

# **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

**CABINET 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010**

## **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

### **GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a Graduate Recruitment and Development Programme. The report covers the following:

1. Background to the Graduate Programme
2. Programmes currently on offer
3. The proposed Wirral Graduate Programme

#### **2. Background**

2.1 On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Council considered a Notion of Motion in relation to graduate opportunities. As part of Council's decision on this Notice of Motion (Minute 104) it was resolved as follows:

- *To conduct a review of departments where there may be a skills gap and where a graduate training scheme could be feasible.*
- *To investigate the possibilities of the Council establishing a Graduate training Scheme as other Local Authorities have done in the North West.*
- *Contact the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), who specialise in Local Authority graduate training schemes, to explore how Wirral may participate.*
- *To report findings to an early meeting of the Cabinet.*

2.2 The proposals in this report seek to establish a Wirral Graduate Programme in line with The People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan as a means to build capacity within the organisation whilst improving the age demographic and supporting hard to fill areas.

2.3 The proposed Programme builds upon and adds value to current Graduate recruitment activity already take place within the organisation to fill specific professional posts (Accountants, Planners, Social Workers) .The programme aims to maximise the opportunity to have a strategic overview of graduate recruitment and development programmes and the associated efficiencies that could be realised. e.g. shared recruitment costs and a shared development programme.

### 3. Programmes on Offer

- 3.1 The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) have been successfully running the **National Graduate Development Programme** on behalf of Local Government for 8 years offering graduates opportunities across the whole country in roles designed to develop them into the Leaders of the future. The basic Programme comprises a two year fixed term contract with structured six month “placements”. The starting salary is £ 22, 700. Support is given to participating Local Authorities in terms of the recruitment and selection process and the on-going development of the Graduates. A subscription fee of £2,000 per Graduate is required of the participating Council.
- 3.2 The Merseyside Improvement & Efficiency Programme (MIEP) has invested in a collaborative **Merseyside Graduate Programme** 2009 – 2011 which was piloted in Year One by Knowsley Council, Knowsley Primary Care Trust and Liverpool City Council. This has seen a shared cohort of 15 graduates recruited and trained together. The salary has been agreed at £16,830 - £17,161. Now in its second year the feedback from the programme is positive with a recent report claiming efficiencies as a result of the approach. Funding has been made available to continue with the programme allowing other Merseyside Authorities and Partners to now come on board.
- 3.3 Currently each participating employer has funded the salary costs from within their own Departments, finding the posts or opportunities to meet their own specific needs. (e.g. Knowsley asked each Department to identify posts suitable for Graduates and the Graduate stays within the same Department for the whole two years). The entire cohort of Graduates are brought together at regular intervals for training and networking to increase the knowledge sharing potential across Authorities and to find efficiencies by working collaboratively. The Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy and the local economy are supported by the Programme as targeted recruitment encourages the employment of Graduates from the Merseyside area (either those who have studied here or those returning to their homes on Merseyside after studying away).

### 4. The Proposed Wirral Graduate Programme

- 4.1 It is proposed that Wirral participates in the Merseyside Graduate Programme in order to achieve savings on the recruitment and training costs as a result of collaborative working. It is proposed however that we adopt the Model used in the National Graduate Programme in order to offer our Graduates a wide range of experience whilst sharing the resource and capacity around the Authority. As we currently invest in a

post graduate academic programme via our “Leadership Programme” it is also proposed that we link the development of the graduates into this after their first year of employment.

- 4.2 The proposed recruitment timetable is detailed in *Appendix B*. The timeline for the launch and delivery of the Programme sees some real urgency around the advertisement and recruitment stages in order for the Graduates to begin work in September 2010. The Process will be managed by the Organisational Development Team.
- 4.3 Early discussions about the Graduate Programme have led to the identification of some posts within service areas that could potentially become Graduate posts. These discussions have taken place on the basis that the Departments in question would host a graduate for the full two years rather than participate in the proposed “placement” Model. In this instance it is proposed that discussions take place with the Departments concerned to find a best fit approach.

## **5. Financial Implications**

The total cost per graduate within the Programme will range from £21,273 - £21,691 (salary at Band D-E, plus on –costs). The graduate posts will sit within the Law, HR and Asset Management department, therefore increasing the establishment by four posts in 2010/11. Participation in a rolling annual programme will mean that the establishment will further increase by four posts in 2011/12, but will remain at this level taking into account that as trainees the graduates will be employed on fixed term contracts for two years. However the cost of each graduate post will be charged back to the host department on a pro-rata basis for the length of the placement (proposed 6 months). Host departments will fund the graduates from vacant posts within existing staffing budgets. The recruitment & training costs will be funded in the first instance by the Merseyside Improvement and Efficiency Programme via the “Merseyside BEST” Project, therefore at no cost to Wirral.

## **6. Staffing Implications**

The extension of the Graduate Programme here at Wirral would be an essential part of our overall approach to attract talent and build future capacity. By linking the programme to longer term career pathways we can also ensure that we continue to achieve strategic priorities outlined in our Workforce Plans and support the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy. The Programme will be run using existing resources from within Human Resources and Organisational Development. In addition we will be dependent on the support of Officers from within Departments e.g. Mentors and Line Managers.

## **7. Communication**

There are a number of internal communication issues arising from this report. Discussions have already taken place on a consultative basis with Departmental Training Officers and the Corporate Workforce Monitoring Group

(a sub group of Corporate Equalities & Cohesion Group). This will continue, to ensure that the Programme is supported across all Departments and to maximise the impact of the Programme on under-represented groups. Trade Union colleagues will be engaged with regards to the Programme and consulted as the Programme develops.

## **8. Conclusion**

Workforce Plans indicate that the profile of the organisation is generally aging and that some areas are experiencing difficulties in recruiting specific skill sets. Historically, private sector employers have been the employer of choice for graduates, with local government being seen as less attractive. The National Graduate Programme has redressed this balance to some extent by promoting Local Government as an exciting and rewarding career choice. With the current economic climate and the pressures facing Wirral around external recruitment, the Wirral Graduate Programme will offer opportunities to some of the brightest and best graduates from Merseyside whilst boosting our internal capacity at a time when it is truly needed.

## **9. Equal Opportunities/ Impact**

An EIA will be required. Recruitment will be co-ordinated with Staff Forums to ensure the widest possible audience is reached and to broaden the opportunity for recruitment from under represented groups in line with our People Strategy and Workforce Plans.

## **10. Health Implications/Impact Assessment**

No implications

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

No Implications

## **12. Local Agenda 21 Implications**

No implications

## **13. Planning Implications**

No implications

## **14. Anti –Poverty Implications**

No implications

## **15. Social Inclusion Implications**

No implications

## **16. Human Rights Implications**

No implications

**17. Local Member Support Implications**

No implications.

**18. Background Papers**

There are no background papers.

**19. Recommendations**

The Cabinet is recommended to -:

19.1 Note and approve the proposed approach and Graduate Programme

19.2 Note and approve the roles identified to support the Programme (including the Mentor role)

Bill Norman

Director of Law, HR and Asset Management.

## Appendix A

### Proposals for the Wirral Graduate Programme

The main features of the proposed programme are outlined below:-

Length of Programme	Two years fixed term contract with a view that the graduate will have obtained a substantive post in the Council by the end of the period. The two years will be divided up into four x 6 month placements. These placements will be organised to provide experience in the following areas :- Front Line Service Delivery Support Services Strategy Development
Grade of Post	Graduates will start at the top of Band D ( £16,830 ) progressing to the bottom of Band E ( £17,161 )
Recruitment Pool/ Source	The Programme will be advertised locally via our Website and local press as well as through Merseyside Universities. To support recruitment in under represented groups, advertising will also be carried out in targeted press.
Selection Procedures	An Assessment Centre will be held along with an Interview to select the agreed number of graduates. It is proposed that we recruit 4 Graduates per year on a rolling programme
Training / Development	The Graduates will participate in collaborative skills sessions with Graduates from other Merseyside Graduate Programme Authorities, in line with the requirements of their KIEs and roles. These sessions will be funded by the Merseyside BEST Programme. e.g. Facilitation Skills, Project Management, Critical Thinking, Report Writing Any specific skills training directly related to a placement will be covered by the host Department. It is proposed that the Graduates are considered to join the Wirral Leadership Development Programme after their first year.
Networking	Networking amongst the graduates will be facilitated throughout the Programme both internally and with Graduates on similar programmes across Merseyside. The HR/OD Team will be responsible for managing this process commencing with their Induction.
Roles / Responsibilities	<b>OD Team</b> – will be the functional “home” of the Graduates. The OD Manager is responsible for the Graduates KIEs and overseeing their development throughout the two years. <b>Line Managers</b> – will provide high quality work placements and projects and any job related training. They will be responsible for day to day management and supervision of the graduate. <b>Mentors</b> – will be sourced from across the organisation and will support the Graduate for the full two years. They will be responsible for facilitating development opportunities, providing access to wider networks and offering support where necessary. <b>Programme Co-ordinator</b> – will arrange placements with Departments and ensure the smooth running of the programme on a day to day basis. This will include organising network meetings and training. This duties attached to this role will be picked up by existing personnel from within the HR and OD Teams.

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Timetable

3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Liverpool Graduate Recruitment Festival
w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> June	Job Description & Person Spec created and agreed
w/c 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Vacancies advertised (4 weeks closing date)
June – August	1 <sup>st</sup> Placements identified and confirmed within Authority
23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Closing date for applications
w/c 26 <sup>th</sup> July	Panel shortlist applications & invite to Assessment Centre and Interview
w/c 2 <sup>nd</sup> August	Assessment Centre & Interviews held
w/c 2 <sup>nd</sup> August	Offer Letters distributed
20 <sup>th</sup> September	Graduates commence employment
September /October 2010	Induction delivered ( Corporate & Departmental)