

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
10 October 2017

Subject: REVIEW OF HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL GRADUATE SCHEME

All Wards

Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Finance: Councillor P R Wilkinson

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 To review the Graduate Scheme and approve further investment from the Economic Development Fund into the scheme in 17/18.

1.2 On the 2 December 2014 Members approved the Hambleton Economic Strategy and Investment Plan 2014 – 2024. One of the key projects highlighted within the Investment Plan was the introduction of a Graduate Programme whose overarching objective was to support 15 graduates at a cost of £50,000 each year, to find employment with Hambleton businesses

1.3 The scheme was launched in January 2015 to run for an initial period of 2 years - 2015/16 and 2016/17 with an allocation of £100,000 from the Economic Development Fund. Initially, the Council operated the scheme in conjunction with Teesside University (TU), until September 2015 when TU went through a restructure and did not have funding to continue with the scheme and their team was disbanded. Hambleton District Council took over responsibility for completing pre-checks such as health and safety on site assessments and has managed and administered the scheme since this time.

1.4 Overview of the Scheme:

The first business successfully applied in February 2015 and since that time:

- 39 businesses have applied
- 28 applications approved
- 28 graduates successfully appointed across 21 businesses

Of the 28 graduates appointed:

- 2 dropped out after 2 months and 1 graduate left and the role was made into an apprentice role
- 18 completed the agreed funded period (normally 12 months)
- 7 are currently in the agreed funded period

Of the 18 which completed the agreed funded period:

- 18 graduate positions (100%) have continued beyond the agreed period, which is very positive

Once existing graduates have completed the agreed funded period the financial support provided from the Economic Development Fund is as follows:

- £90,666.67 has been spent on wage subsidy
- £14,683.10 has been committed to equipment grants
- The average grant per graduate is £4,214

There are a number of case studies which serve to illustrate the effectiveness of the Scheme and the benefits to both large and small businesses who have taken on Graduates. In evaluating the effectiveness of the Scheme it is clear that:

- Compared to the Apprenticeship Scheme there is a lower level of interest from businesses, in part due to our business profile which is largely SME's
- It is more difficult for businesses to find a suitable graduate and it can take a long time to get them into place depending on the time of year, during which time some businesses change their plans / roles etc
- It is more resource intensive in terms of officer time from the Business and Economy team to ensure a successful outcome
- As the Teesside University funding ended, their input also reduced and although they are still supportive of the scheme in terms of advertising opportunities to their students, we have also started to develop links with other universities including York and Sunderland which we will need to continue to develop.

1.5 A Policy Review on the Graduate and Modern Apprentices Schemes has commenced recently, which will look at the success, effectiveness and value for money of the schemes and make recommendations for future improvements to the schemes following its conclusion in April 2018.

2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

2.1 Continued delivery of the Graduate Scheme will support the Council's priority of driving economic vitality. More specifically it will support businesses to grow, help maximise private sector investment, increase opportunities for young people and strengthen links with higher educational establishments.

3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:

3.1 There are no significant risks associated with approving the recommendations.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 There is a Council Plan target to support 7 Graduates in 2017/18, the costs associated with delivering this are £28,000. It is proposed that the scheme continues to be funded through the Economic Development Fund.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation.

6.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES:

6.1 Equality and Diversity Issues are incorporated into the existing criteria and due diligence checks undertaken for the scheme to ensure equal opportunities.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES:

7.1 Health and Safety issues are incorporated into the existing criteria and due diligence checks undertaken for the scheme as part of the risk assessment in the employer visit.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

8.1 That Cabinet approves and recommends to Council that:

- (1) £28,000 is allocated from the Economic Development Fund to the Graduate Scheme in 2017/18 to enable continued delivery of the scheme in this financial year;

(2) funding for the Graduate Scheme from 2018/19 onwards is considered in a further report to Cabinet with the outcomes of the Policy Review on the Graduate and Modern Apprentices Schemes.

HELEN KEMP

Background papers: None

Author ref: SS

Contact: Sam Swinbank
Business and Economy Manager
Direct Line: 01609 767233

101017 Review of HDC Graduate Scheme