

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

6 September 2010

### Report of the Central Services Director

#### Part 1- Public – Delegated

#### **1 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME**

##### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 A report to the General Purposes Committee on 7 September 2009 (Annex 1) outlined and sought Member approval for the appointment of three apprentices.

1.1.2 Following discussions with Key Training, who govern the Apprenticeship Scheme, it was agreed that the apprentices could complete their Level 2 NVQ qualification in a 12 month period. Accordingly, four Services within the Borough Council were identified and placement descriptions agreed. These Services were: Financial, Housing, Central and Environmental Health Services. It was agreed that each apprentice would spend three months within each service before moving onto the next Service.

1.1.3 Key Training agreed the placement descriptions and were confident that each placement would provide excellent, varied work experience that was not only relevant to the NVQ qualification, but would also be good general experience.

##### **1.2 Review of the First Year Apprentice Scheme**

1.2.1 Following an interview process, which forms part of the general work experience, two apprentices joined Tonbridge and Malling in October 2009. I am pleased to be able to report that both apprentices settled in to their new roles incredibly smoothly and quickly. This is not only a reflection of their own attitude and ability, but also in the efforts managers made in accommodating apprentices within their Services. In January 2010, a third apprentice joined the Borough Council and settled in to their role equally quickly and successfully.

1.2.2 The Borough Council adopted a policy that apprentices be given the opportunity of applying for suitable posts that had become vacant.

1.2.3 In early 2010 a post was advertised externally and internally for a Benefits Assistant. One of the apprentices, who had joined Financial Services as their first placement in October, felt that they had the relevant skills for the post and so duly applied.

- 1.2.4 I am pleased to report that despite much high quality competition, the apprentice was successful in being appointed to the position of Trainee Benefits Assistant. Following discussions with Key Training and the apprentice, it was agreed that the experience they would gain in the permanent Benefits role would enable them to continue with their NVQ qualification.
- 1.2.5 In the early summer, two roles were identified within the Council that were believed suitable for the remaining two apprentices. These were both temporary contracts covering maternity leave. The 'Paid Apprentice' roles would allow both apprentices to continue their NVQ studies, but they would also attract a salary (remunerated at the bottom of Scale 1).
- 1.2.6 The first year of the Apprenticeship Scheme at Tonbridge and Malling has proved highly successful. All of the apprentices will have experienced some 'paid' work experience and one is now employed. The employed apprentice has been successful in completing her NVQ qualification in ten months, which demonstrates her determination and ability. The remaining apprentices are on schedule to complete their NVQ qualifications in a 12 month period, being October 2010 and January 2011.
- 1.2.7 Following the success of the first year of the Tonbridge and Malling Apprenticeship Scheme, Key Training are keen that we facilitate three more apprentices and extend the Scheme for another year.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 The Council contract for apprentices will be carefully formulated to ensure that no employment rights are conferred to those participating in the Scheme.

### **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.4.1 The Council has an important role in ensuring the economic vitality of the area and the availability of a skilled workforce for the future. Participation in this scheme allows the Council to make a positive contribution to this important agenda.
- 1.4.2 The total cost of engaging three apprentices is approximately £16,500 per annum and it is proposed that this be met from the Council's reserves.

### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 Before any apprentices commence their training with the Council, a very rigorous risk assessment will be undertaken in consultation with Key Training to ensure that all relevant health and safety considerations have been taken into account and that the Council is not exposed to any future employment law complications.
- 1.5.2 Given the current employment scenario and the high levels of youth unemployment, there is a risk that there could be a shortage of skilled staff in the

future to support the local economy. Participation in this scheme seeks to decrease this risk.

## **1.6 Recommendations**

- 1.6.1 It is recommended that this Committee approve a second year Apprenticeship Scheme for up to three apprentices, commencing late autumn.

Background papers:

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Report to General Purposes Committee  
7 September 2009

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