

Decision Report - Executive Decision

Forward Plan Reference: NA

Decision Date – 7 June 2023

Key Decision – no



Early Careers Strategy

Executive Member(s): Cllr Theo Butt Philip - Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Alyn Jones - Executive Director

Author: Misha Liddiatt

Contact Details: Misha.Liddiatt@somerset.gov.uk / 01823 355448

Summary / Background

1. The Early Careers Strategy for Somerset Council has been created building upon the work of the positive work of Somerset's five former councils. At its heart it is a strategy designed to bring young people into the workforce at Somerset Council; in direct response to our ageing workforce and the threat of losing skills and experience. The programmes mentioned are already well established across the organisation and have been successfully used by several service areas, meaning a strong legacy exists to build upon. Our aim is to re-launch the Early Careers Strategy now we are a unitary authority and ensure all managers are aware of its importance and utilise all initiatives to enhance our workforce.
2. Throughout the development of the Early Careers Strategy key stakeholders have been consulted, such as colleagues from Education Service and Unions, alongside the Young People themselves, both from mainstream and SEND establishments.

Recommendations

3. The Executive agrees;
 - a. to endorse the Early Careers Strategy and its roll-out across Somerset Council;

- b. to receive updates annually from the Organisational Development team on Early Careers activity across Somerset Council.

Reasons for recommendations

4. The Early Careers Strategy has been proven to support workforce development across Somerset Council. Prior to the previous 2017-2020 strategy; there were 40 apprentices employed across local authority organisations within Somerset. This has since increased to a consistent level of approximately 300 apprentices, at any one time. A continuation of this work, which is broader than just apprentice recruitment, is required to maintain the numbers of younger colleagues within Somerset Council and to ensure we have strong succession plans in place for the future.

Other options considered

5. NA

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

6. Successful implementation of the Early Careers Strategy will support the delivery of the Council Plan vision and priorities. Some examples include;

A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset - in the majority of instances we use local training provision within Somerset.

A Health and Caring Somerset – we ensure all our young people are supported both inside the workplace through robust line manager, mentoring programmes and working well networks. Alongside this, we expect a high level of support from our training providers through specific tutors and assessors for each apprentice.

A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset – we encourage all our young employees to strive to reach their potential and have large ambitions for their futures; through the young employees network we offer continuous professional and personal development opportunities.

A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset – we aim to celebrate all our apprentices and young employees and ensure to shout about their achievements through internal and external communications.

Financial and Risk Implications

7. Organisations that have an annual pay bill of more than £3m pay an apprenticeship levy. This levy can only be used by organisations to fund the qualification elements linked to an apprentice. These qualifications range from £4k to £27k.

Somerset Council will pay an annual levy of approximately £1.2m. Should Somerset Council not utilise the levy (not recruit enough apprentices) it is lost to the Treasury.

8. A key strand within the Early Careers Strategy is the Pathway to Employment scheme. This scheme has an annual budget of £200k and is managed within the HR&OD team, it is to be used to support young people from vulnerable and/or disadvantaged backgrounds into education and careers.

Legal Implications

9. NA

HR Implications

10. NA

Other Implications:

Equalities Implications

11. Please see Equalities Impact Assessment below.

Community Safety Implications

12. NA

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

13. NA

14. NA

Health and Safety Implications

15. NA

Health and Wellbeing Implications

16. NA

Social Value

17. The Early Careers Strategy supports the following Social Value priority;

- Developing employment, skills and training opportunities, particularly for hard-to-reach/disabled/target groups

Social Value is a key aspect of our apprenticeship procurement exercise and is a scoreable question within the evaluation tender. All 20 training providers that we work with are contracted to offer social value to our apprentices but where possible the entire workforce and community of Somerset.

This can be through the method of additional learning resources, fully funded qualifications, additional qualifications added onto the basic apprenticeship curriculum or access to national online resources via memberships.

Our training providers are also committed to engaging with NEETs and supporting them into meaningful education or employment opportunities.

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

18. The Early Careers Strategy has been presented to the Somerset Council Implementation Board and HR Committee.

Background

19. The Early Careers Strategy aims to establish Somerset Council as an employer of choice for young people across Somerset and in our neighbouring counties. Bringing young people into our organisations has been a long-standing objective to counteract the ageing workforce we have within Somerset Council. Prior to the inception of Somerset Council, all five of Somerset's councils were utilising the various strands to differing degrees; meaning there is a legacy to build upon and develop, maximising

the opportunities to strengthen our workforce and recruit and retain apprentice, graduates and work experience students.

Background Papers

20. NA

Appendices

- **Early Careers Strategy**
- **Equality and Impact Assessment.**

Report Sign-Off (if appropriate)

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	22.05.2023
Communications	Chris Palmer	22.05.2023
Finance & Procurement	Jason Vaughan	22.05.2023
Workforce	Chris Squire	23.05.2025
Asset Management	Oliver Woodhams	NA
Executive Director / Senior Manager	Alyn Jones	23.05.2023
Strategy & Performance	Alyn Jones	23.05.2023
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Val Keitch /	22.05.2023
Consulted:	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members		
Opposition Spokesperson	Opposition Spokesperson for Transformation and Human Resources – Cllr Faye Purbrick	25.05.2023
Scrutiny Chair	Corporate and Resources – Cllr Bob Filmer	25.05.2023

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset Council		
Version	3	Date Completed	23.05.2023

Description of what is being impact assessed

The Organisational Early Careers Strategy for Somerset Council – setting out our commitments for encouraging and supporting young people into meaningful careers within Somerset Council.

We will look to re-launch the Early Careers Strategy during the summer of 2023.

Our Early Careers Strategy will encompass our ambitions and aims in relation to various initiatives, including apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate programmes and pathway to employment funding which looks to support those vulnerable and/or disadvantaged young people across Somerset.

Evidence

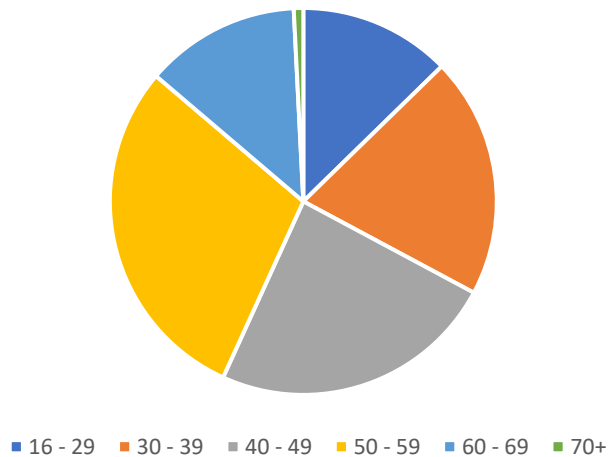
What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Data has been gathered by each organisation around the age brackets of their current workforce so we can highlight the number of people this strategy may affect already in the organisations. This is shown in the below pie chart where it is highlighted that only 13% of the total workforce across the 5 organisations are aged 16-29.

Our Early Careers Strategy will predominantly be aimed at those aged 16-26.

- 16-29: 13%
- 30-39: 20%
- 40-49: 24%
- 50-59: 29%
- 60-69: 13%
- 70+: 1%

Age Brackets - Somerset Council Workforce



Data has also been used from the Youth Voice Census 2021 and the Somerset Youth Board to inform the strategy we have designed to support young people into work and education.

All opportunities, offered, within the ECS are open to all young people from any background or personal circumstance. Accessibility needs are met whenever necessary to ensure an equitable process.

The ECS will be used to ensure inclusivity within Somerset Council through targeted supported employment opportunities in conjunction with other partner organisations such as supported employment colleagues and job coach organisations, such as Discovery.

As of June 2019, 17.4% of Somerset's population were young people aged 0-15. This shows that over the coming few years, we, as a large employer, have a responsibility to offer high quality opportunities for early careers and in partnership with other organisations, educational options. We also must acknowledge the dissemination of information to young people within primary and secondary settings is imperative to ensure they are well informed and able to make their future aspirational decisions.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The strategy was initially drafted in partnership by colleagues from Somerset County Council, Somerset, West and Taunton District Council, South Somerset District Council Sedgemoor District Council and Mendip District Council.

It was shared with Young People within the participation groups, SICC and SLICC – for their views on if we were encompassing all protected groups and to ensure our plans were accessible to all.

The ECS was brought to and approved by the LGR Implementation Board and HR Committee.

Final sign off/endorsement will be sought at the Public Exec meeting on the 7th June 2023.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By improving career opportunities, it is likely to reduce the percentage, we as a county, lose each year of young people. Young People may lack career aspirations and require support to navigate the opportunities available to them within Somerset. Employees aged 27 and over may feel excluded from these opportunities. Young People are less likely to have their own transport, and therefore more likely to use public transport which can impact on where they are able to work. 	□	□	☒
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young People within the County, who have physical or mental health impairments, may not feel that they can join the workplace because of their disability and/or that there may not be appropriate support for them. 	□	□	☒

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People with disabilities, are likely to require reasonable adjustments. Both within the recruitment process and the workplace. • There will be more opportunities for young people with disabilities through the various supported employment schemes within the ECS. 			
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who are thinking about transitioning or going through transition may feel that there are barriers in joining the workplace. • Young People who are thinking about transitioning or going through transition may have greater levels of anxiety within the workplace. 	☒	☐	☐
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have considered the impact upon this protected group, marriage and civil partnership, and no impact has been identified. 	☐	☐	☐
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger parents and expectant mothers may require greater levels of flexibility in the workplace. • This cohort may not be attracted to careers paths within the Council due to their lack of knowledge around what is and isn't available. For example, part time opportunities or term time working. 	☐	☒	☐
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who identify as BME may feel there is a lack of diversity awareness across the organisation – which in turn 	☒	☐	☐

	could impact upon their decision to choose the organisation for their early career.			
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered the impact upon this protected group, pregnancy and maternity, and no impact has been identified. 	☐	☐	☐
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that there are some areas within the council that are traditionally seen by young people as male or female roles and that may influence the decisions young people make about their career path. 	☒	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young People who do not identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual may feel that there will be a lack of diversity within a council environment. 	☒	☐	☐
Other, e.g., carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to their caring responsibilities, Young Carers, may feel they are unable to take on a role within the Council. Young people who have spent time in the Armed Forces may need extra support in readjusting to civilian life. May suffer with PTSD. Young People who live in a low income household, may struggle to pay for transport to and from work or not have suitable attire for the working environment. 	☒	☐	☒

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
The Council will continue to create new opportunities and continue with existing opportunities for employees who are excluded from this strategy. Look to increase the number of apprenticeship roles we offer through looking at current vacancies and whether they could be filled using an apprentice.	Ongoing	Organisational Development Team	Ongoing – quarterly and annual reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering school leavers an additional opportunity to academic options – apprenticeships, work-based learning.	Ongoing	ECS Team and recruiting managers across the organisation	Ongoing – monitored through quarterly reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showcasing the range of apprenticeships now on offer – Level 2 entry level right up to degree and masters Level 7's.	Ongoing	ECS Team	Ongoing – work experience lead to feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ongoing	ECS Team	Ongoing – ECS team to feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>We will continue to recruit care leavers into the organisation into apprenticeships, on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team alongside Leaving Care and YOS colleagues.</p>	<p>Ongoing – monthly finance reports</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Supporting those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental disorders to access high quality educational or career opportunities – through supported programmes and or mainstream programmes with additional recruitment support where needed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team alongside SEND colleagues and Special School colleagues.</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	
<p>Support those on no/low incomes or those who might be homeless to access educational opportunities and work experience placements to strengthen their abilities to begin their early careers.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues alongside local job centres</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	
<p>Sharing information about inclusivity and diversity of Somerset Council as a workforce to ensure those from all backgrounds and ethnicities feel supported and included in our recruitment opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues alongside local job centres</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	
<p>Veterans - Those joining the Council from the Armed Forces are provided with sufficient support in readjusting to civilian life.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues alongside local job centres</p>	<p>Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity</p>	

<p>Young Carers – providing flexibly working arrangements and initial application support to encourage applications from young carers and ensure they feel our vacancies are viable options.</p>	Ongoing	ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	□
<p>Young Parents - providing flexibly working arrangements and initial application support to encourage applications from young parents and ensure they feel our vacancies are viable options.</p>	Ongoing	ECS Team/Recruitment Colleagues	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	□
<p>As an action for all Groups, ensuring that there is a robust induction/onboarding process to provide the relevant support for new starters and give Line Managers confidence. Including signposting to relevant staff networks.</p> <p>Promotion of the Young Employee’s Network to all young people who join the council – showcasing the support it can offer as they begin their early careers.</p> <p>.</p>	Ongoing	OD Team & Line Managers	Ongoing quarterly updates on ECS activity	□
<p>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</p>				

Completed by:	Misha Liddiatt
Date	23.05.2023
Signed off by:	Michelle Anderson
Date	23.05.2023
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	Michelle Anderson - 23.05.2023
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	
Review date:	