

Committee	Audit and Governance Committee
Title of Report	Overview of the Apprenticeships Project
Purpose of the Report	To provide an overview of the Apprenticeships Project highlighting successes, challenges and developments The Audit and Governance Committee is invited to consider the information
Date of Meeting	14.10.21
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Cabinet Member	Councillor Nia Jeffreys

1. Background

1.1 The Case for Establishing an Apprenticeship Scheme

- 1.1.1 It is vital to continually reconcile and improve skills levels in Gwynedd to respond to future challenges, secure a positive future and keep our young people living in the area. The Council has an opportunity to lead the way by offering apprenticeships of the highest quality, mainly through the medium of Welsh.
- 1.1.2 Apprenticeships is one of the priorities within the Council Plan for 2018 - 2023.
- 1.1.3 It is an effective way of responding to the Council's workforce planning needs. 'To get the right people, with the right skills, in the right places, at the right time'.
- 1.1.4 After researching the jobs that were filled in 2016 in the Council, it was estimated that approximately 54% of those jobs would be suitable as apprenticeships.

1.2 What is an Apprenticeship?

- 1.2.1 An opportunity for individuals to learn by working in any field, receiving training, gaining skills and qualifications, whilst earning a salary.
- 1.2.2 The individual could be in a new job that has been created specifically for an apprenticeship or in an existing job.
- 1.2.3 Apprentices can be of any age over 16.
- 1.2.4 The duration of apprenticeships can vary, but they usually last two or three years.
- 1.2.5 An apprenticeship is a combination of experience and training at work, and studying in an educational institution e.g. one day a week.

- **Foundation Apprenticeship** - Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE Level)
- **Apprenticeship** - Level 3 (equivalent to A Level)
- **Advanced Apprenticeship** - Levels 4 and 5 (equivalent to HNC/HND/Foundation Degree)
- **Degree Apprenticeship** - Levels 6 and 7 (equivalent to Degree / Higher Degrees)

1.3 Relevant Considerations

- 1.3.1 The 'Aligning the Apprenticeship Model to the needs of the Welsh Economy' report outlines the Welsh Government's vision to develop vital skills in priority fields and the economy in Wales.
- 1.3.2 The Apprenticeship Levy (0.5% of the payroll bill) was introduced in April 2017 to encourage employers and businesses to invest in apprenticeships.
- The Council contributed approximately £685,000.00 to the levy in 2019/20, but during this time it took advantage of qualifications worth £680,000.00.
 - The Council will contribute approximately £700,000 to the levy for 2021/22. The amount recovered will not be as high, however, we are confident that we will be able to reclaim amounts that will at least match the levy in future.
- 1.3.3 Paying a fair wage to new apprenticeships, equivalent to the *National Minimum Wage / National Living Wage*.
- 1.3.4 The Council receives no contribution towards the costs of employing apprentices, but the levy gives access to developmental costs (the qualifications and training elements only).
- 1.3.5 The 'Talented Women for a Successful Wales' report by Welsh Government highlights the significant under-representation of women in high level jobs (less than 10%) and in STEM sectors (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics).
- 1.3.6 Our duty as a Corporate Parent is to ensure opportunities for looked after children, by offering access to training opportunities that are specifically tailored for them.
- 1.3.7 Several services have expressed an interest in employing apprentices and have made a partial commitment to co-finance this.

1.4 Approval and Funding for the Scheme

- 1.4.1 Leadership Team Meeting 31.07.18:
An initial report was submitted to the Leadership Team outlining the importance of apprenticeships to the organisation, and presenting a case for establishing a fund for future apprenticeships. Guidance was sought on establishing a £300,000 fund that would enable the Council to employ up to 20 new apprentices on two-year contracts.

1.4.2 Leadership Team Meeting 18.12.18:
Received confirmation of support with guidance to submit a formal bid to the Cabinet for funding to establish and implement an Apprenticeship Scheme within the Council.

1.4.3 Cabinet Meeting 22.1.19:
The Cabinet committed £300,000 from the Council Plan Fund to establish the apprenticeships scheme to employ up to 20 new apprentices in 2019.

1.5 Initial Challenges

1.5.1 Varied perception of what apprenticeships are. It is essential to change the mindset on vocational routes across sectors and educational establishments. This involves acknowledging the value of vocational development in the same way as academic development.

1.5.2 Lack of bilingual provision for advanced apprenticeships in Wales.

1.5.3 Provision for some key areas e.g. translation, Health and Safety, are either not available or need substantial time to develop.

2. **2019-20**

2.1 Recruitment

2.1.1 Ambition for 2019-20

- Appoint up to 20 apprentices by the end of the year.
- Create high quality apprenticeships in the priority areas and in key jobs.
- Ensure equal opportunities for women and men and encourage young people to venture.
- Ensure a Welsh language provision of the highest quality.

2.1.2 Progress: By March 2020, 17 apprenticeships were appointed in 10 different fields

- 11 women and 6 men
- 2 apprentices under 18 years old, 11 apprentices between 18 and 24, 4 apprentices 25+.

	APPRENTICESHIP	LEVEL	JOBS
1	Digital IT Degree (IT)	Degree	2
2	Civil Engineering (YGC)	Apprenticeship	2
3	Customer Liaison and Registration (CG)	Apprenticeship	2
4	Social Media and Marketing (Byw'n Iach)	Apprenticeship	1
5	Adults Health and Social Care	Foundation	2
6	Advanced Adults Health and Social Care	Advanced	2
7	Care - Children's Learning and Development	Apprenticeship	2

8	Civil Engineering (Highways and Municipal)	Apprenticeship	1
9	Post-16 Team Youth Work (Youth)	Apprenticeship	1
10	Business and Administration (CG)	Apprenticeship	2

2.2 Lessons Learnt

- The importance of a thorough, targeted promotional campaign, using several different methods such as social media, apprenticeships fair, articles in the local papers, apprenticeships week and apprentices' panel.
- Preparing and supporting line managers to support apprentices requires a significant investment of time.
- The apprentices need robust support e.g. monthly reflection meetings to reflect on their learning and development and note any difficulties or obstacles.

2.3 Further Approval and Funding for the Scheme

2.3.1 Leadership Team Meeting 16.03.21:

A further report was submitted to the Leadership Team highlighting the initial success of the apprenticeships scheme and submitting a case for allocating more funding. It was approved to submit an application to the Cabinet for an additional £600,000 over three years to aim to offer at least 20 apprenticeships a year during the funding period.

It was noted that this would:

- Be in addition to the apprenticeships already created
- Enable the provision of crucial support and administration (which is becoming increasingly difficult within existing resources)
- Enable developing the scheme to work more with small businesses, local contractors and community enterprises to establish and support new apprenticeship jobs.

2.3.2 Cabinet Meeting 18.05.21:

An application for an additional £600,000 over three years (in addition to an amount of £500,000 for the Cynllun Yfory Scheme for Managers and Experts).

3. **2020-21**

3.1 Recruitment

3.1.1 Ambition for 2020-21

- Appoint 18 additional apprentices in 9 fields
- These will be funded in part by the original £300,000 investment.

3.1.2 Fields

NO.	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	LEVEL	JOBS
1	Customer Liaison and Registration Apprentice	Corporate Support	3	1
2	Childcare Apprentice	Children and Families	3	2
3	Adults Care Apprentice (North)	Adults, Health and Well-being	2	1
4	Adults Care Apprentice (South)	Adults, Health and Well-being	2	1
5	Administration and Business Apprentice	Corporate Support	3	1
6	Learning Disabilities Apprentice - Residential	Adults, Health and Well-being	2	1
7	Learning Disabilities Apprentice - Support	Adults, Health and Well-being	2	1
8	Civil Engineering Apprentice	YGC	3	1
9	Digital Degree Apprentice	Finance	6	1
10	Street Lighting Electrician Apprentice	Highways and Municipal	3	2
11	Civil Engineering Apprentice	ACGCC	3	2
12	Business Apprentice	ACGCC	3	1
13	Cyber Security Degree Apprentice	ACGCC	6	1
14	Civil Engineering Apprentice	Highways and Municipal	3	1
15	Social Media and Digital Marketing Apprentice	Byw'n lach	3	1

4. September 2021 Summary

4.1 Recruitment

30 apprentices have been recruited since the Apprenticeships Scheme commenced in 2019

- 17 apprentices were recruited in 2019-20
 - 9 of the apprentices in 2019-20 have already accepted a job at the Council
- 13 apprentices have been recruited so far in 2020-21
 - 7 women and 6 men (including women in the fields of Cyber Security and Electrical)
- 7 other jobs to be advertised before the end of the 2020-21 year
 - This includes two more jobs than the original ambition noted for the period (see 3.1.2)
 - Mechanic Apprentice
 - Communication and Engagement Apprentice

This will be a total of **37 apprentices** by the end of 2021 (if we can fill every vacancy).

4.2 Achievements

- The support for the Apprenticeships Scheme has been excellent - from a member of parliament, the cabinet, Heads of Department, site managers, parents and educational organisations.
- The Apprenticeship Scheme has attracted a high number of quality applications.
- Effective recruitment process has led to appointing a higher than expected number of apprentices including women in technical fields.
- The Council will have recruited 37 apprentices with the original investment of £300,000 made in 2019. The numbers are much higher than the original target. The main reason for this is that the services have been able to contribute more than expected towards the salary.
- Appointments in priority fields including degree apprenticeships in Information Technology, Health and Social Care and the Civil Engineering field.
- The appointed apprentices live across a wide geographical area (Dwyfor 4, Meirionnydd 3, Arfon 21, Anglesey 1)
- Although there is a lack of quality bilingual provision for apprentices, especially on higher levels, the Council has encouraged 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 and highlights our ambition. Every provider and apprentice have signed up to the statement and committed to the expectations.
- The feedback from managers and teams about our apprentices has been positive on the whole e.g. feedback about Aimee Parry who works as an apprentice at Maesincla Residential Home - "I cannot praise Aimee enough. For a young woman she has been fantastic. All the staff praise her. She looks for something to do and does it without any fuss. Aimee has become a key part of our team here".
- A satisfaction questionnaire was sent to our apprentices, and generally the results suggest that our apprentices are very satisfied. The following is an overview of the findings:
 - The current apprentices' assessment is either "Good" or "Excellent" for most of the apprenticeship elements.
 - In choosing words to describe their apprenticeship, most have selected 'Eye opening', 'Prepared me well for the job', 'interesting, lots of experiences' and 'challenging' as the most suitable descriptions.
 - The apprentices have written a sentence to describe their apprenticeship so far including - " I have enjoyed every second of being a Gwynedd Council apprentice. I feel that the apprenticeship has given me a lot of support with my self-development, which has enabled me to reach my true potential."

5. Looking to the Future

- We will begin investing the £600,000 approved in May after appointing each of the 37 apprenticeships that have already been established.
- Numbers (5 years) - 'conservative' estimate

		SEPTEMBER 2022	SEPTEMBER 2023	SEPTEMBER 2024	SEPTEMBER 2025
Apprentices	New	20	20	20	20
	Current	10	15	20	20
TOTAL		30	35	40	40

- Developing 'Joint apprenticeships'
 - We will be looking at the possibility of establishing joint apprenticeships with local companies and contractors, in maintenance fields (e.g. Joiner, Electrician, Plumber).
 - The Council will support the companies and the contractors to establish the apprenticeship and possibly contribute to the wage of the apprentice.
- The Organisational Learning and Development Team are carefully quantifying the work to identify the staff resource required to address the increasing 'demand'.