

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

16 November 2022

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| Report title | Council Commitment to become Cornerstone Employer – promoting Council Careers in Schools | | |
| Decision designation | AMBER | | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Chris Burden Education, Skills and Work | | |
| Key decision | Yes | | |
| In forward plan | Yes | | |
| Wards affected | All Wards | | |
| Accountable Director | Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families | | |
| Originating service | Skills | | |
| Accountable employee | Sue Lindup Tel Email | Skills and Employability Manager 07766473146 Sue.lindup@wolverhampton.gov.uk | |
| Report to be/has been considered by | Directorate Leadership Team | 24 October 2022 | |
| | Cabinet Member Briefing | 1 November 2022 | |
| | Education Leadership Team | 10 November 2022 | |
| | Strategic Executive Board | 10 November 2022 | |

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Agree that the Council signs up to an agreement with Black Country Consortium to become a Cornerstone Employer.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the Council becoming a Cornerstone employer and the benefits to employers and young people in Wolverhampton.
- 1.2 Becoming a Cornerstone employer commits the Council's staff to attending schools and Colleges in Wolverhampton on a regular basis to promote the job roles that are available in the Council.
- 1.3 Becoming a Cornerstone employer commits a senior member of staff to attend the regular Cornerstone employer meetings and sharing the work that the Council, as a significant employer in the city, is undertaking in schools.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Becoming a Cornerstone Employer fulfils Our City Our Plan priority to support more local people into more jobs and training. The Council employs a variety of roles ranging from accountants to social workers to catering assistants. This scheme enables staff from a range of disciplines to go into schools to talk about their roles and their career pathways.
- 2.2 The Cornerstone Employer scheme also fulfils our priority to support young people into jobs through the Wolves at Work 18-24 initiative ensuring that young people in schools are provided with a variety of careers experiences before they make important choices about their education and their pathways into work.
- 2.3 The Council already has an annual service level agreement in place with the Black Country Consortium to support the delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) enterprise advisors programme in Wolverhampton schools and College via the Black Country Careers Hub.
- 2.4 The Council has recently committed to a further year to deliver this initiative as part of new service level agreement until August 2023 and has employed an additional part time member of staff (Enterprise Co-ordinator) through additional funding from its Wolves at Work 18-24 initiative to provide added support to young people in our city.
- 2.5 Through this initiative, the Black Country Careers Hub and the Council work together in the city to ensure that the world of work is communicated to young people through schools and colleges.
- 2.6 The Black Country Consortium also works with a number of employers, called Cornerstone employers. Those employers invest in the successful and sustainable delivery of careers education for young people. They commit to join a leadership group, managed through the Black Country Careers Hub of local businesses to support schools, colleges and young people in their area.
- 2.7 Cornerstone Employers work with a cluster of secondary schools and colleges to support careers provision in the area and influence the work of the Black Country Careers Hub.

Their goal is to ensure all young people in an area have the opportunity they need to be prepared and inspired for the world of work.

- 2.8 A Cornerstone Employer can be a large or small business as long as they are:
- A. Experienced in engaging with education.
 - B. Dedicated to investing time and resources.
 - C. Committed to working with other Cornerstone employers.
 - D. Willing to galvanize their business networks.
 - E. Focused on sustainability and act as an Ambassador.
- 2.9 The Council would join a group of other employers who have committed to becoming a Cornerstone employer, they are Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, A F Blakemore, Wolverhampton NHS Trust, Thomas Dudley, Accord, KPMG, Wilmott Dixon.
- 3.0 Progress and Benefits to the Council and Young People**
- 3.1 Wolverhampton City Council has been invited to become a Cornerstone Employer on the basis of the good work that the Council has already committed to in our schools and as a large reputable employer in Wolverhampton.
- 3.2 The benefits of the Council becoming a Cornerstone employer are:
- A. Giving back to the community and supporting the growth of the local economy
 - B. Engaging and developing our current workforce through volunteering.
 - C. Developing a closer relationship with our schools and assisting with the delivering of the Gatsby Benchmarks for careers education.
 - D. Informing our young people about the different jobs and sectors within the Council.
 - E. A great opportunity to help our young people develop the skills required for our future workforce and building a talent pipeline.
- 3.3 The benefits to young people within Wolverhampton schools and College are:
- A. Great opportunity to meet employers/employees and volunteers from the Council.
 - B. Opportunity to gain a better understanding of the world of work.
 - C. Meeting people from different sectors and industries helps to challenge any stereotypical views about different careers.
 - D. Students are more motivated and inspired and so this helps to raise aspirations and attainment levels.

- E. Research shows that young people who have four or more encounters with employers whilst at school are less likely to be NEET and on average will go on to earn 18% more than their peers who did not.
- F. Ensuring that all young people in our city have the opportunities they need to be prepared and inspired for the world of work.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 **Option one** would be to make no change and not to attend our schools and college as an employer. This would not assist our young people in understanding the vast number of careers available within the Council.
- 4.2 **Option two** would be to continue as we are with our staff supporting other employers to attend schools and promote their careers with young people. This does assist young people in their career choices but would mean that they still are a bit aware of the vast number of careers available within the Council.
- 4.3 **Option three** would be the preferred option. It is proposed that service areas offer this as part of the staff 2 days of volunteering which is available for every employee to request from their manager. Co-ordination of volunteers in our schools will then be undertaken by funded staff in the Council who provide the Enterprise Advisor function for the Black Country Careers Hub.

5.0 Reasons for decision

- 5.1 The decision is to sign the Cornerstone Employer Agreement with the Black Country Consortium in order to deliver careers information about working in the Council to our schools and College in Wolverhampton.
- 5.2 The delivery of the Cornerstone Employer Agreement in schools and the College will be managed by the Skills Team in collaboration with the Organisational Development team in the Council.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The Skills Team and Organisational Development team will manage the Cornerstone employer scheme through existing resources which have already been made available.
[MH/21102022/D]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 As part of its commitment to the scheme, the Council will be entering into an agreement to become a Cornerstone Employer. There is no minimum commitment expected from the Council as part of the term set out in the agreement. Legal Services have advised on the terms of the Agreement and its obligations on the Council.
[RR/19012022/Q]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 Wolverhampton currently has the highest unemployed claimant count for young people aged 18-24 in England with 2045 claimants in September 2022.
- 8.2 Wolverhampton Council's role as a Cornerstone Employer in our schools is an extension of our commitment to support young people into appropriate careers choices when they leave school and learning and move into the world of work.

9.0 All other implications

- 9.1 The Council will resource the Cornerstone Employer initiative through existing staff resources.
- 9.2 Employees who are interested in volunteering for the scheme will be encouraged to apply through the volunteering portal provided by the Organisational Development team.

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Black Country Cornerstone Commitment