

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development

Modernisation Team Apprentice Recruitment

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval from Cabinet to recruit a new Modernisation Apprentice, using under used Apprenticeship Levy, within the Asset Management & Development Team, and outline the strategic benefits, onboarding process and expected outcomes of the appointment. It is intended that this role is targeted at an ex offender, as part of the councils ongoing commitment to recruiting hard to reach groups, set out in the Recruitment Policy.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to APPROVE the recruitment of an Apprentice, for the Asset Management and Development Team, both building on the success of the apprentice recruitment for the Development Team, but also as a further step towards a sustainable and affordable employment model for the team, effectively using publicly allocated Apprenticeship Levy funds to support the funding of the role.

3. Detail

As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to workforce development, and succession planning, the Asset Management & Development Team have identified the development opportunity, as a result of under used Apprenticeship Levy funding, to recruit an apprentice to support operational delivery in the Modernisation Team, whilst at the same time continuing with the authority's rich history in developing talent. The approach also aligns with one of the Council's corporate priorities around youth employment, skills development and inclusive growth.

We do have gaps in terms of the current Modernisation Assistant role, which is crucial to our ability to run the day to day Capital Programme. One of our current Modernisation Assistants has recently left the authority, and we are seeking a replacement through the recruitment process. This leaves us somewhat exposed in terms of the ability to provide administrative support to the Modernisation Team, which includes retrofit, but also the day to day work required to arrange appointments with customers, process purchase orders and administer our communal inbox. In addition, the Modernisation Assistants have been involved with supporting data cleansing processes, as we continue to work through the challenges of getting to a more stable position in terms of data quality, and I have encouraged them to support other teams within the department, as we look to 'blur the lines' in terms of the various different

factions in the A&D Team, and move closer to a 'One Team' culture. This is also directly supporting the current Social Housing Regulator inspection response, due in October 2025.

The role also helps us to further utilise unused apprenticeship levy, and continues to support the tradition the authority has in developing colleagues from within. It allows us to ensure that we have sufficient cover for these positions, and ideally always have 2 MDs available to assist the team. In addition, the intention is to fill the vacancy with an ex offender, through Release on Temporary License, which will further promote the authority's inclusive employment stance, in line with our amended recruitment policy, approved by Cabinet earlier in the year.

Centralised administration through Business Support will continue as per previous, and not be impacted by the introduction of this role.

4. Key Decision

Not applicable.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The role will be a Grade 2 post. The 2025/26 budgeted annual cost of a Grade 2 post is £32,400 including oncosts, with the actual salary being £24,797. With the present salary line and National Insurance budgets for Asset Management & Development, forecast to underspend by circa £45k, these costs can be accommodated. There may be further savings towards the latter end of the financial year, through a full reduction of agency staff from the team, however a portion of this will be netted off by the employment of permanent staff filling those roles.

The Apprenticeship Levy can now be used for applicants who come into the business from an ex offender route, and the full £11k worth of educational costs associated with this role will be funded 100% through this external fund. This post will ensure the council fully utilises it's annual allocation of the Levy, and be in a position where no funds need to be returned to central government.

The role will predominately support the HRA Capital programme, therefore it is forecast that it will be 100% funded by the HRA Capital budget.

7. Legal Implications

The role will be targeted at an ex offender applicant, likely to be brought in on the Release On Temporary License scheme (ROTL). The Foster Avenue offices and surrounding area have been risk assessed, and the council has met all necessary obligations in terms of statutory requirements and duties to staff and members of the public.

8. Human Resources Implications

All necessary work has been done to ensure this recruitment approach is a success, however further work, both to prepare the current staff base, and the individual who is brought into this role, will be required, as part of an enhanced onboarding process.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

10. Climate Change Implications

Not applicable

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

This falls in line with the Council's Recruitment Policy.

13. Background Papers

Nil