

**MODERN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.0**

The aim of this report is update the Policy and Resources Committee on the Council's position with regards to the implementation of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Modern Apprenticeship Scheme was initiated in April 2014 as a pilot. It was then fully launched in July 2014, following approval at the Policy & Resources Committee on 15 May 2014, with an agreed target of 25 apprentices.

There are currently 11 new Apprentices in post, with a further 6 posts at the recruitment stage, bringing the total opportunities for MAs with the Council to 17. A further 8 - 10 apprenticeships are in the planning stage with the intention for these posts to be recruited in the next 2-3 months. This would allow us to meet our target of recruiting a total of 25 apprentices.

The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to:

Note the progress of the project and the implementation of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, including the promotional activities.

Note the position with the number of apprentices appointed and their progress and achievements to date.

Note the current situation with regards to the numbers of eligible applicants.

Agree that a further 15 Modern Apprenticeship opportunities will be created by the Council in the next year.

Agree to offer assistance with obtaining a driving licence for eligible Modern Apprentices, by funding 5 driving lessons each.

Agree to extend the age criteria for Modern Apprentices from 16-19 to 16-24.

Note that the costs will be met from existing departmental budgets.

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**2.00    SUMMARY**

**2.1**    The aim of this report is update the Policy and Resources Committee on the Council's position with regards to the implementation of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme since its launch in July 2014.

**3.00    RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

**3.1**    Notes the progress of the project and the implementation of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, including the promotional activities.

**3.2**    Notes the position with the number of apprentices appointed and their progress and achievements to date.

**3.3**    Notes the current situation with regards to the numbers of eligible applicants.

**3.4**    Agrees that a further 15 Modern Apprenticeship opportunities will be created by the Council in the next year.

**3.5**    Agrees to offer assistance with obtaining a driving licence for eligible Modern Apprentices, by funding 5 driving lessons each.

**3.6**    Agrees to extend the age criteria for Modern Apprentices from 16-19 to 16-24.

**3.7**    Notes that the costs will be met from existing departmental budgets.

**4.0    DETAIL**

**4.1    INITIAL OBJECTIVE**

**4.2**    The Single Outcome Agreement states that in order to tackle our declining and ageing population, our children and young people need to have the best possible start. As one of the actions the Council undertook to address this, a commitment was made to implement a

Modern Apprenticeship Scheme which would provide training and employment opportunities for local young people, within the Council.

- 4.3 A temporary Project Officer from HR was appointed for 6 months to research and implement the scheme, and developed guidance and support for managers as well as liaising with training providers to identify the best possible framework for the project to be delivered successfully.
- 4.4 A Modern Apprenticeship Project Team was established to include Isabel Bremner, Economic Development Manager, Aileen Goodall, Opportunities for All/Lead Officer 16+ and Julie Hallett, Project Officer and the group worked in liaison with the Employability Partnership.
- 4.5 The project was successfully completed on time and the Project Officer has returned to their substantive post as HR Officer but will retain an overview of the MA Scheme and act as the main contact in the immediate future.
- 4.6 A Managers Guide to Recruitment - Modern Apprentices was produced and is available on The Hub.
- 4.7 A list of potential training providers has also been produced and is available for managers, highlighting the type of qualification that can be offered to apprentices. There are opportunities in the future to work with more training providers or to develop delivery of relevant qualifications in house with the SVQ Unit.
- 4.8 Presentations on the MA Scheme were given at SMT, all three DMTs, the HR Board and Trade Union Liaison Meetings. This provided information and guidance on all aspects of the scheme.
- 4.9 One to one support has been provided to managers who have expressed an interest in taking on an apprentice and this has resulted in a number of modern apprenticeship posts being advertised and successful appointments made. Regular update reports have been taken to the HR Board.

## **5.0 WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

- 5.1 The MA Project Team met regularly for the six months of the project during the secondment of the MA Project Officer. Ongoing liaison with Economic Development and Education has continued to ensure relevant schools are aware of any current opportunities.
- 5.2 There has been considerable liaison with a number of training providers to ensure appropriate courses can be provided locally. At the present time the Council is working directly with Argyll Training, and QA, who are delivering courses to our existing MAs.
- 5.3 During the secondment of the MA Project Officer there was an active participation in the Employability Partnership, working in partnership

with JCP, SDS, HIE, Argyll College, ATL, DWP and others within Argyll and Bute Council. This group continues to meet regularly and is chaired by Ishabel Bremner, Economic Development Manager.

## **6.0 PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY:**

**6.1** Features on Modern Apprentices (MAs) were included on the Council's Website and Facebook pages in May and September 2015 and included profiles on some of the MAs. See Appendix 1.

**6.2** A promotional feature was also placed on the Hub with information for managers on recruiting a MA Feature on Hub.

**6.3** Representatives from the Council have also attended Recruitment Fairs and Careers Information days across Argyll and Bute and more are planned for later in the year (October 2015).

**6.4** Adverts for the MA vacancies have appeared in the local papers, included on MyJobScotland and S1 Jobs recruitment sites, JobCentrePlus and have been circulated to the relevant local schools.

## **7.0 MODERN APPRENTICES APPOINTMENTS AND OUTCOMES**

**7.1** 11 MAs in total have been appointed since May 2014, 7 of which were within Customer Services and 4 within Community Services - Children and Families.

**7.2** 4 of the 11 MAs have successfully completed their apprenticeships with 2 achieving the higher grade of SVQ3 in Business and Administration due to the quality of their coursework (they were originally scheduled to undertake a SVQ2). One of the two original MAs has gained permanent employment with the Council, and one has left on completion of their apprenticeship and is believed to be applying for college courses.

**7.3** Of the remaining 9 MAs, 3 have gained other employment opportunities prior to completion of their apprenticeship (2 are seconded within the Council and one has obtained a permanent post with the Council). This demonstrates a high level of achievement and success for the apprenticeship scheme.

**7.4** With regards to recent adverts for apprentices there has been limited interest in some of the MA vacancies, and 4 of the posts have been advertised twice, without success. This has been a particular issue for the ICT apprenticeship posts and it may be that the salary offered is a factor. It may also be that the age criteria has been restrictive and it is recommended that this is reviewed (see 8.00 below).

**7.5** In addition to the Modern Apprentices, the Council has mechanic apprentices in place in Roads and Amenity Services.

## 8.0 MARKET AND ISSUES AFFECTING RECRUITMENT

8.1 The focus for Modern Apprentices has currently been on 16-19 year olds as they meet the requirements for 100% funding from SDS for the training element of the apprenticeship and this age group is under-represented in the Council's age profile.

8.2 However, the take up of MAs has been relatively low so far, and information from the DWP states numbers ***of those claiming Job Seekers Allowance and looking for work in Argyll and Bute*** are as follows:

- **16/17 year olds** 7
- **18-24 year olds** 162\*

\*Only 58 of the 162 are on the Work Programme and eligible to apply for MA opportunities.

8.3 Of the 11 existing MAs employed by the Council, over half were aged 18+ at the start of the apprenticeship. This is illustrated below:

<b>Aged 16</b>	<b>Aged 17</b>	<b>Aged 18</b>	<b>Aged 19</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

8.4 In order to increase the numbers of applicants for Modern Apprenticeships it is recommended that the age criteria is extended to include 20-24 year olds. This would expand the local opportunities for young people but would potentially result in additional expenditure for higher salary costs (as they may be eligible for the minimum wage for their age).

8.5 There would also be reduced financial support for training costs, which would only be partially funded by SDS up to 50% and the Council would need to pay 50%.

8.6 However, from the unemployment statistics, it would appear that there would be a larger pool of unemployed people within this age bracket who would benefit from this opportunity.

## 9.0 TARGET FOR 2015-2016

9.1 It is necessary to reconsider the target for Modern Apprentices for 2015-2016.

9.2 It has not been possible to meet the current target of 25 for 2014-2015 within the first 12 month period, but plans are in place to ensure that this target is met. Giving consideration to the current population profile and eligibility, it is recommended that a target of 15 is agreed for the

next year. Specific allocations will be given by SMT for each department based on capacity and resources available.

- 9.3** There is no specific financial allocation being made for Modern Apprentices so Departments will be expected to meet the cost from their existing resource allocations.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION / FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 10.1** The Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme is now fully established and is operating successfully, in liaison with partnership agencies.

- 10.2** The feedback from the Modern Apprentices and Skills Development Scotland is very positive and we have already seen successes with MAs completing their apprenticeships and obtaining permanent posts within the Council.

- 10.3** There have been 11 MAs employed so far, with authorisations in place for a further 5 to be recruited in the near future, and up to another 8-10 opportunities currently being developed.

- 10.4** The numbers of applicants for apprenticeships has been low and some vacancies have not been filled. There are a number of factors that may be contributing to this, including the salary offered and this may need to be considered further, particularly if the age criteria is expanded. More targeted advertising should also be considered to appeal to the youth market.

- 10.5** Additional benefits are proposed to make the overall MA package more attractive. This will include support with Driving lessons (in accordance with the arrangements already in place for our Looked After and Accommodated Children), participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, as well as participation in the STEPS programme.

- 10.6** It is also proposed to expand the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme to include 20 to 24 year olds. This would result in a higher capital cost per apprentice but would expand the opportunities available to a wider group and expand the pool of potential applicants. This is the recommended approach to be taken in Year 2 of the programme.

## **11.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1** Policy: The Modern Apprenticeship scheme complies with current Council policies and procedures and contributes towards the Council's delivery of SOA outcomes.

- 11.2** Financial: The current Government scheme provides for 100% funding for training for MAs aged 16-19, and 50% for those aged 20-24. Some services have cited a lack of budget to commit to taking on a MA, but the recommendation is that funding for modern Apprentices is found from within existing departmental budgets. There is the potential for some additional funding to be allocated to the MA scheme from the

Youth Employment Opportunities Fund.

- 11.3 Legal: The Council is compliant with appropriate legislation.
- 11.4 HR: The MA process is compliant with the Council's procedures.
- 11.5 Equalities: The MA scheme is compliant with the Council's equality duties.
- 11.6 Risk: N/A
- 12.0 **APPENDICES**
- 12.1 Appendix 1 Profiles of current Modern Apprentices from the Council's Website

**Executive Director – Customer Services – Douglas Hendry**  
**Policy Lead – Dick Walsh**

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015

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## Appendix 1 – Modern Apprentice Profiles (taken from feature on Argyll and Bute Website):

### Modern Apprentices Share Their Experiences



For two Mid Argyll girls, Jenny Blair and Samantha Newlands, the Modern Apprenticeships scheme has already proven to be a valuable experience. Samantha, from Ardrishaig, and Jenny, who is from Crinan, joined the council's Customer Services team in May 2014 as Modern Apprentices. Ahead of Scottish Apprenticeship Week, 18th to 22nd May 2015, the girls were proud to receive their Modern Apprentice certificates and SVQ qualifications.

Samantha heard about the council's Modern Apprenticeship opportunities at school and, seeking a career in administration, decided it would be the ideal way to get started in the workplace.

"I did Higher Admin at school and really enjoyed it. I've always thought the council is a really good place to work. When I heard about this, it sounded great, with opportunities to learn more and work your way up. My family lives in Argyll and I really want to be able to stay here and have a good career. This is a chance for me to do that," she explained.

Jenny added: "I've always been interested in working with the council and I got the chance to do work experience there while I was at school. That was a good stepping stone to the Modern Apprenticeship scheme. I've found the training really interesting and



everyone has been very helpful. I've been able to build on what I learned at school – we are learning how to use different systems and software, as well as shadowing other people and seeing how the process works. It's really good."

Now armed with their Modern Apprenticeship certificates and new SVQ qualifications, both Samantha and Jenny are fully prepared to enter the world of work.

Jenny has completed her apprenticeship and has now moved on but has found the experience to be really helpful and is hopeful of getting a permanent job very soon.

Samantha has been successful in obtaining a clerical post within the council's Customer Services department and is clear about how much her Modern Apprenticeship experience has contributed to her success.

"When I started, I had literally just left school - the day before! This gave me a great chance to learn and get experience before going out and getting a job. I'm really happy that I've got a job with the council - it means I can continue doing something I've really enjoyed. It's never been boring and has really helped to develop my knowledge and skills. I can't wait to get started full time."



Twenty-year-old Chris Cupples is an apprentice mechanic with Argyll and Bute Council's Fleet Support team in Lochgilphead.

Chris, from Tarbert, joined the council in January 2013 after starting his apprenticeship with a private garage company. He says that one of the best things about his job is the chance to work on a wide range of vehicles and challenges.

"Every day is different," he explained. "One day, you could be fixing a bin lorry or a gritter – and then you're doing everyday repairs on a small car. It means you can learn about a lot of different aspects of mechanics, which you might not be able to do somewhere else."

As part of his apprenticeship, Chris spends a week every two months at college in Glasgow. “It’s a good chance to learn more about what you’re doing at work. I’m able to learn on the job but also in a college environment, which is really good.”

Finding a job with prospects for the future, that’s also close to home, has been a bonus for Chris: “Being able to learn a trade, but also earn a wage at the same time, is great, and I started earning as soon my apprenticeship with the council started. It’s close to where I live which is handy, but I also get the chance to work all over Argyll and Bute, including the islands, and that’s not an opportunity that comes with every job.

“I would encourage anyone else who is interested in an apprenticeship with the council to find out more. It’s a good place to work.”



Sixteen-year-old Connor Chlopuk from Lochgilphead started work in the council’s HR team in December 2014. He’s currently working towards an SVQ in Business Administration and says the opportunity is ‘definitely a positive thing’.

“I wanted to find work in Argyll after leaving school and was job-hunting when I saw the Modern Apprenticeship advert,” said Connor. “It seemed like a good way to further my education and get into the working world.

“I did have the chance of another job but decided to go for the Modern Apprenticeship as it offered more opportunities and was local – this was really important to me.”

In the busy HR team, Connor is learning about working with and supporting employees across all council services, using new software and systems and other administration skills. “I’m surprised how much I am enjoying it – it is definitely better than school! I’d encourage anyone thinking about a Modern Apprenticeship to go for it – it really is a great opportunity.”

Over in Helensburgh, we spoke to Liam Atkinson (17) who is undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship in the council’s Children and Families service. He found information about the opportunity on Facebook and, like Connor, sees it as a great way to expand

what he learned at school and take those skills into the world of work. He is also studying for the SVQ in Business Administration.

“I was keen to stay in Helensburgh and this was ideal for me,” he said. “I studied Business Administration at school and was applying for lots of jobs before I saw this one. I think I’m really lucky to get this opportunity at the council – it’s a good job and if you work hard there are prospects. I’m learning lots of different skills – there is even more to it than you think.”

In Dunoon, Kjeld McIntyre joined the Criminal Justice team as a Modern Apprentice in early February 2015. Finding employment in his home town was important to him too but, as a keen footballer who trains regularly in Glasgow, he initially thought that his best option was to look for a job in the city. However, he was convinced to stay local by the opportunities offered by the Modern Apprenticeship – which also allowed him to commute easily to the central belt for football. It offers Kjeld the best of both worlds and helps him maintain a healthy work-life balance.

When asked about his experience so far, he said: “It’s really good – in fact it’s brilliant.

“I first heard about the Modern Apprenticeship on a jobs website. Because I had studied business administration at school, I thought it would be a chance to build on that. I’m also getting to learn new skills, things I probably wouldn’t have thought about before.”

Kjeld, who is 18, added: “The people I work with are really friendly and helpful and there’s always support if you need it. I feel really lucky to have got the chance to do this and I’d definitely encourage anyone else who’s thinking about it to go for it too.”

## **You’re hired! Modern Apprenticeships from the service point of view**

It’s clear that Modern Apprenticeships offer young people a great opportunity to earn and learn at the same time. But taking on a Modern Apprentice also brings real benefits to council teams– especially when it comes to planning ahead for the future and making sure the organisation has a sound bank of skilled people who’ll be able to deliver services in the future.

Sandra Black, Fleet Performance Manager is currently responsible for five apprentice mechanics. This is the fourth year that the team has been working with apprentices and Sandra is enthusiastic about the process.

“It’s excellent for them and for the council,” she said. “We have been involved with our apprentices all the way from application stage through interview to starting work in the depots. It’s been a very good experience for the team, who are proud to be able to act as mentors and pass on their skills. Working with the apprentices is also fun – they are really keen and that’s like a breath of fresh air for the rest of the team.

“There is a misconception that all apprentices do is brush the floor – that’s simply not the case. Our apprentices fit in really well – they don’t just work for the team, they are part of it. We’ve structured the service so that all the apprentices get the chance to travel around all our depots to work and learn. This gives them the chance to see different parts of Argyll and Bute, meet and work with other colleagues, work on different things – and all that adds to their training and work experience.

“I would encourage other teams to look at what a Modern Apprenticeship could bring to their service. For us it has been a really positive thing to do.”

Of the 11 new Modern Apprentices taken on in 2014/2015, three have already been successful in gaining either temporary or permanent employment with the Council, and it is hoped that the others will also be successful in achieving either ongoing employment or further training opportunities over the coming months.

There will be further opportunities for new apprentices over the coming year and current opportunities can be found on our website/MyJobScotland:

<https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/argyll-bute-council/jobs> <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/modern-apprenticeships>