
REPORT TO:	Housing and Community Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 13
DATE OF MEETING:	21st April 2005	CATEGORY: Delegated
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Bob Ledger (ext 5775)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Appointment of two Apprentices to the Housing DLO team	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the appointment of two modern apprentices to meet the succession and capacity needs of the Housing DLO.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree the re-establishment of two modern apprentice positions within the Housing DLO.
- 2.2 To approve the salary range for these positions as outlined in the report.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Housing DLO has an ageing workforce and there is a need to consider how to sustain the service when tradesmen either retire or leave the Council's employment.
- 3.2 An option is open market recruitment. In the local and national setting of growing skills shortages the Council would not necessarily be an attractive employer and could expect difficulty in attracting craftspeople of the right match to requirements.
- 3.2 Capacity to meet the demand for a range of responsive repairs has not been available in this part of the Housing Service for several years. This has led to increasing externalisation of work that in the modern setting may not always be the most viable or cost effective option.
- 3.3 The Council is committed to achieving high quality standards for its tenants through a successful Housing DLO. To these ends it is currently introducing a number of initiatives in consultation with trade unions and the ability to undertake more work on time is a key feature and driver in considering DLO viability through time. These initiatives include the possible introduction of multi-skilling.

- 3.3 Modern Apprenticeships offer the Council an opportunity to provide young people with a structured training programme and employment opportunity. In addition there is also the benefit of providing cost-effective training for these employees who want to gain craft skills while working with the Council's Housing DLO.
- 3.4 Part of the apprenticeship programme would include working in partnership with Burton College that would lead to the achievement of a recognised qualification. The apprentices would attend Burton College for periods of at least 2.5 years depending upon the skills-level required and ability of the individual. At present there is funding available from outside the Council for the college costs of Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, leaving the Council with pay, overheads, working and minor college attendance costs only.
- 3.5 Although negotiations were undertaken on the pay and conditions for such posts a number of years ago the matter was not taken forward for implementation and there are no posts on the establishment to allow recruitment. The expectations of future demand suggest the Council should currently consider two positions, one for a joiner and one for a plumber.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 All costs would be borne by the Housing DLO trading account, with income expected to rise as the apprentices undertook semi-skilled and skilled work across activities on a multi-trade platform of activities i.e. fundamentally this initiative should be cost neutral. However set-up costs will be approximately £1000 for tools, clothing etc.
- 4.2 Based on previously agreed principles of pay the costs falling to the Council would be as follows:

	£		
6 months at £65.00/week	1690		
12 months at £116.00/week	7540		
12 months at £166.00/week	10790		
Subsistence for 30 months	<u>1200</u>		
	21,220	x2	= £42,440.

- 4.3 Therefore the costs are broadly £8,500 per apprentice per year.

5. Corporate Implications

- 5.1 This recommendation follows review of the factors that are suppressing the performance and future prospects of this important service delivery area. Recruitment of apprentices will support the corporate desire to be a top quartile performer while maximising the benefits of a successful in-house team to both the HRA and General Fund.
- 5.2 The employment of Modern apprenticeships would build capacity within the Housing DLO service. It would also enable the Council to respond positively not only to a national programme in this area but also to recognised trends in the sector.

5.3 Through working in partnership with a local college the programme will provide the apprentices with structured training leading to recognised qualifications. This in turn would have benefits for the delivery of the Housing DLO service and show a commitment to the existing and future needs of the workforce.

6. Community Implications

6.1 Such an initiative will support the skills and employment prospects of youngsters and add to the pool of expertise within the local community.

