

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting: 18 May, 2021
Cabinet Member: Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer: Geraint Owen
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Title of Item: Apprenticeships Scheme and “Cynllun Yfory” Scheme for Managers and Experts

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

That the Cabinet continues to support the Apprenticeships Scheme, as well as the “Cynllun Yfory” Scheme, by earmarking a total of £1.1m for the purpose of funding the schemes, to be distributed in accordance with the content of the report.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

2.1 Is there support to fund the Apprenticeships Scheme for the next three years?

2.2 Is there support to approve additional funding to continue to attract graduates as future managers and experts?

3. BACKGROUND

APPRENTICESHIPS SCHEME

On 22 January 2019, the Cabinet approved an application to establish an Apprenticeships Scheme and to earmark a contribution of £300,000 towards recruiting up to 20 apprentices for the Council.

The purpose of the Apprenticeships Scheme is to promote apprenticeships, recruitment and apprentices and to ensure the quality of these apprenticeships across Council departments. The scheme is an integral part of workforce planning and is recognised within the 2021/22 Council Plan as part of the priority of workforce planning.

Following the first recruitment campaign in 2019, 17 apprentices were appointed to 10 different fields (Appendix 1).

11 women and six men have been recruited. The age range comprises of - two apprentices aged under 18, eleven apprentices between 18 and 24 and four apprentices who are over 25.

By now, nine apprentices have been appointed to jobs within the Council and continue to follow their qualifications. One apprentice has left the scheme voluntarily.

The above-mentioned numbers are appointments in priority fields including degree apprenticeships in Information Technology, Health and Social Care and the Civil Engineering field, where we have recruited two women.

For 2021, the Council will recruit 18 additional apprentices in nine fields (Appendix 2). These will also be funded in part by the original £300,000 earmarked in 2019. This means that the Council will have recruited 35 apprentices with the investment made in 2019. The numbers are much higher than originally anticipated. The main reason for this is that services across the Council have, for various reasons e.g. annual underspend, been able to contribute higher than expected amounts towards the salary.

The Council has committed to pay a fair wage to our apprentices, which is equivalent to the National Minimum Wage (Appendix 3). The estimated cost of employing an apprentice is approximately £35,000 for the full duration of an individual apprenticeship and consequently it can be stated that the investment of £300,000 has instigated actual investment of over £1 million on the basis that 35 apprenticeships have been established.

The Corporate Support Department has also invested additional funds to secure sufficient resource to support the apprentices and to administrate the Scheme. This means that every penny of the earmarked £300,000 has been used to employ apprentices since the Scheme launch in 2019.

As you will be aware, the Apprenticeships Levy was introduced in April 2017 to encourage employers and businesses to invest in apprenticeships. Every employer within the public, private and third sectors with an annual salary bill of more than £3million pay the levy which equates to 0.5% of the Council's total annual salary bill.

The Council will contribute around £700,000 to the apprenticeships levy for 2021/22. The Council does not receive any contribution from the levy towards the cost of employing apprentices however the levy does provide access to the qualification costs and the following training:

Apprentice- New jobs that have been created specifically for being an apprentice.

Learning while working- The Levy can fund the developmental elements of existing jobs.

In the early days of the levy, there was concern that the Council was not able to recover the cost of the levy through the training arranged. However, in 2019/20, when the Council contributed approximately £685,000 to the Apprenticeships Levy, it is estimated that a sum to the value of £680,000 was recovered in light of introducing the Apprenticeships Scheme and the in-service training that was arranged. Although the amount recovered will not be as high for 2020/21, we are confident that we could reclaim amounts that will at least equate to the levy in future.

The Council has held a successful promotional campaign through a number of different methods including social media, articles in local papers, apprenticeships week, apprentice panels and an apprenticeships fair. During the period, a number of people and influential groups have demonstrated their interest and appreciation of the Scheme including the Cabinet, a Member of Parliament, Heads of Department, setting managers and educational institutions.

Feedback from managers and teams about our apprentices has been positive and the responses to the questionnaire completed by the apprentices to assess their satisfaction with the Scheme have included descriptions such as 'Eye-opening', 'Prepared me well for the job', 'interesting, lots of experiences' and 'challenging'.

Although there is a lack of quality bilingual provision for apprentices in Wales, especially at higher levels, the Council has been at the forefront of encouraging providers to offer most of their provision through the medium of Welsh. To this end, we have introduced the "Statement of Ambition for the Welsh Language for Gwynedd Council Apprenticeships" which outlines linguistic expectations for the apprentice, the Council and the provider. Every provider and apprentice has signed up to the statements and committed to the expectations.

“CYNLLUN YFORY”

This Scheme has existed in different forms for many years and was known as the Professional Trainees Scheme before being re-branded as “Cynllun Yfory” in 2017. It provides an opportunity for graduates to develop expertise in key fields and to understand more about working in local government. There is keen competition every year for the few opportunities provided.

However, back in 2015, it was decided to abolish the revenue budget for maintaining this Scheme, as part of a corporate effort to realise significant savings. The Scheme has continued since on the basis of the savings accrued as so many of these graduates were appointed to jobs within the Council before their periods as trainees came to an end. For example, see the analysis in Appendix 4 of the opportunities offered to 14 graduates under this Scheme since 2017.

By now, the contingency fund is significantly reduced and it is becoming more challenging every year to sustain these special opportunities. At the moment, we are advertising for six more opportunities as part of this Scheme with a view for the successful applicants to commence as trainees in July of this year. It will not be possible to offer the same level of opportunities in future unless additional investment can be secured to maintain the Scheme.

The average cost of these opportunities is more costly than the equivalent cost for apprentices as the employment cost is approximately £100,000 each over a three-year period. It should be borne in mind that only a contribution is required towards the total cost of the majority of these trainees and that not all trainees would cost the fund the amount mentioned above. A breakdown of the cost of employing one trainee can be seen in Appendix 5.

4. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Given the success of both schemes and their contribution, not only in offering employment and training to young local people but also in filling gaps in our workforce as a Council, an bid is submitted for the following amounts to be earmarked to ensure the continuation and further development of the Apprenticeships Scheme and “Cynllun Yfory”;

Apprenticeships Scheme - a sum of **£600,000** over three years that will aim to offer at least 20 apprenticeships a year over the funding period that will enable us to provide the support and administration which is becoming increasingly difficult to provide within available resources. This would be in addition to the 35 apprenticeships already created and would enable us to develop further by working more with small businesses, local contractors and community enterprises to establish and support new apprenticeship jobs.

“Cynllun Yfory” - a sum of **£500,000** to reinforce the fund that would ensure that we continue to be able to maintain an annual programme of attracting graduates to develop skills and gain a post-graduate qualification with the Council.

At its meeting on the 4 March this year, the Council approved a Business Plan for 2021/22 which identifies 'Workforce Planning' as one of its priorities. The Apprenticeships Scheme as well as the "Cynllun Yfory" are considered crucial to our ability to realise the objectives of that priority.

These bids are submitted following discussions with both the Head of Finance and the Chief Executive in relation to sourcing the required finance. It has been confirmed that the necessary one-off funding can be ensured if Cabinet members are eager, and supportive, of the total bid for £1.1 million, in order to maintain and build upon the success which is outlined in this report.

As noted in the "Corporate" section of Appendix 2 in the "2020/21 Revenue Out-turn" report, which is another item on this meeting's agenda, significant specific grants have been received as a consequence of the Covid-19 emergency. Since the Council has already financed a number of elements in response to the emergency, a part of the grant received is available and £1.1 million of it can be committed to finance the Apprenticeships Scheme and the "Cynllun Yfory".

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

Should the Cabinet approve the release of these funds for the continuation of both schemes, the first opportunities will be offered later on this year, as a consequence of completing the appointments for opportunities that are currently being advertised along with enabling the Council to extend the current provision for at least the next three years.

6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

The Monitoring Officer

No comment to add in terms of propriety.

The Head of Finance Department

I have co-operated with the author to prepare this report and am able to confirm the financial facts at the end of part 4 above. If the Cabinet prioritises these 2 schemes, £1.1m can be committed from the grant received in order to finance them.

APPENDIX 1 - A List of Gwynedd Council's Current Apprenticeships

NUMBER	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	LEVEL	APPOINTMENT
1	Digital Degree Apprentice	Finance	Degree (Level 6)	2
2	Civil Engineering Apprentice	YGC	Apprenticeship (Level 3)	2
3	Customer Liaison and Registration Apprentice	Corporate Support	Apprenticeship (Level 3)	2
4	Social Media and Marketing Apprentice	Byw'n Iach	Apprenticeship (Level 3)	1
5	Adults Care Apprentice	Adults, Health and Well-being	Foundation (Level 2)	2
6	Adults Care Apprentice - Advanced	Adults, Health and Well-being	Advanced (Level 5)	2
7	Children's Care Apprentice	Children and Supporting Families	Foundation (Level 2)	2
8	Civil Engineering Apprentice	Highways and Municipal	Apprenticeship (Level)	1
9	Youth work Apprentice	Children and Supporting Families	Foundation (Level 2)	1
10	Administration and Business Apprentice	Corporate Support	Apprenticeship (Level 3)	2

APPENDIX 2 – List of New Apprenticeships 2021

NUMBER	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	LEVEL	AGREEMENT	JOBS
1	Customer Liaison and Registration Apprentice	Corporate Support	3	2	1
2	Childcare Apprentice	Children and Families	3	2	2
3	Adults Care Apprentice (North)	Adults, Health and Well-being	2	2	1
4	Adults Care Apprentice (South)	Adults, Health and Well-being	2	2	1
5	Administration and Business Apprentice	Corporate Support	3	2	1
6	Learning Disabilities field Apprentice - Residential	Adults, Health and Well-being	3	2	1
7	Learning Disabilities field Apprentice - Support	Adults, Health and Well-being	5	2	1
8	Civil Engineering Apprentice	YGC	3	2	1
9	Digital Degree Apprentice	Finance	6	3	1
10	Street Lighting Electrician Apprentice	Highways and Municipal	3	3	2
11	Civil Engineering Apprentice	ACGCC	3	2	2
12	Business and Quality Apprentice	ACGCC	3	3	1
13	Cyber Security Degree Apprentice	ACGCC	6	3	1
14	Civil Engineering Apprentice	Highways and Municipal	3	2	1
15	Social Media and Digital Marketing Apprentice		3	2	1

APPENDIX 3 - Gwynedd Council Apprentice Pay-scale 2021/22



Apprentice Age	Hourly rate	Individual's Annual Salary	Annual Pension Contribution	Annual NI Contribution	Total Annual Cost for the Council	Total Cost of 2-year Contract	Total Cost of 3-year Contract
16 – 18	£4.62	£8,913.27	£1,818.31	Exempt from paying NI	£10,731.58	£21,463.16	£32,194.74
18 – 20	£6.56	£12,656.08	£2,581.84	Exempt from paying NI	£15,237.92	£30,475.84	£45,713.76
21 – 22	£8.36	£16,128.78	£3,290.27	£1,005.85	£20,424.90	£40,849.80	£61,274.70
23+	£8.91	£17,189.88	£3,506.74	£1,152.28	£21,848.90	£43,697.80	£65,546.70

The scale is equal to the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage.

APPENDIX 4 - Cynllun Yfory Managers / Experts since 2017

Number of Trainees - 14

Name and Role	Department / Service	Phase	Qualification(s)	Situation
Management Trainee	Corporate	2017 – 2019	Level 7 CMI Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership University	In post Health and Care Transformation Leader (West) Adults Department
Management Trainee	Corporate	2017 – 2019	Level 7 CMI Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership Bangor University	In post Technical Assistant YGC
Management Trainee	Corporate	2018 – 2021	Level 7 CMI Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership Bangor University	On secondment Senior Project Officer Post-16 Education Department
Management Trainee	Corporate	2018 - 2021	Level 7 CMI Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership Bangor University	In post Waste / Recycling Data Officer
Procurement Trainee	Corporate Support Procurement	2018 - 2020	Level 4, 5 and 6 CIPS Diploma Llandrillo Group	In post Corporate Category Specialist
Information Trainee	Corporate Support Research and Information	2018 - 2021	Information Rights Law and Practice (LLM) - Master's Degree Northumbria University	On the Scheme
Trainee Nurse	Corporate Support Health, Safety and Welfare	2019 - 2021	Occupational Health Nursing Diploma Birmingham University	In post Occupational Health Nurse
Registration Trainee	Corporate Support Customer Liaison and Registration	2019 - 2021	NAP Nationally accredited programme for Registration Officers	On the Scheme Contract extended to 2022
Well-being Trainee	Adults, Health and Well-being Learning Disabilities	2019 - 2022	Master's degree in Public Administration (MPA) Birmingham University	On the Scheme
Finance Trainee	Finance	2019 - 2022	CIPFA Level 7	On the Scheme
Health, Safety and Well-being Trainee	Corporate Support Health and Safety	2020 - 2022	NEBOSH Health and Safety	On the plan Appointed to new post
Countryside Management Trainee	Environment Traffic and Projects	2020- 2023	Msc Wildlife and Conservation Management Glasgow University	On the Scheme
Property Safety Surveyor Trainee	Housing and Property Property Safety	2020- 2023	Msc Commercial Buildings Surveying John Moores	On the Scheme
Legal Trainee	Corporate Leadership Team Legal Services	2020 - 2022	Professional Skills Course University of Law	On the Scheme

APPENDIX 5 - Cost of Employing a “Cynllun Yfory” Manager or Expert (2020/21)

SCALE	S2	PENSION	NI	ANNUAL TOTAL
Year 1	£24,982.00	£5,595.97	£2,023.54	£32,601.51
Year 2	£25,481.00	£5,707.74	£2,063.96	£33,252.71
Year 3	£25,991.00	£5,821.98	£2,105.27	£33,918.26