

JOINT REPORT TO: THE MORAY COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2008

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

**BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To agree a programme for the implementation of an Employment Scheme for young people in Moray Council, for which budget provision had been made in the Council's financial plan 2008-12.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II (18) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to new policy matters, which do not relate to any particular committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Meeting agree to:
- the procedures set out in this report for recruitment of 10 posts.
 - Commencement of recruitment in schools now, with a view to selection in September/October 08.
 - Preparation for a second intake at the end of school summer term in June/July 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following work done by the Dialogue Youth Group in 2006-07 a proposal to initiate a scheme to retain young people in jobs in Moray was presented to CMT, the Personnel Forum, and, in June 2007, to a seminar of Elected Members, culminating in a budget commitment for the years 2008/09 – 2011/2012.
- 3.2 The basis of the scheme proposed was to attract school leavers into careers in local government, in response to a) the longstanding economic costs of young people from this area leaving for jobs and training elsewhere in Scotland; and b) the continuing difficulty of recruiting career posts to Moray. These trends led to an examination of the potential to "grow your own".
- 3.3 Apprenticeship schemes are already successfully in place in some Council services, for example in Teaching and the DLO, but trainee posts in almost all other professional and technical areas have greatly declined in recent years, as managers have strived to use tight staffing budgets to best effect.
- 3.4 Difficulties in implementing such a scheme were known for similar experiments by other authorities, notably Argyll and Bute, and concerns were

raised that school leavers would not usually be best value for money in filling technical/professional vacancies from existing staffing budgets.

- 3.5 A scheme was therefore devised which could be underwritten by a separate Council budget from those of existing staffing establishments, and which draws in "Modern Apprenticeship" funding from Government Training Scheme sources, via the Enterprise network.
- 3.6 At the special meeting of the Council on 14th February 2008, (paragraph 2 (c) of the Minute refers) an allocation of £125,000 was made for year 2008/09 and £250.000 for each of the following three years.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The original proposal was for the Council to employ "one in a hundred" of its own Moray school leavers (which is annually between 1000 and 1100 pupils). The funding allocation will allow nine "full time equivalent" posts (at Council minimum wage) instead of ten, so it is proposed to appoint eight full time, and two part time, retaining the objective of 10 posts.
- 4.2 In year 2, and thereafter, there will be 20 posts funded.
- 4.3 The Council will each year offer to employ 10 school leavers and, to introduce them as a group to work in local government, and train them to SVQ Level 3 in Customer Service. They will be paid the Council's Grade 1 wage (£11,630 for a 36.25 hour week) for a two-year period, at the end of which they will be able to apply for any permanent post in the Council. They will undertake SVQ training at Moray College (funded via HIE through the "Modern Apprenticeship" scheme).
- 4.4 Eight different Council services have already expressed a willingness to take on a school leavers apprentice this year with managers "signed up" to the necessary supervision of the posts.
- 4.5 Expressions of interest have been sought from all secondary schools through their guidance teachers and a further round of "recruitment" will be conducted before the end of this term.
- 4.6 It is proposed to select candidates by interview, conducted at the schools; this year in September/October, but in future years, in June, and to create a competitive interest in winning these "apprentice" appointments.
- 4.7 On appointment, the 10 successful candidates will be inducted during their first week as a group, and will remain a group, for their enrolment as students at Moray College and any in-house training. Mentors will be appointed from among existing trainee staff and they and the apprentices who complete their two years and attain a Council post, will be asked to promote the scheme in schools in subsequent years. (This will be managed under the guidance of the "Aspire North" scheme). Managers will also be given support with the

apprentices, by Personnel's Training Team, in terms of expectations from the scheme, job descriptions etc.

- 4.8 If successful, the scheme will be recommended to the Community Planning partners.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Apart for the Dialogue Youth Group, this scheme has been discussed with Personnel, Education, (HQ and Guidance Services), Jobcentre Plus, Careers Scotland, HIE, Moray College and the Council's CMT.

5. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 **This scheme has the potential to address two issues within Moray and Moray Council's economy: the loss of young people to jobs elsewhere; and the difficulty of recruiting into technical/professional posts in the Council. As the letter to guidance teachers states, "We will select the best candidates and ensure they receive every support. We hope to recruit the lawyers, planners, environmental health officers, personnel advisors, accountants, and council officers of the future".**

Author of Report: Donald Lunan, Planning and Development Manager
Carol Sheridan, Senior Employee Development Adviser

Background Papers:

Ref: DJL/KT