

YOUTH TRAINING (FOUNDATION MODERN APPRENTICESHIP)

1 SUMMARY

To propose changes to the Council's current Youth Training Scheme arrangements.

There is no statutory requirement to offer Youth Training.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council currently provide a budget of £20,600 to fund training allowances for youth trainees placed with the Council for work experience by training providers.
- 2.2 The budget is only applicable to youth training with no flexibility to fund other forms of work based experience for other types of unemployed people eg people with disabilities or women returners who are also seen as being disadvantaged in entering the job market. The Council is often approached by the Department of Employment and other training providers such as Prospects to provide such placements and currently must decline.

3. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Since this scheme was set up youth training has changed considerably. Originally it was anticipated that trainees, often less academically gifted, would remain with the Council for up to two years receiving a training allowance and attending day release training at a college or training centre.
- 3.2 Today's trainees are required to follow a foundation modern apprenticeship and achieve a recognised National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 by experiential learning – often without attending college. The qualification can only be achieved if the Trainee is provided with supervision, direct instruction and support in the workplace and given a range of suitably graduated work experience.

- 3.3 Youth unemployment in the area is low with the result that the turnover of Trainees is high. Some of the young people are disinterested in the work but see the allowance as an improvement on benefits. Good Trainees naturally seek paid employment at the first opportunity. There is often no 'payback period' for Departments who constantly provide input just to see Trainees leave for paid employment elsewhere after a quite short period. This has led to a reluctance to invest time in the Trainees and to the YT budget being under-utilised for several years.
- 3.4 To address these issues and retain Trainees to a point where they provide a source of potential candidates for our Scale 1-2 vacancies it is proposed that the Council move to the direct employment of Trainees funded by the YT budget. Good quality recruits could be attracted to what would be seen as attractive opportunities.
- 3.5 As now, they would follow the foundation modern apprenticeship scheme supervised by SEETEC receiving support and on-job assessment from college staff. Training for 16-24 year olds is fully funded by the government.
- 3.6 It would be necessary to agree a Trainee rate of pay in consultation with UNISON. The Council has discretion to set the rate of pay for 16 and 17 year olds who are not fulfilling the full substantive duties of posts.
- 3.7 The National Minimum Wage (NMW) does not apply to 16-18 year olds. As a guide, the NMW for 19-21 year olds is currently £3.20 per hour and for adults £3.70 (rising to £4.10 in October 2001). The lowest hourly rate for adults in local government is currently £4.60 with a pay award pending.
- 3.8 Pegging the Trainee rate for 16-17 year olds to the NMW for 19-21 year olds (£3.20) would provide a reasonable level of wage and provide an automatic means of uprating. This would currently equate to a wage of approximately £6,200 per annum.
- 3.9 Two Trainee posts could be fully funded (£12400 + £2170 oncosts = £14570) leaving £6000 budget to fund short adhoc placements for disabled people or women returners to facilitate their entry/re-entry to the job market.
- 3.10 Funding three Trainee posts would require an increase in budget of £1255 (£18600 + £3255 oncosts = £21855).
- 3.11 It is envisaged that each Trainee would be allocated half time to two departments to ensure that an appropriate range of work experience can be provided. At the end of each year Trainees would be rotated to

another pair of Departments. The Personnel Manager would oversee the Trainee's placements and development .

3.12 Employed Trainees would be seen as priority applicants for Scale 1-2 posts with an expectation that would receive an interview.

3.13 UNISON are supportive of the principle of employed Trainees.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If three trainees were to be employed an additional £1255 budget would be required.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS**

that the youth training scheme be amended to allow the direct employment of two Trainees with the balance of the budget used to fund short adhoc placements for disabled people and women returners.

John Honey

Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)

For further information please contact Elsie Chapman on:-

Tel:- 01206 318162
E-Mail:- elsie.chapman@rochford.gov.uk