

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	RES/07/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Corporate Resources Committee

Date: 26 January 2022

Report Title: Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship & Intern Programme

Report By: ECO Resources and Finance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details the progress of the Highland Council Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship programme. The Modern Apprenticeship Programme is suitable for people of all ages (16 – 67yrs old). Since 2017, the apprenticeship programme has over 320 staff enrol and 119 completing training, with staff upskilled in a variety of rolls and locations across the Highlands.
- 1.2 Highland Council have facilitated a range of opportunities both for new employees and existing staff aligned with workforce planning requirements and plan to continue to grow the portfolio of apprenticeships which can be offered. This will create opportunities and growth for the Highland workforce and economy. There is also close working with the Highland Council Employability team to develop opportunities for Youth Trainees, which can see them progressing from their Youth Trainee work placement into a Modern and/or Graduate apprenticeships.
- 1.3 The Economic Prosperity Fund is being used to fund MAs and expand opportunities for existing and new staff which is approved through the Economic Initiative Board.
- 1.4 The Council is supporting the Young Person's Guarantee through various activities of the '5 Asks' to prepare our young people for the world of work and develop their skills to provide the best opportunity for work.

2.

Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note progress with the staff who have enrolled on the Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship Schemes and training which has been completed.
- ii. Note current developments with MAs funded through the Economic Prosperity Fund supporting Service workforce planning needs and expansion of the MA frameworks being used.
- iii. Note the work taking place to support the Young Person's Guarantee and the Council's proposed participation in Apprenticeship Week in early March.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – Staff have been recruited to the Learning and Development MA team to provide dedicated support to managers in the recruitment of the MA/Graduate Interns. Funding is currently being provided for MAs and Graduate Interns from the Economic Prosperity Fund. Services are also funding MAs by Service budgets such as trade apprentices which are recruited on an annual basis.
- 3.2 Legal – Apprentices and Graduate Interns are direct employees of the Council and have standard employment rights.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – Employment Initiative Board are approving roles across the Council's geographical area. The MA/Graduate Interns are providing employment opportunities across the Council area.
- 3.4 There are no Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications arising from these proposals.
- 3.5 Risk – if the work within the MA Programme were not to continue, this would have a direct impact on staff development and detrimental impact on workforce planning solutions within Services.
- 3.6 There are no Gaelic implications arising from these proposals.

4. Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship Programme

4.1 Highland Council has enrolled over 320 employees in the Modern/Graduate Apprenticeship Programme. This includes a combination of apprentices from those upskilling their existing skills within their role as Highland Council employees to new recruits joining the Council. In addition, we have a further 16 Modern Apprenticeship posts being currently recruited to in the coming weeks funded through the economic prosperity fund.

4.2 The current Modern Apprenticeship programme (MA) consists of 20 frameworks:

Business Administration	Freight Logistics
Civil Engineering	Horticulture
Construction - Building	Housing
Construction - Civil Engineering	IT & Telecommunications
Construction - Technical	Paralegal
Construction: Technical	Project Management Technical
Customer Services	Social Services & Healthcare
Data Analytics	Social Services (CYP)
Domestic Plumbing and Heating	Trees & Timber
Electrical Installation	

4.3 The MA programme sees apprentices committing to between 2–4 years of learning and work experience with the organisation. On completion of their qualification, they have several years of real time work experience, giving them much needed life skills and a sound understanding of the working world in their chosen profession. We are currently developing apprenticeships with further apprentice frameworks in order that the Council can provide opportunities to match workforce needs.

4.4 We are supporting apprenticeships across the Highlands, with apprentices based in: Alness, Applecross, Ardersier, Ardgay, Aviemore, Avoch, Ballachullish, Dingwall, Dornoch, Farr, Fort William, Gairloch, Golspie, Grantown, Inverness, Invergordon, Kiltarlity, Lairg, Nairn, Nethy Bridge, North Kessock, Plockton, Skye, Tain, Thurso and Wick. We are actively ensuring our programme stretches across the full area of Highlands.

4.5 30 employees have enrolled in the Graduate Apprenticeship programme over 6 different frameworks:

Construction in the Built Environment	Engineering and Design & Manufacture.
Civil Engineering	IT for Business Management
Data Science	Cyber Security

5. Training Providers

5.1 Highland Council is now using a broad range of training providers both local and Scotland wide where local providers are not available to deliver the apprenticeship programme. Our training providers are:

University Highlands & Islands	Highland Council
Glasgow Caledonian University	Moray Firth Training
Heriot Watt University	Virtual Learning Academy
Napier University	Safety Training Solutions

6. Current Developments

- 6.1 The programme is continuing to expand the portfolio of frameworks offering development opportunities to new and existing employees across the Highlands.
- 6.2 The Economic Prosperity Fund is being utilised to provide services with apprenticeships and frameworks not yet used such as Paralegal, Trees & Timber (Arboriculture), and Customer Services in areas which support workforce planning needs. The programme sees existing employees benefit from opportunities to develop within their existing roles, which can see services succession planning throughout their teams and Services allow employees in the organisation to take their career to the next step.
- 6.3 Services have been proactive in using the apprentice frameworks in their succession planning and workforce planning to grow their own, provide many opportunities to both the young people in local areas and those affected by the current economic climate during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.4 Further to the MA/GA programme, we have also been developing the Graduate Intern Work Placements, that sees successful candidates being given a 6-month work placement opportunity to work on a project for the hosting service with defined goals. 11 Graduate Interns are employed with a further number of applications at various stages of the recruitment process. The graduate interns are currently working on projects in the various areas of the organisation such as:
- Mental Health and Wellbeing (Resources & Finance)
 - Corporate Branding Development Officer (Resources & Finance)
 - Housing Policy (Property & Housing)
 - Communications and Resilience (Performance & Governance)
 - Transport Planning (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy)
 - Leadership and Empowerment (Education & Learning)
 - Waste Services Business Development (Communities & Place)
 - Welfare (Resources & Finance)
 - Roads Asset Management (Infrastructure, Environment & Economy)
 - Environmental Health Licensing (Communities & Place)
 - Policy Team (Performance & Governance)
- 6.5 In order to provide support and welcome to the Council, online virtual inductions and virtual tea breaks have been introduced. This facilitate the interns having a peer support group within the organisation to help them settle in and to start building their networks to enhance the projects and work activity being undertaken.
- 6.6 We work closely with the Highland Council Employability team to develop opportunities for Youth Trainees, which can see them progressing from their Youth Trainee work placement into a Modern and/or Graduate apprenticeships.
- 6.7 As we continue to build the programme, we have been connecting with various organisations such as Poppy Scotland, Developing Young Workforce (DYW), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), Highlife

Highland (HLH), Highland Secondary schools and Communities Councils across the Highlands. This allows us to promote all the Apprentice opportunities to as wide an audience as possible. As a council we are part of the Public Sector Network (PSN) and play a key role in the PSN Steering Committee, where we have representation from Scottish Government, which helps us have a voice to make and implement changes throughout the whole of Scotland on Apprentice frameworks.

6.8 As an organisation we are committed to supporting employment within Highlands and actively involved in creating pathways from Youth Trainee work placements to MA/GA opportunities for groups such as Care Experienced, as well as those who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Young Person's Guarantee

7.1 The Young Person's Guarantee is a commitment to bring together employers, partners, and young people. It aims to connect every 16- to 24-year-old in Scotland to an opportunity. This could be a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training programme or volunteering.

7.2 We are currently engaging with a number of activities within the '5 Asks' as outlined below with a view to investigating how we support the Young Person's Guarantee further as we move through 2022.

7.3 **Ask 1 – Prepare young people for the world of work**

Example activities

- Developing Young Workforce ✓
- Work Placements ✓
- Mentoring ✓

Ask 2 – Create opportunities for young people who face the greatest barriers to work

Example activities

- CV Building ✓
- Mock Interviews ✓

Ask 3 – Invest in a skilled workforce

Example activities

- Modern Apprenticeships ✓
- Graduate Apprenticeships ✓

Ask 4 – Create jobs and apprenticeships for young people

Example activities

- National job creation
- Local job creation ✓

Ask 5 – Create an inclusive workplace

Example activities

- Scottish Living Wage ✓
- Scottish Business Pledge
- Disability Confident ✓

7.4 **Communication**

Engagement takes place with many partners and training providers across the Highlands in order that our programme, apprentices, and graduate opportunities are communicated to the biggest audience as possible.

A Google Classroom has been set up with a direct link in with young people looking to see what is available to them when leaving school. We will look to develop our digital profile of the Apprentice and Employability within the organisation in 2022. We have the facility to set up online sessions on completing the online application process, and interview skills for both face to face and virtual interviews.

7.5 **Apprentice week**

Apprenticeship week takes place 7-11th Mar 2022. The MA Programme, Education and Employability will create a programme of engagement with schools, parents, Highland Council employees and partners to provide information about the MA/GA, Graduate Intern, and employment opportunities available. The benefits of working for the Council will be communicated and making it the employer of choice in the Highlands.

Designation: ECO Resources and Finance

Date: 19.1.22

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Background Papers: