

## **Apprenticeships in Wiltshire**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. Update to the Children's Select Committee on Apprenticeships in Wiltshire and in particular the work underway to maximise Apprenticeship growth in the county and support young people to take up the offer.

### **Background**

- 2.1 This is the first report on Apprenticeships to this Committee subsequently please find below some introductory information and a summary of Apprenticeship performance in Wiltshire. For more detailed information and key facts about Apprenticeships please refer to **Appendix 1**.

- 2.2 **Introduction to Apprenticeships**

Today's Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes designed around the needs of employers, which lead to nationally recognised qualifications all the way to degree level. Apprenticeships can be used to train both new and existing employees and are available at Intermediate, Advanced and Higher (degree) level, covering more than 170 industries and 1500 job roles, from advertising to youth work via environmental engineering and nuclear decommissioning. Over 100,000 employers are employing or have employed quality apprentices in more than 200,000 locations.

A Higher Apprenticeship incorporates a work-based learning programme and leads to a nationally recognised qualification at Level 4 and above.

Level 4 and 5 is equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree. Level 6 is equivalent to a bachelor degree and Level 7 is equivalent to a master's degree. Higher Apprenticeships offer a new work-based route into professions which have traditionally been the preserve of graduates. Over 40 different subjects are currently covered, ranging from legal services, accounting, creative and digital media to commercial airline piloting, space engineering, life sciences, advanced manufacturing engineering, representing hundreds of job roles.

Traineeships were introduced as a new member of the Apprenticeship family in 2013. These are for young people (aged 16-24) focused on work or the prospect of it and who have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an Apprenticeship within 6 months or less. Traineeships consist of a high quality work placement, a focused period of work preparation training, English & Maths for those

who have not achieved GCSE Grade C or equivalent and the flexibility to include other elements such as vocational/industry specific content and qualifications.

### 2.3 Apprenticeship Performance in Wiltshire

Significant Apprenticeship growth has been achieved in Wiltshire with a 329% increase in Apprenticeship starts between 2005/06 and 2011/12. There were 5,330 Apprenticeship starts in 2011/12, the highest yet recorded for Wiltshire and growth has outstripped national performance. Far higher proportions of apprentices were aged 19-24 (37.5%) in 2011/12, which was more than the average (31.0%), although this proportion went down slightly to 36.2% in 2012/13. Table 1 below shows the number of Apprenticeship starts each year between 2005/06 and 2013/14 and Table 2 below provides information on Apprenticeship starts by learners with LDD since 2010/11.

Table 1: Apprenticeship Starts by Year

Apprenticeship Starts In Wiltshire (Academic Year)								
2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14*
1,620	1,790	2,480	2,860	3,790	4,930	5,330	5,110	1,080

\*Starts to date relating to 2013/14 Q1 only.

Table 2: Apprenticeship Starts by Learners with LDD

Apprenticeship Starts with LDD (Full Year)	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
16-18	11.3%	13.1%	14.1%
19-24	7.7%	7.2%	8.5%
25+	6.9%	6.8%	6.9%

In the most recent year for which data is available (2012/13), there were 5,110 Apprenticeship starts in Wiltshire -4.2% on 2011/12 and following the downward national trend. Of this cohort, just 19.1% were aged 16-18 which whilst lower than the Wiltshire rate for 2011/12 it is significantly higher than the England average of 10.5%. In Wiltshire there was also a decline in the number of apprentices aged 16-18 (978 starts – 6.4% decline) as well as aged 19-24 (1,855 starts – 12.5% decline). Table 3 below shows Apprenticeship success rates across all age bands to be consistently higher in Wiltshire than regionally and nationally.

Table 3: Apprenticeship Success Rates

Success Rates (Full Year)	Wiltshire	Regional	National	
2009/10	16-18	76.5%	76.0%	72.4%
	19-24	80.4%	78.1%	74.9%
	25+	83.0%	78.4%	75.1%
	All Ages	79.5%	77.3%	73.8%
2010/11	16-18	83.9%	77.4%	74.0%
	19-24	87.6%	80.1%	77.8%
	25+	84.2%	80.4%	78.8%
	All Ages	85.7%	79.1%	76.4%
2011/12	16-18	75.6%	74.8%	73.1%
	19-24	83.1%	78.2%	75.9%
	25+	77.7%	75.2%	72.6%
	All Ages	79.3%	76.2%	73.8%

For further information on Apprenticeship performance in Wiltshire please refer to the MI Report for Wiltshire (2012/13 academic year) attached as **Appendix 2**.

## **Main Considerations for the Council**

### **3.1 Supporting Young People to Take-up Apprenticeships**

Wiltshire Council are working jointly with the National Apprenticeship Service to develop the Apprenticeship Ambassador programme, aimed at training a designated member of staff in each school to be 'expert' in giving information and advice around Apprenticeships, the application process and linking with employers or training providers to attend specific events in school. Ambassadors are supported with access to resources and input from training, providers, employers and apprentices to help them to communicate the Apprenticeship message within their schools.

Like other businesses, schools experience skills shortages and gaps. A growing number of Wiltshire's primary and secondary schools are expressing interest in or have already introduced Apprenticeships to their workforce. Apprenticeships hold great potential for supporting the broad range of occupational areas commonly found in schools including ICT, Business Administration, HR, Finance, Facilities Management, Grounds Maintenance, Construction, Teaching Assistants, Lab Technicians and many more. The employment of apprentices in schools is a fantastic way for schools to role model to pupils the benefits of Apprenticeships.

The Your Choices website [www.wiltshirechoices.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirechoices.org.uk) has a page dedicated to Apprenticeships and Traineeships, and will be promoted through leaflets and booklets which will be sent to schools via the Your Choices theatre tour which is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of touring all secondary schools with the "Choices" production. This engaging production portrays the full range of options available to young people. Apprenticeships are demonstrated as being able to provide a route into further/higher education or employment and parity of esteem with the traditional academic pathway. This year's tour will run during the last week of June and first 2 weeks of July with a re-written script to take account of developments including the introduction of Traineeships.

Wiltshire Skills 4 Success is a tailored programme to help support young people in Wiltshire to gain the basic skills and knowledge necessary to make a successful transition from school into further education, training or employment. Through it we aim to improve young people's preparedness for the world of work whilst participating in enjoyable and worthwhile activities. Throughout various programme elements post 16 opportunities are promoted including Apprenticeships. A NEET Perspectives and Future Options DVD is helping to challenge the stereotypical Apprenticeship image and highlight the range and breadth available and demonstrate the value and progression routes they can offer. The Wiltshire Careers Education Programme will offer free, specialist CEIAG lessons and curriculum are being developed that may be taught in schools over the coming years and will be available from September 2014. It will comprise a full suite of lesson plans for Years 7-11 and cover all post 16 options including Apprenticeships and even self employment.

Enterprise Days are supporting young people that are currently in education (Year 10 upwards) as well as those currently NEET up to 24 years old. The National Apprenticeship Service, National Careers Service, other key agencies and education and training providers are all invited to showcase their offers to young people.

Inspiring 'mentors' from business are supporting Year 11 students and young people, up to 24 years old (including those in education, those that are at risk of becoming NEET and those that are NEET). The aim of this is to develop aspiration, a desire for achievement and offer an insight into the world of work. We have apprentices (or individuals who originally pursued an Apprenticeship) engaged as mentors. Similarly, current and former apprentices have been engaged to undertake inspirational one-off visits to primary school pupils to motivate and offer an insight into the world of work.

More intensive support is available to eligible young people through Key Worker Support and Individual Resilience Training. These aspects of the programme are delivered by Community First (Youth Action Wiltshire) and are targeting a minimum combined total of 300 vulnerable young people (16-24). Both offers ensure that young people will engage in a suitable progression opportunity for them which, amongst others, include Apprenticeships and traineeships.

Wiltshire Council's NEET Team focus on those young people aged 16 to 18 who are currently NEET and in this capacity offer one to one support which includes:

- Discussing Apprenticeships and traineeships with young people so they understand how the process works, and what will be expected of them and offered by the employer/training provider
- Helping young people to clarify their area of interest
- Registering and applications on [www.Apprenticeship.org.uk](http://www.Apprenticeship.org.uk) and other industry websites
- Support to contact employers (in person, phone, email and post) to identify a placement for an Apprenticeship
- Support to create CVs and covering letters
- Support with interview technique
- Support to match up with a training provider if an job opportunity is identified which does not already have attached training
- Support to manage the signing up process between the applicant, the employer and the training provider
- Support to get organised in order to begin work appropriate clothing, transport and proof of I.D to become an employee and get paid
- Ongoing support to enable them to maintain their Apprenticeship

Project IMPRESS offers the recently employed aged 16+ up to 2 years worth of in-work support to help them sustain their employment and develop/advance their careers. Returning to work after a long period of unemployment or starting a new job for the first time can often be stressful. Because of this, people often 'fall out' of employment within the first six months. Project IMPRESS provides support for employees to help them sustain employment and develop their careers through addressing personal and employment barriers.

IMPRESS Employment Support Workers offer individuals professional advice and empower them to take ownership for problem solving, identifying their needs and aspirations, and working towards their own solutions and outcomes. This will lead to improved efficiency and performance at work, along with reduced stress in their personal and work life. Individuals who opt for self-employment instead of securing a job with an existing employer are able to access the provision that we offer to

businesses, as well as the support we offer to new employees. Additionally, the newly self employed are encouraged to take up the Wiltshire Business Support Service offer, which provides business owners with practical help and support.

Wiltshire Employment Support Team (WEST) assists young people with SEND to find and sustain varying levels of paid employment with local employers including Apprenticeships. After referral, a Job Coach is allocated who profiles the young person in terms of individual experience and expertise, highlighting further skills that may be required. Job Coaches also engage actively with employers to create and discover local job opportunities. The Job Coach then supports the young person to apply for jobs and prepare for interviews whilst advising on benefits calculations, which clearly explain the financial benefits of moving into work. Once a young person is successful in finding work the Job Coach will support them and the employer until both feel confident the young person has the necessary skills to carry out the role. Continued reviews from WEST maximises the potential of the young person sustaining their employment. WEST support is available to young people:

- aged between 14 to 25 with a statement of Special Education Need (SEN) or previous statement
- with autistic spectrum condition aged between 16 and 25

WEST also deliver 'Preparing for Employment' programmes for young people with SEND in their last years of local education. These are 14 week courses, currently running in the special schools and college in Wiltshire. As part of our Pathfinder work and in improving our Local Offer for the Preparing for Adulthood age range, Wiltshire Council is working in partnership with parents, carers, young people and Wiltshire College to develop a pilot Supported Internship programme for September 2014. It is intended that Wiltshire Council and its contractors offer employment placements; WEST offer job coaching and Wiltshire College offer a bespoke programme of study for each individual Intern. Supported Internships are for young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 16 to 24 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or a 'My Plan', who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

### **3.2 The Role of Wiltshire Council in Supporting Apprenticeship Growth**

For several years now Wiltshire Council has been utilising its role and influence as a community leader to maximise Apprenticeship growth in the county. The Council's Employment & Skills Team based within the Economic Development & Planning Service leads partnership activity jointly with the National Apprenticeship Service in support of the following Apprenticeship related objectives:

- Increase the proportion of the Wiltshire 16-18 cohort participating in Apprenticeships
- Enable employers to recognise the potential Apprenticeships hold for meeting their skills needs and thereby increase their participation in Apprenticeships
- Grow advanced and higher Apprenticeships in Wiltshire

The Apprenticeship Growth Group (sub-group to the Education, Employment & Skills Board) provides a co-ordinated, partnership approach to increasing the number of Apprenticeship opportunities in Wiltshire and maximising their up-take. The group's membership comprises representation from NAS, relevant Wiltshire Council services, Schools, Colleges and Training Providers and business support

agencies/business representative groups. The group's membership and Terms of Reference has recently been refreshed and work will shortly commence on a new Apprenticeship Action Plan for Wiltshire.

### **3.3 Supporting employers to maximise Apprenticeship growth**

Persuading more companies of the bottom-line business benefits of investing in training and development is an on-going requirement as is encouraging them to look to school and college leavers to meet their recruitment needs. There continues to be a view amongst some significant minorities of employers that new young labour market entrants lack the skills needed for employment this is especially significant in Wiltshire where the predominance of SMEs in the local business base means many are reluctant to employ young people on account of the perception they will require more supervision and support which could be a drain on their own capacity. Apprenticeships are particularly valuable as a framework to support young people to attain and sustain their first employment so it is vital we work with employers to convince them to harness the fresh skills and diverse perspectives young people can contribute to their organisations and recognise the opportunity to shape and grow their future workforce.

The Wiltshire Council led Apprenticeship Campaign which ran during the 2012/13 academic year was aimed at encouraging a broader range of employers and more SMEs to offer apprenticeship opportunities. The campaign was a huge success with:

- 1,157 Apprenticeship starts (against a target of 1,000)
- 302 employers engaged of which 50% (150) were new to Apprenticeships/hadn't been engaged in Apprenticeships for some time (against a target of 100)
- Approximately 65% are new jobs created (752) and 35% were conversions of existing jobs (405)

The vast majority of the starts (estimated at 85%) were for young people aged 16-24. That said, Wiltshire like the rest of the country is still not seeing the much needed increase in Apprenticeship opportunities for 16-18 year olds. Future campaign activity will be discussed and agreed with the Apprenticeship Growth Group as part of the new Apprenticeship Action Plan for the county. Meanwhile, we continue to promote Apprenticeships and support employers to create more apprenticeship opportunities through a couple of programmes in particular.

Project IMPRESS is part of a wider project that is delivered in parts of southern England and northern France. The project is funded through the European Union's Channel Programme as well as Wiltshire Council's Action for Wiltshire Programme. As well as providing post employment support to the newly employed (including young people aged from 16+) to help them sustain their employment and develop their careers, Project IMPRESS offers eligible employers free access to specialist employment skills to retain, develop and grow their workforce including:

- Help with recruitment and staff induction
- Staff retention support
- Human Resources advice and guidance
- Workforce development and up-skilling support
- Future workforce needs planning/succession planning
- Conflict management support,
- Overall encouragement with good employment practice

In addition to the more individually tailored offer outlined above, eligible employers are able to benefit from a series of workshops and seminars/master classes to help develop their own capacity and skills to provide high quality in-work support as an essential component of an organisation's drive to support staff retention, workforce development and ultimately business growth. The IMPRESS offer to employers is targeted at those who don't have this type of in-house capability. Through IMPRESS we are supporting a number of companies to develop apprenticeship opportunities that hadn't before considered them.

Wiltshire 100 is our direct engagement programme with businesses identified as of strategic importance to the economy. In face to face meetings with senior decision makers, the key issues and opportunities facing each business are discussed; this invariably includes workforce development. Intelligence is gathered on areas including: skills shortages or recruitment difficulties; strength/weakness of the local labour force; links to schools/colleges/Universities, and specifically whether Apprenticeships are used or would be considered. The Wiltshire 100 Manager liaises closely with the National Apprenticeship Service to agree a joint approach with specific employers. Recent examples of issues supported in this way include:

- A pharmaceutical business which has started administration Apprenticeships and is keen to explore accreditation for its technical training
- A brewery rolling out L2/3 Apprenticeships from its HQ to its pub estate
- A charity relationship management company supported to pursue management development Apprenticeships
- A semiconductor business helped to address provider/applicant quality issues
- An advanced manufacturing business very interested in using Apprenticeships to support a planned factory expansion

We are also currently exploring with Corporate Procurement colleagues ways to embed Apprenticeships and Traineeships alongside other employment and skills considerations into the council's approach to large scale procurement and the management of its supply chain. According to research, Apprenticeships are featuring more strongly in supply chain selection criteria with 16% of SMEs and over a third (37%) of larger organisations say they have been questioned by clients or prospects about their apprentice recruitment policies. This finding is mirrored in a supplementary study amongst some of the companies featured in the latest City & Guilds Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers List. 93% of whom advocate apprentice recruitment through their supply chain and 78% say they would be more likely to choose a supplier or partner if they too offered Apprenticeships, with 18% of these saying apprentice recruitment is already part of their selection criteria.

### **3.4 The Council as an Apprenticeship Employer**

The Council holds a contract with the Skills Funding Agency which funds the training element of the Apprenticeship programme. The training and assessment is delivered in house by the 'Learning in Wiltshire' delivery team. Wiltshire Council is able to deliver Apprenticeships in: Health & Social Care (adults), Supporting Teaching & Learning (schools), Business & Administration, Children & Young People's Workforce (Social Care and Early Years – two separate qualifications), Customer Service and IT Applications.

As an employer Wiltshire Council has put 14 of its own employees onto Apprenticeship programmes. 1 employee was recruited into the job role as an apprentice; the other 13 were employees in existing jobs who were converted into Apprenticeships. Of the 14, 7 have now completed and achieved their full Apprenticeship framework, 4 are continuing and are expected to complete by the end of the year. 3 employees had to leave the programme due to personal or work reasons.

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME - COUNCIL EMPLOYEES								
Qualification	Enrolments	Completed	Achieved	Withdrawn	Continuing	% Retention	% Achievement	% Success
Apprenticeship Health and Social Care (Adults) Level 2	5	2	2	1	2	80%	100%	80%
Advanced Apprenticeship Business and Administration Level 3	2	1	1	0	1	100%	100%	100%
Advanced Apprenticeship Customer Service Level 3	1	0	0	0	1	100%		
Advanced Apprenticeship Health & Social Care (Adults) Level 3	6	4	4	2	0	67%	100%	67%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79%</b>

In addition to the above, the Council has also enrolled a further 10 employees who work in Wiltshire schools onto an Apprenticeship programme. 2 have completed and achieved their framework, 7 are continuing on programme and 1 had to withdraw due to personal reasons.

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME - SCHOOL EMPLOYEES								
Qualification	Enrolments	Completed	Achieved	Withdrawn	Continuing	% Retention	% Achievement	% Success
Apprenticeship in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 2	1	0	0	0	1	100%		
Advanced Apprenticeship in IT User Skills Level 3	1	0	0	0	1	100%		
Advanced Apprenticeship Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools Level 3	8	2	2	1	5	88%	100%	88%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>90%</b>

We have recruited our target 6 trainees (4 are aged 17 and 2 are aged 16). They started on programme in early March 2014 and are completing an initial frontloaded classroom programme (3 days a week for 4 weeks) and then will move into their work placements from the first week in April. The classroom based element is covering English, Maths, IT, team building, work skills, communication skills etc. Once they move into the work element they will typically do 3 days a week in the placement from April until the end of July but this may change according to the needs of the department we are placing them in and the Trainee. We hope to have placed our Trainees in Planning, IT, Customer Services, Facilities Management, Payroll and Youth Services.

With areas of skills shortages and an ageing workforce indicating succession issues; Wiltshire Council faces skills and recruitment difficulties. The Council's People Strategy 2012–15 identifies the under 25s workforce as an under-represented group. Our workforce statistics show that 7.5% of the Wiltshire council workforce is under 25 in comparison with 16% of the working age community. Wiltshire Council's percentage of under 25's, however, is high when compared with the level seen across other local authorities (4.8%). Wiltshire Council is serious about embedding our Apprenticeship Programme firmly within our People Strategy and Under 25s Recruitment Plan. A new Apprenticeship wage rate has just been approved for lower level Apprenticeships and that new jobs advertised as Apprenticeship posts will be paid at the bottom of grade A - that is £6.45 per hour and well above the Apprentice National Minimum Wage of £2.65. HR are in the process of putting together a generic grade A apprentice role profile, any area in the Council recruiting an apprentice would then need to complete and add an appropriate job context statement.

### **3.5 Apprenticeship Reform – The Future of Apprenticeships in England**

The government's Apprenticeship reform programme is aimed at ensuring Apprenticeships in England become more rigorous and more responsive to the needs of employers. Its origins lie in Doug Richard's November 2012 report, the principles of which were accepted by the government in March 2013.

Apprenticeships are central to the Government's drive to developing the skilled workforce employers need to grow and compete. Government has prioritised Apprenticeship growth with significant funding in recent years and committed more than £1.5bn in this current financial year.

Apprenticeship Reform will radically change the way Apprenticeships are delivered putting employers in the driving seat. It aims to ensure Apprenticeships are more rigorous and responsive to the needs of employers following the Richards Review. The Government's Autumn Statement announced that Apprenticeship funding would go to employers directly through HMRC. This was not unexpected, but did come with a caveat that there would be a further consultation on a different model for smaller businesses. The objective is to give the purchasing power back to employers for them to design and commission their own training solutions. Consultation is also currently live on the funding model going forward based on the Government's view that Apprenticeships are a joint investment between the apprentice, the employer and the government subsequently the cost is should be shared between these three parties.

Apprenticeship Standards designed by employers will replace existing frameworks. Typically two thirds of assessment will be at the end of the Apprenticeship and a Pass, Merit, Distinction grading system will be introduced. The level of maths and English required of Apprenticeships will be stepped up linked to GCSE Reform. Off the job training will be mandated to at least 20%. Following a pilot period Government plans to fully implement these changes with 2015/16 as a period of transition to the new Standards ahead of all new Apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 being aligned to the new Standards.

Government strives for Apprenticeships to be viewed with the same esteem as the traditional University route. Market penetration of employers offering Apprenticeships nationally has increased from 3% to 8% but Government aspires to match the German rate of 36%. The drive on Higher Apprenticeships continues with £40m additional funding announced in the Government's Autumn Statement to support 20,000 more Higher Apprenticeships. Increasing Apprenticeship take-up by 16-18 year olds remains a key priority so we are to expect further policy announcements and challenge in support of this. Also in the Government's Autumn Statement was an announcement that £10m additional money will go to Job Centres to help 16 and 17 year olds find Apprenticeships and Traineeships. This money will be delivered 'in partnership with Local Authorities' and we await further details. Following low take-up amongst apprentices, 24+ Advanced Learner Loans have been removed for apprentices.

### **3.6 Government Support for Young People with SEND**

Young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are less likely to achieve a level 2 qualification and, therefore, are less likely to access an Apprenticeship programme. Some young people with SEND may be able to access a

Traineeship but many would require a more individual support package to access employment. The Government is promoting Supported Internships in the forthcoming legislation in the Children and Families Bill (September 2014). Government wants to end the assumption that young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities cannot work, and wants to ensure that they receive the right support to move into adulthood with paid jobs and careers. Supported Internships build on the strong evidence base that many young people with severe learning disabilities and/or disabilities want a paid job and with the right support, can secure and retain jobs that employers value. The special educational needs (SEN) Green Paper, '*Support and aspiration*' build on this learning. It set out a cross-Government commitment to ensure young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive a seamless package of support as they move from education into employment.

Supported Internships are personalised study programmes based primarily at an employer's premises. They are designed to better enable young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for the workplace. For the young person, the internship should contribute to their long-term career goals and fit with their working capabilities. For the employer, the Internship must meet a real business need, with the potential of a paid job at the end of the programme of study, should the intern meet the required standard.

### **Safeguarding Considerations**

4. There are no identified safeguarding considerations within this update report.

### **Public Health Implications**

5. There are no identified public health implications within this update report.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

6. There are no identified environmental impacts within this update report.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

7. The activity on Apprenticeships outlined in this report has equalities considerations at its heart as it aims to provide opportunities to develop skills and learning and kick-start or advance careers.

### **Risk Assessment**

8. There are no further identified risks within this update report.

### **Financial Implications**

9. There are no identified financial implications within this update report.

### **Legal Implications**

10. There are no identified legal implications within this update report.

### **Options Considered**

11. No alternatives considered as the intention of this report is to provide an update to the Children's Select Committee on Apprenticeships in Wiltshire and in particular the work underway to maximise Apprenticeship growth in the county and support young people to take up the offer.

### **Conclusions**

12. Wiltshire has experienced vast, sustained growth in Apprenticeships placing it ahead of regional and national rates however, that growth dipped in 2012/13 suggesting it is becoming harder to maintain the same rate of improvement and rates regionally and nationally whilst experiencing similar downward trends are starting to catch up and close in on Wiltshire's lead. It is therefore essential Wiltshire Council and strategic partners avoid complacency and continue to focus effort on driving Apprenticeship growth in the county. As seen from this report, there is considerable activity that has been designed to build further on Wiltshire's earlier strong performance but of course, there is always more that can be done.

It is worth noting a number of issues that are likely to continue to challenge or add new further challenges along the way:

- Wiltshire's business base is dominated by SME's and the proposed funding changes are likely to generate a segmentation of the system making it harder for SMEs to engage with Apprenticeships
- The proposed funding changes are likely to have serious implications for FE Colleges who have come to rely on the apprenticeship funding as a major income stream
- Further analysis needs to be undertaken into why Apprenticeship starts are not increasing amongst 16-18 year olds
- Work needs to continue with schools - schools are key in communicating the Apprenticeship message within CEIAG
- Younger apprentices currently attract full government funding for their Apprenticeship. It is concerning that under the funding changes proposed this will no longer be the case as enforced co-investment is introduced for all Apprenticeships including 16 and 17 year olds. This could have a negative effect on employer attitudes towards employing school leavers – this will present further challenges in relation to Raising Participation.
- Work needs to continue on addressing outdated perceptions of Apprenticeships – there are still some image problems
- Higher Apprenticeships have yet to really take off locally or nationally
- The Skills Funding Agency is currently in the midst of an organisation re-structure which is anticipated to produce a 30-50% reduction in headcount. As part of this the NAS brand is moving to a digital platform and the level of support will reduce, their role is anticipated to become more audit and quality assurance focused. In particular NAS are withdrawing from their in school support offer – learners are no longer a NAS focus, their work will now concentrate fully on employers.

## **Proposal**

13. The Children's Select Committee is invited to note the progress made on Apprenticeships in Wiltshire and the activity in place to maximise and sustain this improvement. The Committee is also invited to note the influence of national policy and funding arrangements and the recent key announcements affecting this area.

## **Reason for Proposal**

14. Update to the Children's Select Committee on Apprenticeships in Wiltshire and in particular the work underway to maximise Apprenticeship growth in the county and support young people to take up the offer.

## **Name and title of Director(s)**

Julia Cramp, Associate Director – Commissioning, Performance & School Effectiveness  
Alistair Cunningham, Associate Director – Economic Development & Planning

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## **Report Author:**

Haylea Asadi, Employment & Skills Manager, Economic Development & Planning

Email: [haylea.asadi@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:haylea.asadi@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Direct Line: 01225 718588

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## **Background Papers:**

None

## **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Apprenticeships: More Detailed Information and Key Facts

Appendix 2 - MI Report for Wiltshire Quarter 4 2012/13 published by The Data Service on the 04/12/2013