

AGENDA ITEM 14: APPENDIX I

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 4 FEBRUARY 2014

Title:

REVIEW OF THE PROVISION OF HORTICULTURE TRAINING AT WAVERLEY TRAINING SERVICES

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Julia Potts]
[Wards Affected All]**

Note pursuant to Section 100B (5) of the Local Government Act 1972

An annexe to this report contains exempt information by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in the specific paragraphs of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely:-

1. Information relating to an individual; and
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Summary and purpose:

Waverley Training Services delivers training for young people in a wide range of areas across the Borough. It continues to exceed performance targets with the current contract totalling c£1.6m, a threefold growth in the last 4 years. It now has in excess of 800 apprenticeships, delivering foundation learning and provide a Job Club service for the unemployed in the Borough.

The exception to this success story is horticulture. Despite the best efforts of the team to recruit horticulture trainees and being one of a few providers in the area, demand for this service has not grown and in this particular area we are not meeting the requirements of the external funding we receive.

The purpose of this report is to:

- request that post number AC02 Assessor/Trainer (Horticulture) a 3 day per week post at Waverley Training Services is deleted and replaced with an Assessor/Trainer (Horticulture) post which is 2 days per week; and
 - to seek approval to review the delivery of horticulture at Waverley Training Service this academic year and cease delivery if the number of learners do not increase.
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How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The delivery of high quality front line services is the Council's top priority. Understanding our residents needs through the delivery of effective training and apprenticeship opportunities for 16 – 24 year olds and the long term unemployed.

Value for money – reducing hours to reflect the loss of a contract ensuring efficiency of delivery.

Financial Implications:

Waverley Training Services are funded by the Skills Foundation Association to deliver horticulture apprenticeships. Failure to do so results in the contract being reduced or clawed back. We make provision for this through effective monitoring of the performance of each stream of delivery. Horticulture is the one area where we are not seeing growth, in reality we are seeing a reduction in demand with the loss of the school's contract. If redundancy occurs, the costs will be met from the 2013/14 WTS budget which is referred to in the Budget Management report at Agenda Item 12.

Legal Implications:

The proposed redundancy of post AC02 has been addressed in accordance with the Council's restructuring and redeployment policies and complies with employment law.

Introduction

1. Horticulture has been delivered by Waverley Training Services (WTS) since 2008. This has included one day per week tuition for school age children. From September 2013 WTS cancelled the school's contract. The numbers were low and the class was disruptive.
2. The loss of this class affects the working hours of the Horticulture assessor/trainer, and we have been consulting with this employee since July 2013 when this decision was made.
3. The post holder has not requested a reduction of hours, therefore the deletion of post AC02 would make the postholder at risk of redundancy. Redundancy costs are included in the (Exempt) Annexe to this report.
4. Since July 2013 efforts have been made to replace this work by increasing the number of learners and by offering level 3 horticulture as well as level 2. This has been unsuccessful however and the number of learners is still below 10. The number required to sustain the funding for a three day post is a minimum of 16 learners.
5. Whilst previously Surrey County Council actively requested that Waverley provide Horticulture for the county this is no longer the case. The low number of learners and high number of negative leavers impacts negatively on the OFSTED.

6. The number of learners and the completion rate in general calls into question the reasons for delivering horticulture at all. To this end the service will be monitored for the remainder of the academic year but it is proposed to stop from 31 July 2014.

Conclusion

7. Despite Waverley Training Services' success in recent years, the number of Horticulture learners no longer sustains a post which is 3 days per week but would sustain a post which is 2 days per week.
8. Efforts made to increase take up since July 2013 to address this under-performance have not succeeded. This, together with the number of negative leavers, impacts negatively on our OFSTED reports.
9. The Executive is therefore asked to approve the deletion of the 3 day per week post, to be replaced by a two day per week post.
10. The Executive is also asked to review the provision of horticulture training to determine whether Waverley Training Services should continue to offer this training in the future.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive approve:

1. the request to delete post number AC02 with effect from 1 March 2014 and replace it with a 2 day per week post; and
2. the continued review of the provision of horticulture at Waverley Training Services and, if learner numbers do not increase, authority be given to the Head of Community Services and the Manager of Waverley Training Services to cease offering this course at the end of the academic year 2013/14 and the two day per week post be deleted accordingly.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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