

PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Andy Bell, Corporate and Human resources portfolio
REPORT FROM:	Director of Resources
TO:	Executive
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Apprentice/Trainee Funding

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek agreement on two new apprentices/trainees from budget allocated for succession planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That budget is allocated for a Building Control Trainee.
- (2) That budget is allocated for an Estates Surveyor Trainee.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Both these professions are recognised as difficult to recruit to therefore developing internally supports the Council's succession planning and sustainability of delivering services.

ISSUE

At the Budget Council in March 2025, it was agreed that £60k of funding would be allocated to the salary of two new apprentices/trainees within the Council. The intention was that these posts be focused on professional posts, in hard to recruit areas therefore support succession planning of professionally qualified officers in those services.

The budget is to cover salary costs for the trainee as the Apprentice Levy will cover the degree course that they will likely need to study for in order for them to gain the professional qualification.

Assistant Directors/Heads of Service were invited to submit a bid. In the bid it was requested they included how the post met the criteria of a hard to recruit professional and they were also asked to detail how the existing team would support and develop the individual as they underwent their professional qualifications. and had to cover why they thought it met the criteria and how they would support and develop the apprentice/trainee.

In total we received seven bids covering Economic Growth, Legal and Democratic Services, Operational Services, Planning, Building control & Regulatory Services, Policy and Commissioning and Property Services.

The bids then were reviewed by Corporate Leadership Team who commented on the merit of all applications. The two applications that were deemed to be the most crucial based on recent recruitment and service issues was that from Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services and Property Services which are a Building Control Trainee and Estates Surveyor Trainee.

The application for a Building Control Trainee which was seen as a key area to focus the budget on comes from significant difficulty in recruitment this has been an ongoing issue in local government for over 10 years, this problem as been exhibited in the last 12 months with the implementation of the new regulations which meant Building control Officers regardless of previous qualifications had to go through an examination process to prove professional competence. Unfortunately, that has meant that more officers dropped out of the market as they didn't want to go through the difficult exam process. We have had some success in this area working with the professional body the LABC and having one of their students placed with us for work experience who has now completed the first of his professional exams and we've been able to recruit him directly to work for us as he continues his studies.

The Estates Surveyor Trainee is necessary due to the imminent retirement of two qualified officers' surveyors within the service who are likely to be leaving in early 2026. We have recently tried to recruit a surveyor but have had little to no interest even after having added a Market Supplement. There is likely to be significantly higher salaries in the private sector that we are not going to be able to compete with. This new Estates Surveyor Trainee will allow us to have knowledge passed on from the officers retiring and should have significant interest with the Council providing the professional qualification alongside real life experience and mentoring.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: none

Financial: Budget of £60k allocated as part of Council Budget meeting in March 2025.

Legal: none

Risk Management: These posts should support service risks of no qualified employees to deliver services.

Health and Safety: The H & S of the successful post holders will be in line with other employees.

Sustainability: none

Community Safety: none

Equality and Diversity: none

APPENDICES

N/A

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A