

Apprenticeship Update

Swale Borough Council Apprenticeship scheme

1. As reported at the last meeting the Council has now recruited to eight new apprenticeship posts, across a range of departments on a 12 month fixed-term basis. All of the apprentices recruited are resident to the Borough and for most are still within their first month of employment. Therefore it remains too early to judge how this pilot scheme is going, but early indications that all have settled well into their roles.

2. By way of reminder, the services areas into which apprentices have been placed are as follows:-

1. Facilities and Contracts and Procurement
2. Customer Services
3. Legal and Democratic
4. Policy and Economic Development
5. Commissioning and Open Spaces
6. Revenues and Benefits
7. Human Resources
8. Environmental Response

Potential Swale Rural Schools Project

3. Economy and Community Services have begun a piece of work with partners looking at potential apprenticeship opportunities that might be created through local schools, both secondary and primary. In the case of the latter, this offers a potential opportunity for a strong rural dimension. Of the 49 primary/junior schools within Swale almost half would be considered rural and together form a significant employer within the local, rural area.

4. The project is an adaptation of a project that has previously successfully operated in Thanet. We are currently looking to develop an 'offer' for local schools, which seeks to take advantage of available funding to minimise costs. This may then be used to approach local primary/junior schools initially to ascertain levels of interest and the work areas in which schools feel they might benefit from employing an apprentice. Three apprenticeship frameworks that may be of particular interest are

- Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- IT professional
- Business Administration

5. It is hoped that an initial offer can be brought to schools over the coming months and an update will be brought to the next meeting.

Business Support Programme for Swale

6. Whilst not apprenticeship related, we wished to bring to the Forums attention a new programme of business support that has been introduced. The service aims to support residents of Swale considering self employment, established small businesses looking to grow, and other community and

voluntary organisations providing or hoping to provide services in the Borough.

7. The service is sponsored by Swale Borough Council and is being delivered by Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, through a series of workshops and 1:1 advice sessions being delivered in Sittingbourne, Sheerness and Faversham. The programme design caters for individuals and businesses working in the private sector or providing community services as a charity or not-for-profit organisation. We would welcome the support of the rural Forum in promoting this free service to potential beneficiaries. Anyone interested should call the business support line on 01795 379012 or contact the Economy and Community Services team on 01795 417398.