving a consistent approach across the County.** It is important that there is a single coherent approach to any of the initiatives, so that all placements are handled equitably, the quality of the experience is ensured the outcomes monitored and any risk to the organisation is managed well. For example, when Work Experience opportunities are handled 'unofficially' the young person may not be involved in appropriate work, may have access to information that requires a CRB check to have been carried out, and, if injured while on site, the organisation may not be adequately insured
- 5.2. **Ensuring sustainable numbers of placements.** Appropriately supporting a short term placement of a young person requires investment of time and resource as well as a stable experienced team to make the placement a success. Some placements are more in demand than others and some work lends itself more easily to the creation of a good placement opportunity. It is important not to overwhelm teams with placements as this

can compromise the success of the placement and potentially service delivery.

6. **Future direction**

- 6.1. **Work Experience;** future plans include developing more opportunities for YOT clients and NEETs. PBRISIT has a pilot scheme planned to open work experience opportunities more widely to people with learning difficulties. This builds on the successful partnership with Mencap two years ago.
- 6.2. **Apprentices;** the Council will continue to work with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), local employers and training providers to ensure that employers are fully aware of funding opportunities, that high quality information, advice and guidance on apprenticeships is available for young people in Hampshire. It is envisaged that an effective next step to this is for the Council to work closely with an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA). ATAs offer a number of benefits including high completion rates, better quality placements and the opportunity for smaller employers to participate. Although there is some concern nationally about meeting NAS targets in the current economic climate, there is interest from local training providers/existing ATAs to work with the Council in this way.
- 6.3. **A new initiative;** a scheme will be developed to provide employment specifically to a number of leavers from Hampshire schools and colleges. This will start small but grow over time. It will ensure that these young people are given every support with career planning and development. The 'graduates' of this blue ribbon scheme will become the future ambassadors for it, raising the profile of the Council, showing young people its quality as an employer, and making sure that other young people in the county know about the huge range of opportunities and interesting work which the Council offers. Change in the employment landscape of the Council is unprecedented but the transformation that is underway provides the chance to do things differently. Recruiting enthusiastic young people into the organisation and helping to shape their future careers within it is good for the organisation and good for them.

7. **Recommendation(s)**

- 7.1. Cabinet is asked to
- a) note progress in achieving successful placements for young people,
 - b) approve the approach of continuing and reinforcing existing schemes with a view to exploring further opportunities when the changes in departmental structures have been implemented and new ways of working embedded, and
 - c) note that action will be taken to develop a new scheme to provide employment to school leavers.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Not applicable

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Not applicable

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact

b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No impact