

<b>Report Title</b>	Apprenticeships Approach 2026
<b>Meeting</b>	Executive
<b>Meeting Date</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
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<b>Directorate</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Executive Member(s)</b>	Cllr Mohammed Ammer
<b>Wards Affected</b>	
<b>Public. Part Exempt, or Fully Exempt</b>	Public
<b>Appendices (if any)</b>	None

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the cost implications of increasing the current apprentice pay rate. It also provides an overview of how previous apprenticeship funding has been utilised and sets out recommendations for 2026/27 budget allocation.

## 2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 To consider increasing apprentice rates of pay to the National Minimum Wage.
- 2.2 Note the current number of apprentices and employees undertaking development programmes within the Council.
- 2.3 Agree the recruitment of new apprentices funded from the budget approved at Budget Council.

## 3. Apprentice Pay

- 3.1 Currently, entry-level apprentices are paid the National Apprentice Wage for the first year of employment, regardless of age. As of April 2026, this is set at £8 per hour and changes annually. In the second year of the apprenticeship, pay increases to the National Minimum Wage applicable to the employee's age.
- 3.2 There are currently three apprentices in Year 1 who are paid the apprentice rate. The Council also employs a number of trainees working towards professional qualifications. These roles are graded differently, as entry

requirements for these qualifications typically include higher education, such as A Levels or BTECs. The table below details the current apprentices and trainees employed by the Council and their grading structure.

### 3.3 Current Apprentices and Trainees

Job Title	Grading	Qualification
Apprentice Gardener	Apprentice Rate	Level 2 Horticulture
Business Administration	Apprentice Rate	Level 2 Customer Service
Business Administration	Apprentice Rate	Level 3 Business Administration
Trainee Environmental Health Officer	Scale 3 – SO1	Level 6 Environmental Health Practitioner
Trainee Technical Officer	Scale 1 – SO1	Level 6 Environmental Health Practitioner
Trainee Estates Surveyor	Scale 3 – SO1	Level 6 Degree Estates Surveying
Trainee Engineer	Scale 1 – SO1	Level 6 Degree in Civil Engineering

3.4 As at the end of March 2026, 13 employees are utilising the apprenticeship levy, covering qualifications from Level 2 to Level 7.

3.5 The cost of increasing the current apprentice rate to National Minimum Wage, effective from 1 April 2026 for the remainder of apprenticeships, is estimated at **£19,100** (including on-costs).

3.6 This one-off increase will be funded from the reserve fund.

## 4. Additional Apprenticeship Funding

4.1 In the previous financial year, Members approved an additional £65,000 to support apprenticeships in hard-to-recruit areas, with a focus on professional roles.

4.2 Following an application process, successful bids were received from Property Services. This reflects workforce risks, particularly where professionally qualified surveyors are approaching retirement and where recruitment is challenging due to competition with higher-paying private sector roles.

4.3 A Trainee Estates Surveyor was successfully recruited in Quarter 3 of the last financial year, attracting strong interest. The successful candidate commenced a Level 6 apprenticeship in Estate Surveying in April 2026. This qualification is funded through the apprenticeship levy. The associated levy cost of £26,000 (over four years) has been met through a contribution from Liberata.

4.4 There was also an intention to recruit a second trainee in Building Control. Due to operational circumstances, this has not yet been progressed. However, the

Local Authority Building Control (LABC) programme is offering a fully funded training route, which would enable the Council to host a trainee at no cost.

**4.5** The Council has previously hosted an LABC trainee who progressed into a Building Control Officer role following completion of their End Point Assessment. This programme is currently open for applications, and an outcome is expected in summer 2026.

**4.6** Given the national shortage of Building Control professionals and the statutory nature of the service, competition for these placements is high.

## **5. New Funding Allocation – Budget Council 2026**

**5.1** In March 2026, Budget Council approved an additional **£150,000** to support apprenticeship development across the organisation.

**5.2** Corporate Leadership Team members were invited to submit proposals for apprenticeship and trainee roles. A total of nine applications were received.

**5.3** Assessment criteria included:

- Total cost over the apprenticeship duration
- Existing service budgets and ability to self-fund
- Strategic workforce priorities, including Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
- Succession planning for services

**5.4** It is proposed that the following roles are approved:

- Apprentice Health and Safety Assistant
- Apprentice Regulatory Compliance Officer (Housing)
- Apprentice Business Support – Operational Services

**5.5** Costings for these roles are detailed below covering the 18 month to 2 year total length of contract for the post.

Post Title	Service	Apprenticeship Training Course	TOTAL YEAR 1	YEAR2
Trainee Health and Safety Officer	Operational Services	Safety, health and environment tech	30,937	31,865
Apprentice Regulatory Compliance officer - Housing	Housing & Environmental	Regulatory compliance officer (level 3) - ap	31,967	32,926
Apprentice Business Support - Operational Services	Operational Services	Business administrator (level 3) - ap	18,049	12,333
			80,953	77,125

## 6. Link to Council Plan Priorities: Providing High Quality Services

6.1 Providing High Quality Services – supporting apprentices within the council ensures the long term future of services and ensures that Pendle will be in the best place coming into LGR.

## 7. Implications

### 7.1 Financial Implications

The cost of uplifting the nationally agreed rates of Apprentice Pay to the National Minimum Wage, for the first year of apprentices, would be £19,100. Should the Executive agree with to this, the additional cost would be met from the Staffing/Modern Apprentice Reserve.

The cost of employing additional apprentices in 2026/27 (and through 2027/28) is £ 158,078 as set 5.5 above. £150,000 was agreed by the Council as part of the budget for 2026/27. The additional £8,078 will be met from the Staffing/Modern Apprentice Reserve.

### 7.2 Legal and Governance Implications

There are no legal or governance implications to this report.

### 7.3 Climate and Biodiversity Implications

There are no climate and biodiversity implications.

### 7.4 Human Resources Implications

The HR implications are documented.

### 7.5 Equality and Diversity Implications

Completed the screening document there is a positive impact on young people employed by the council. The increase in pay may open future opportunities to a wider age demographic

## 8. Consultation

No consultation has taken place

## 9. Alternative Options Considered

- No changes could be made to the current apprentice rates the people currently employed would go up as they complete year one of their apprenticeship to the NMW for age.
- Other trainee/apprentices could be considered out of the bids put forward.

**10. Statutory Officer Sign off** (please put an x in the relevant box below)

Section 151 Officer	X
Monitoring Officer	<b>X</b>

**Contact Officers**

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