

FINANCE COMMITTEE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

SUBMISSION FROM CITY OF FALIKIRK COUNCIL

1. Thank you for your letter seeking information on the steps that Falkirk Council is taking to offer employment opportunities, including Modern Apprenticeships, to individuals furthest from the employment market, such as individuals experiencing high levels of multiple deprivation, care leavers, looked after young people and the long term unemployed.

2. Falkirk Council agreed a policy position in August 2005 that we would strive to achieve a target of 5% of the workforce as Modern Apprentices. Since the policy inception, over 700 opportunities have been created ranging from traditional occupations such as craft apprentices through to non-traditional civil engineers, childcare, social care, administration, sports coaching and professional cookery.

3. The policy commitment is aligned with and integral to the Council's corporate priorities of improving school leaving destinations, improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged young people and increasing the number of young people with qualifications alongside our efforts in developing a workforce of the future. An innovative approach between the Council's Human Resource, Economic Development and Corporate Policy Teams provides a successful, integrated and collaborative framework for the delivery of this policy commitment.

4. As part of our approach to supporting the most disadvantaged young people and those furthest from the labour market a proportion of our Modern Apprenticeship opportunities are targeted at those progressing from Get Ready for Work and pre-employment programmes. This has resulted in over 60% of our Modern Apprenticeship opportunities this year being progression opportunities supporting the most disadvantaged young people.

5. The Council's Fairer Falkirk Strategy which aims to help tackle poverty and disadvantage provides additional Council resources to support a targeted and enhanced provision for care leavers as part of our Corporate Parenting/Family Firm approach to creating opportunities.

6. In an effort to maximise our powers as a Local Authority in providing opportunities for our young people we have adopted an all Council approach to creating, providing and supporting pathways into sustainable employment for our most disadvantaged. This includes the participation of all Council services in our role as employers, purchasers, service providers, development agents and funders. This delivers our enhanced package of support such as:

- Transition planning, life skills and key work support;
- Providing valuable work experience, new skills and qualifications;
- Providing transitional and intermediate employment opportunities;

- Supported Modern Apprenticeships;
- Falkirk Employability Award – core skills accredited training;
- Targeted Training and Recruitment opportunities via the Procurement Process;
- Recruitment Incentives and support for SMEs to support entry to apprenticeships;
- Proactively creating Jobs through contract and service re-design;
- Adding value to public services;
- Preparing the most disadvantage young people residents for economic recovery and new jobs on the horizon.

7. In conclusion, Falkirk Council works with public, private and third sector partners to increase the scope, quantity and diversity of opportunities available and is taking a variety of steps enabling a substantial local contribution to providing quality opportunities within the current challenging financial and economic circumstances.

8. We would be pleased to provide further details or case study materials on any aspects of our approach.