

WIRRAL COUNCIL

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - 28 JUNE 2007

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to brief Members about a particular initiative COMT has agreed in order to establish further employment opportunities in the Council for disabled people. COMT have agreed that one established post in each Department will be identified for a training placement for a disabled person.

In this way six disabled people will be offered a training opportunity for a period of up to 12 months in a permanent post. Following the training placements the Council will then explore whether the employees can be potentially employed through a competitive recruitment process or can be supported in their employment via Workstep, as may be required.

2 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED POLICY

The Council has positively encouraged the employment of disabled people over many years through various initiatives.

To build upon the Council's achievements to date I took a paper to Chief Officers asking them to agree to identify a vacancy within their department which can be ring-fenced for the on going appointment of a disabled person for a 12 month training opportunity.

As the largest employer in Wirral, I am keen to take a positive lead to mainstream equality and diversity. In general the employment of more representative numbers of disabled employees will enhance our understanding of the issues experienced by disabled people and will broaden the understanding of our managers of disability and lead to a greater awareness of disability issues within the Council. It will also mean that the public's experience of the Council's workforce will be more representative of disability within the community.

I am therefore proposing that that the Council seeks to identify vacancies from across the range of the Council's functions and grades and that one or more of the posts be of a professional career structured nature, subject of course to suitable vacancies arising. It is important that disabled people are not stereo- typed in to specific roles or types of work.

ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

It is important that the Council complies with staffing requirements in recruiting in this way, we will therefore undertake,

- That each Chief Officer with the support of their departmental and corporate HR staff identify a vacancy over the next 6 months for the training placement of a disabled person.
- That appointments be made to real vacancies, to posts across a range of the Council's functions and grades and that one or more of the posts ideally be of a professional or career structured nature, subject of course to such posts becoming vacant.
- That as far as is practicable the posts be based in the main administrative centres and therefore involve the minimum of travel.
- The corporate HR team will liaise with Disability Employment advisors in Job centre+ in order to identify potentially suitable candidates and that the skills/competence mix of these individuals be shared with departmental HR teams to assist in identifying suitable vacancies.
- Each successful applicant will be 'employed' for up to 12 months during which time they will be provided with job specific training, together with any other training they may require (for instance in health and safety).
- During their employment the individual will be paid the rate for the job.
- At the end of the 12 month placement the Chief Officer will consider whether the post should be advertised (taking into account any relevant factors such as funding), the individual will then be invited to compete on a competitive basis for the post, or based upon the merits of the situation, the individual should be offered employment under the Workstep scheme and hence their continued employment be on a supported basis.

Each employee once they become permanent will continue to have access to the Council's Workstep scheme in order that they receive any required ongoing support.

3 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

There would be no additional staffing costs as the posts identified by the Chief Officers will already be funded posts. In terms of other Council staff I will discuss the arrangements with the recognised Trade Unions as this will mean that 6 vacancies will be used for training placements rather than be advertised on a competitive basis.

4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

That as far as is practicably possible the appointments will be based in the main administrative centres so as to maximise accessibility to potential candidates and

minimise the need to travel. Furthermore the employment opportunities for disabled people will enhance the understanding of the Council's managers and employees of a range of disabilities.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee note the report.

JIM WILKIE
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES