

COUNCIL

22 JULY 2020

Item 14(b) Apprenticeships - Motion included on the agenda by Councillor Owens on behalf of the Our West Lancashire Group

Amendment to be moved by Councillor Pryce-Roberts

Council notes that this Council is increasing the number of apprenticeships offered within the organisation and that a number of apprenticeships have been started in recent months or are scheduled to start shortly and this is to be warmly welcomed.

This Labour run council has a strong record of action when it comes to creating opportunities within the council and working with employers large and small across the borough and education providers, including West Lancashire College.

This action has resulted in the creation of 33 meaningful apprenticeships within the Council (25 new starts since 1 April 2017) and this doesn't include those apprenticeships created through our contractor partners in housing services.

Council further notes with concern that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the employment prospects of young people have been very negative. Youth charity, Impetus point out:

- That in June 2020 twice as many young people are now claiming unemployment benefits compared to March 2020, with 13% of the youth labour force now claiming benefits.
- That this summer, a further 500,000 young people will leave education and try to enter the labour market.
- Young people are 2.5 times as likely to work in shut-down sectors, accounting for 30% of all 18-24 year olds. This has meant that one-third of 18-24 year olds – excluding students – have either lost their jobs or been furloughed. That's double the rate of prime age adults.
- 9% of non-full-time students have lost their main job since COVID-19 hit – three times higher than the average figure.

This council welcomes the announcement by the Chancellor on 8 July that HM Treasury will provide £2 billion under the Kickstart Scheme specifically targeted to support the creation of opportunities for those seeking work, in particular for those in the 16-25 year old age group. As the Kickstart Scheme is based on Labour's successful Future Jobs Fund, it should help many young people to access work.

At this time no detail has been given on how the scheme(s) will work particularly within local authorities. There is also the uncertainty of Council's financial position due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of proper funding from central

government.

Therefore, this council resolves to:

- Use the commitment from Government to provide support for those seeking work, including the creation of apprenticeships for young people, to continue to engage in providing meaningful apprenticeship schemes in the council in a prudent and financially sustainable manner.
- Continue to work with the wider business community in West Lancashire to encourage greater provision of apprenticeships.
- Write to the Chancellor, The Right Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, The Hon Michelle Keegan MP calling on the Government to provide funding insupportable of apprenticeship schemes beyond 2021.
- Bring a report back to the October 2020 Council meeting on a plan to if possible recruit more apprentices taking into account our financial position and having fully received and understood the government's new policies/directives on apprenticeships.