

## **Apprenticeship Scrutiny Inquiry Draft Recommendations**

Having completed the Inquiry into Apprenticeships in the city, the panel has identified the key themes and has made recommendations within each. The panel supports the creation of a Southampton Apprenticeship Action Plan which will detail the delivery of the following recommendations and action points:

### **Recommendations Summary**

1. Improve the Quality and Availability of Apprenticeship Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) in Schools, Colleges and for NEET young people
2. Create an Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme
3. Introduce Southampton Apprenticeship Graduation Day
4. Develop an Enhanced Traineeship Scheme for Southampton in partnership with Solent LEP
5. Create a Southampton City Council Apprenticeship, Internships and Work Experience Programme that will expand to apprenticeship brokerage for wider Southampton employers
6. Introduce a Southampton Apprenticeship Grant Scheme
7. Establish a Southampton City of Opportunity Hub to engage employers to promote and recruit Apprenticeships, internships and work experience
8. Update local Labour Market Information (LMI) and support Apprenticeship training providers to respond to local demand
9. Create Apprenticeship best practice partnerships
10. Promote Southampton as an example of best practice

---

### **Theme 1: Improve the promotion, preparation for, and recruitment of, young people into Apprenticeships**

---

#### **Recommendation 1:**

#### **Improve the Quality and Availability of Apprenticeship Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) in Schools, Colleges and for NEET young people**

The delivery of consistent, high quality and impartial IAG which is relevant to the local labour market is essential to ensure that young people can make informed choices. The Inquiry Panel has found that the current provision of Apprenticeship IAG provided, particularly in schools, is inconsistent and has agreed that improving careers guidance at schools, colleges and training provision is a necessary starting point for improving awareness of apprenticeships across the city. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Carry out an audit of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in schools and colleges to identify availability, take up, quality and areas for improvement
- Action 2: Host an event for National Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus, school and college careers advisers, training providers and businesses to identify and agree resource to support apprenticeship IAG, including how Southampton uses the "Inspiring the Future" campaign to create a joined up approach across businesses and providers to visit schools to promote apprenticeships, and to provide business mentors
- Action 3: Develop a new Careers website that all schools, colleges and training providers can access to support the provision of impartial and consistent career guidance across the city
- Action 4: Develop a corresponding Smartphone application to provide a new IAG resource for students (building on recent success of Social Media techniques across the council especially the 'Recycle Southampton' Smartphone application developed by My-Mo to promote recycling in the city)

- Action 5: Provide National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) presentations to promote at senior level at Southampton Heads Forum, School councils, Governors Forum, Providers Forums and Southampton City Council's Leadership Group
- Action 6: Arrange for the NAS 'Apprenticeship Bus' tour to visit Southampton, at Guildhall Square and at community venues across the city, particularly linking with Estate Regeneration activities and to promote apprenticeships in deprived areas
- Action 7: Ensure that young people of all backgrounds, particularly from priority groups such as care leavers and disabled young people, receive IAG and support to access Apprenticeship and Traineeship options, thus supporting social inclusion
- Action 8: Working with Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (Solent LEP), ensure that IAG includes Labour Market Information (LMI) regarding local apprenticeship, skills and employment demand

### **Recommendation 2:**

#### **Create an Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme**

The Inquiry Panel received updates from existing local apprentices and feel that the experiences of these young people should be shared as a source of information and inspiration to school students. An ambassador scheme will also allow the apprentices to demonstrate to their employers that they have the responsibility and motivation to go further in their role. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Introduce an Apprenticeship Ambassador Training and induction course, and produce an ambassador resource pack for Southampton
- Action 2: Create a database of current and recently qualified apprentices with the confidence and drive to inspire other and who are available to visit local schools and colleges to discuss their career options, and agree a schedule of ambassador visits with all secondary schools in Southampton

### **Recommendation 3:**

#### **Introduce Southampton Apprenticeship Graduation Day**

The Inquiry heard that vocational programmes for young people such as Apprenticeships are still widely considered to be of lower value than the academic route of 'A' Levels and University. In order to raise the profile of Apprenticeships the panel supports the introduction of an Apprenticeship Graduation Day to recognise and celebrate the achievements of apprentices in the city and to promote new opportunities. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Organise and deliver an annual Apprenticeship Graduation Event in partnership with employers, training providers and funding agencies, with the first event to be planned for Summer 2014 to be held at an appropriate location such as the Guildhall

### **Recommendation 4:**

#### **Develop an Enhanced Traineeship Scheme for Southampton in partnership with Solent LEP**

Traineeships are a new Government initiative launching in September 2013. They offer a new entry route for young people aged 16-24 who are disengaged or have lower skills levels, including a work placement up to 26 weeks, to enable them to gain the skills and experience to progress into full Apprenticeships. The panel received information on the existing Pre-apprenticeship Scheme being delivered and funded by SCC, in partnership with the Partnership for Urban Southampton Hampshire (PUSH), and proposals to merge the Pre-apprenticeship scheme with Traineeships to provide an enhanced programme for the city, including wage incentives. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Confirm Enhanced Traineeship Scheme model with Solent Employment and Skills Board, funding agencies, local colleges and traineeship providers, and implement autumn 2013

- Action 2: Integrate Traineeship opportunities into SCC recruitment policy (in line with Recommendation 5) and through the council's Section 106 Employment and Skills Plans, confirming a minimum number per annum
- Action 3: Integrate Traineeship opportunities as part of the City Deal Youth Employment Strand currently being agreed

---

## **Theme 2: Maximise employer take up of Apprenticeships across the city, particularly in key sectors and in the Council**

---

### **Recommendation 5:**

#### **Create a Southampton City Council Apprenticeship, Internships and Work Experience Programme that will expand to apprenticeship brokerage for wider Southampton employers**

The Council is a key employer in Southampton and the panel agreed it should be a leading example of apprenticeship recruitment. The current existing number of apprenticeships employed by the Council is not tracked and could not be presented to the Inquiry by Human Resources. The panel confirmed that the Council should develop a clear, forward thinking recruitment policy and practice for apprenticeships, internships and the provision of work experience opportunities, with an intention to expand the scheme through public sector procurement and to include Southampton employers. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Carry out an audit and provide comprehensive evidence of the current posts held by apprentices across the Council
- Action 2: Create a fully resourced SCC Apprenticeship Policy and programme, setting out a clear model for the future recruitment of apprentices across SCC as part of a wider strategic recruitment policy, including internships and work experience
- Action 3: Provide guidance to SCC managers to ensure that all relevant departments establish which job areas can be filled by apprentices, and maximise any potential apprenticeship opportunities through vacancy recruitment
- Action 4: Update the HR system to ensure that future apprentices are correctly recorded and tracked for progress after they complete their Apprenticeship
- Action 5: Set a minimum number of SCC Apprenticeships per annum for Southampton care leavers, NEET young people and young people with disabilities
- Action 6: Expand the model to include wider Southampton employers, and ensure that SCC public procurement contracts and strategic partnerships secure more Apprenticeship opportunities (in line with Recommendation 7)

### **Recommendation 6:**

#### **Introduce a Southampton Apprenticeship Grant Scheme**

The Inquiry was informed of the existing NAS Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) which provides an employer incentive of £1,500 for new apprentices recruited. AGE is a national incentive currently running to December 2014. There are examples of best practice, including London, Manchester and the Isle of Wight, where supplementary local grant schemes have proved effective in gaining commitment from new employers to recruit apprentices. The panel agreed that a scheme should be introduced in Southampton. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Launch the Southampton Apprenticeship Grant Scheme in autumn 2013, confirming eligibility criteria, value and number of incentives to be funded
- Action 2: Promote the scheme through 'employer ambassadors' and case study examples demonstrating return on investment when recruiting apprentices

### **Recommendation 7:**

#### **Establish a Southampton City of Opportunity Hub to engage employers to promote and recruit Apprenticeships, internships and work experience**

The Inquiry received information from the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business (FSB). Both organisations confirmed a willingness and enthusiasm to support and promote Apprenticeship recruitment, both through existing business networks and to establish new local initiatives. The panel also heard that existing recruitment support for small and medium sized enterprises (SME) is through a national helpline. The panel confirmed a central co-ordinated approach to employer engagement activity, and local recruitment support, would lead to increased commitment from employers. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Develop a central, co-ordinated approach for employer engagement as part of Southampton City of Opportunity work, linking the City Deal Business Growth Hub Strand currently being agreed
- Action 2: Introduce a sustainable model for creating Employment and Skills Plans through S106 Planning Agreements and expanding to community benefit clauses in public sector procurement across the city, to increase the number of Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Internships and work experience opportunities as part of the City Deal Procurement Strand currently under development
- Action 3: Improve local brokerage and support for SME to recruit Apprentices, in partnership with apprenticeship training providers and the ALPHI network (Association of Training Providers Hampshire and IOW) including new Employer Account Managers to provide a direct sales function and face-to-face support
- Action 4: Attend existing business events across the city to provide Apprenticeship information, utilising existing events hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, FSB and Business South

---

### **Theme 3: Establish an Apprenticeship training offer in Southampton which includes frameworks and levels which are likely to employ young people and meet the needs of the Southampton economy.**

---

### **Recommendation 8:**

#### **Update local Labour Market Information (LMI) and support Apprenticeship training providers to respond to local demand**

Local colleges and training providers presented information on the range of Apprenticeship frameworks currently available in Southampton, and the numbers of young people completing Apprenticeships and moving into sustainable employment. Updated LMI is essential to ensure training provision is aligned with the requirements of local employers, and can respond to forecast growth and future demand of the city economy. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Linking to the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership Growth and Skills Strategy, produce local LMI for Southampton detailing employment and skills requirements and forecasting future demand arising from new major development, growth sectors and local workforce 'churn'
- Action 2: Using LMI, identify gaps in the market and potential requirements for business and framework development
- Action 3: Share LMI with Apprenticeship providers and IAG providers
- Action 4: Support Apprenticeship training providers to work collaboratively to respond to local demand
- Action 5: Ensure that all frameworks with significant/growing volumes in the labour market are made available in Southampton where there is evidence of market demand, such as the emerging Solent ECO/Green Deal
- Action 6: Support the development of, and increase numbers of, advanced and higher apprenticeships across Southampton

**Recommendation 9:****Create Apprenticeship best practice partnerships**

Apprenticeship growth is a key strategic aim for all local authorities across the country. The Inquiry received examples of successful and innovative approaches and confirmed that the introduction of local initiatives should take into consideration lessons learned from other local authorities. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Research best practice from across other authorities and public sector agencies that could be adopted in Southampton to increase the uptake of Apprenticeships.
- Action 2: Create partnerships with key local authorities and organisations delivering successful Apprenticeship campaigns, including 'Ladder for London' and the 'Greater Manchester Commitment'
- Action 3: Establish a Southampton Apprenticeships Steering Group which will bring together key stakeholders to monitor the progress of the Southampton Apprenticeship Action Plan and introduce new initiatives as required to support the achievement of targets in the Plan

**Recommendation 10:****Promote Southampton as an example of Best Practice**

Southampton is the lead authority for employment and skills for the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, and has introduced initiatives for Apprenticeship recruitment that stand up as best practice regionally and nationally. Some members of the Inquiry were not fully aware of the range of opportunities being created by SCC, including Apprenticeships, and confirmed that better promotion of existing schemes was needed to inform the local community and to promote SCC. The key actions for this recommendation will be:

- Action 1: Share the Council's own best practice through Pre-apprenticeships, S106 Employment and Skills Plans and ECO Procurement, demonstrating how this has created new Apprenticeship opportunities for Southampton residents, through appropriate networks and media nationally and locally
- Action 2: Engage with large private and public sector employers in Southampton with successful Apprenticeship recruitment strategies, such as Southampton Hospital and ABP, to disseminate information