

Economic Development Sub-Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Apprenticeships Funding Update
Date of meeting:	19 January 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact Members were provided with a report at the November 2016 meeting highlighting the strong performance in apprenticeships starts supporting the County Council's key objectives. Members were asked to note that the funding for much of the apprenticeship service will cease in June 2017 and that whilst alternative sources of external funding are being explored it may not be possible to continue with the current level of service offer. This report provides an update on the position.	

Executive summary

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note:

- That it has been possible to identify approximately 50% of the required resource that could be used to support the delivery of Apprenticeship promotion work in schools, the community and to employers from July 2017.
- That exploring alternative external sources of funding including European Social Fund Opportunities (ESF) and social mobility funding continues.

1. Proposal

- 1.1. In November, Members were concerned about the potential loss of Youth Work Apprentice posts from July 2017 when the current contracts finish.

Officers have completed an analysis of the original Apprenticeships Norfolk Funding made available in 2012 and have identified a high likelihood that up to £150,000 could be available to support the delivery of this work from July 2017.

Officers continue to explore potential match funding opportunities from a variety of sources including social mobility funding and ESF that could facilitate the retention and further development of the service, and will look to maximise the level of resources used from external sources to minimise the use of core funds. Further information will be available in the first quarter of 2017 when ESF calls are released and a further paper will keep Members updated then.

2. Evidence

- 2.1. The work of the apprentices in schools, hostels, youth centres and other community settings has impacted on the numbers of young people citing an Apprenticeship as their first choice at 16, rising from 1% in 2015 (128) to 6% in 2016 (464). Additionally, the latest data released from DfE shows that Norfolk

has the highest number of 16 and 17 year olds in the Eastern Region participating in Apprenticeships with growth in excess of 3% in October 2016 compared with the previous year. So, not only are more young people expressing an interest in an apprenticeship, but more are actively pursuing this to its natural conclusion, enabling more young people to earn whilst they learn and improving the skills levels in Norfolk.

Raising the profile of apprenticeships generally is an important part of the service offered by the four apprentices, they attend careers fairs in a variety of settings and host workshops to help with employability support. The apprentices have built excellent relationships with schools, DWP and other organisations in Norfolk and are regularly invited back and recommended to others across Norfolk.

Networking and communicating via social media and focus groups has allowed them to build relationships and strong partnerships for the future. The team are innovative, adaptable and professional in their delivery and have been commended by many who have worked with them.

The four Apprentice Youth Workers are a valuable resource offering a service throughout Norfolk to all events they attend, providing information and assistance. With ongoing provision of this service in Norfolk it is expected that we will continue to see growth in apprenticeships and for Norfolk to remain the county that is leading the way in the Eastern Region.

3 Financial implications

- 3.1 Up until the end of June 2017, no additional funding is required. Officers have identified some £150,000 that could be used to support continued activity for a further two years from July 2017 to June 2019.

4 Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1 Officers are now confident that there will be sufficient funding available within Norfolk County Council to continue activities from July 2017 for a further 2 years. Officers will continue to explore opportunities to attract match funding from an external source that would enable an enhanced level of service to be offered.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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