

Time began: 10.35am
Time ended: 11.07am

**Personnel Committee
6 January 2022**

Present Councillors Dhindsa, A Holmes and Skelton

Officers present Liz Moore – Head of Human Resources
 Tania Hay – Apprenticeship Project Manager

22/21 Election of the Chair

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair, Councillor Skelton nominated Councillor Dhindsa to serve as Chair for this meeting; Councillor A Holmes seconded the nomination.

Resolved that Councillor Dhindsa would serve as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Councillor Dhindsa took the chair at this point.

23/21 Apologies

Apologies were received for councillors Pegg, Potter, Sandhu, Carr and Pandey.

24/21 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

25/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

26/21 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 November 2021.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

27/21 Apprenticeship Project Update

The Committee received a report on the Apprenticeship Project update. This report was sponsored by the Head of Organisational Development and was presented by the Apprenticeship Project Manager.

The Committee noted that the Apprenticeship Project's activities in 2021 included:

- £440K spent on programmes April – Dec.
- 18 new start apprentices aged 16-24 (none 2020 year due to pandemic)
- 5 new starters going through clearances aiming to start in January 2022
- Supporting services to switch from training budgets to levy funding
- Working with services to support hard to recruit posts to grow our own internally
- Successful graduations from programmes developed with the University of Derby
- Currently 159 colleagues on apprenticeship funded qualifications

It was reported that the LGA peer review exercise had provided the following feedback on the Council's performance:

- Second highest levy funding spend in the region
- Our own assessment against the LGA performance matrix matched that of the independent assessor
- Positive report and recommendations received
- We are one of the leading influencers in the region

It was noted that the Leadership and Management Programme continued to be very successful. It was reported that 11 colleagues had started on programme in September 2021 and that four colleagues would be starting on programme in January 2022. It was also noted that the Apprenticeship Team would be sending out communications regarding the September 2022 intake soon.

It was reported that eight Residential Child Care Workers started on programme with Derby College in November 2021 and that the Council were currently processing the second cohort, with the aim of starting them in February 2022. It was reported that three colleagues were starting on the Social Worker programme with Nottingham Trent University in January 2022 and that the Apprenticeship Team were currently processing several expressions of interest for various programmes.

It was noted that the Council had planned to hold a public event at the Council House to promote its apprenticeship offer on 7 February 2022. It was noted that this event would now take place during May 2022. It was reported that this event would be a great opportunity to promote services and the council with potential employees, schools, colleges and parents. It was noted that colleagues were planning to attend events hosted by the University of Derby and the Derby College Group during the National Apprenticeship Week 7th-13th February 2022.

The Committee noted that the Level 2 Business Administration Apprenticeship was switched off 31 July 2020, despite extensive lobbying from employers in all sectors. It was reported that nationally this was used as an entry level apprenticeship into businesses. It was noted that the Apprenticeship Project Manager was participating in a 'Trailblazer' group made up of numerous public

sector bodies which was submitting a proposal to develop a new level 2 Business Administration apprenticeship which would align with the current level 3 standard.

It was reported that all Trailblazer group members had been called to action by the Chairs on two points:

- to reach out to our partners in private businesses and ask if they'd like to be part of the Trailblazer group.
- to lobby our local MP and anyone else deemed as a useful contact and tell them we need Level 2 Apprenticeships, and that Business Administration is a first step to a career that can lead to senior management and beyond. Asking them to tell Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE) they want a Level 2 Administrator too.

It was reported that as of 17 December 2021, the Council had transferred a total of £3,317,743 into the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account and had drawn down £1,524,808 for apprenticeship training programmes. It was noted that since September 2021 the Council had not been experiencing expiration of funds and had been able to utilise all its Levy Fund. It was reported that the total Levy drawn down including expired funds was £2,052,508.

A councillor commented that it was encouraging to see that no funds had expired since September 2021. The Committee noted that this was due to several developments including: a substantial additional transfer to Derby Homes, 12 managers going on programme at Derby University and wider engagement with services.

A councillor asked which posts were considered 'hard to recruit to'. The Committee noted that posts in Adult Care, Social Care and Refuse were hard to recruit to. It was noted that these services were being assisted with training and with bringing programmes in house.

A councillor asked which Council had the highest Levy Fund spend in the region. The Apprenticeship Manager informed the Committee that they would look into this.

A councillor asked how much money the Council had lost so far in expired funds. The Committee noted that this figure was just over £500k and that the Council were focusing on developing the workforce in order to avoid losing further funds.

A councillor commented that it was important for the Council to allow services to recruit apprentices alongside developing the existing workforce. It was noted that the Apprenticeship Team were supporting services which had seen their applications for apprentices declined by the Resources Panel. It was noted that although the Apprenticeship Team were focusing on workforce development, they were also supporting recruitment where possible.

Members of the Board asked for a report to be brought to the next Committee meeting on what challenges the Apprenticeship Team were facing in relation to funding and whether this was impacting the Council's ability to spend the Levy Fund.

The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.

- 1. To note the update on the Apprenticeship Programme.**
- 2. The Personnel Committee agree to write to Mrs Latham OBE MP, Margaret Beckett MP and Amanda Solloway MP to ask them to support the development of the Business Administration Level 2 Apprenticeship.**
- 3. To note the Levy payments made to date, the drawdown for training programmes that we have instigated and expired funds as of 17 December 2021.**
- 4. To request that a report to be brought to the next Committee meeting on what challenges the Apprenticeship Team were facing in relation to funding and whether this was impacting the Council's ability to spend the Levy Fund.**

28/21 Foster Carer Leave Policy

The Committee received a report on the Foster Carer Leave Policy. This report was sponsored by the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources and was presented by the Head of Human Resources.

The Committee noted that Derby City Council recognised and valued the contribution that foster carers made to society and especially the lives of children in care. It was noted that the Council understood that foster carers who do other work in addition to fostering needed some flexibility in their working arrangements in order to meet the needs of their fostered child. It was reported that in recognition of this valuable contribution, foster carer leave was available for those colleagues that foster children.

The Committee noted that the proposed changes to the Foster Carer Leave Policy were:

- Foster carer leave will now be available for those colleagues that foster children or are going through the assessment process to foster children, either for Derby City Council Fostering service, other Local Authorities or Independent Fostering Agencies (previously colleagues could only apply if they were fostering for Derby City Council).
- Foster carer leave will apply to family and friends carers.
- Special Guardians will be eligible for the assessment leave entitlement (4 days)

- Foster carer leave will increase from 3 working days paid leave a year to:
 - 4 working days paid leave for the assessment, initial training and attendance at the fostering panel prior to approval as a foster carer. This is a one-off entitlement.
 - 5 working days paid leave in any rolling twelve - month period if the fostering placement requires this. This is the ongoing foster carer leave for approved foster carers.
 - This entitlement is pro rata for part-time colleagues.
- Colleagues will need to request leave from their manager who will consider requests based on service requirements.

The Committee noted that benefits to employers with Fostering Friendly status were:

- The Council can display the Fostering Friendly logo on our website and fostering material
- The Fostering Network publish a list of Fostering Friendly employers which can help to promote and celebrate the new status
- By becoming Fostering Friendly the Council can improve support for our DCC colleagues, making it easier for people to consider fostering.

It was reported that to obtain the Fostering Friendly Status, the Fostering Network has a list of recommendations that the HR policy should cover including:

- It applies to all employees who are foster carers
- Foster Carers in employment with your organisation are entitled to an additional minimum of five days paid leave per annum to allow for the process of becoming a foster carer, settling in a new child, training courses, support groups, meetings, and emergencies
- You must promote Foster Care Fortnight™ during our annual campaign (this recommendation we already support).

It was reported that once the Council had achieved Fostering Friendly Status it could encourage other local businesses to think about becoming Fostering Friendly. It was noted that the Council were part of the D2N2 Collaborative Board looking at ways it could collectively work together on Fostering. It was reported that one of the listed projects was to obtain Fostering Friendly Status. It was noted that Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derbyshire County Council, and Derby City Council were all updating their HR policies to become Fostering Friendly. It was reported that once all four councils had Fostering Friendly Status there would be a joint marketing campaign to promote this.

It was reported that the policy had been developed in consultation with the Principal Service Manager of the Fostering Service and that the proposals for the revised policy were agreed at People's DMT. It was noted that the revised draft Foster Carer Leave Policy had been shared with the HR Management team, Legal and the Strategic Director of People Services. The Committee noted that consultation had also taken place with Trade Union colleagues through the Policy Working Group and that the LGBTQ+ Network and the Lead on Equalities and Diversity were consulted on the draft Policy.

Members of the Committee commented that they supported the proposed changes to the Foster carer Leave Policy.

The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.

- 1. To approve the revised Foster Carer Leave Policy.**
- 2. To note that subject to Personnel Committee approval, the policy will proceed to CJC for ratification.**

MINUTES END.