



Subject:	Employability Update
Date:	17 June 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Council's commitments to Inclusive Growth were published in March 2020. The document contained actions that Belfast City Council would progress over the next two years, including actions relating to the role of the Council as an employer. We recognise that as a civic leader and large employer in Belfast we can and should set a strong example for others in driving best practice around employment.
1.2	Through the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Council is committed to providing inclusive recruitment opportunities and to improving participation in employment for under-represented groups by breaking down barriers to employment. This report provides an update on progress to date to support the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the progress to date in relation to the employment commitments in the Inclusive Growth Strategy.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>To meet our employment commitments in the Inclusive Growth Strategy we have completed the following key actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have reviewed our employability and skills community outreach and engagement work in conjunction with key partner organisations and made recommendations to focus resources on agreed inclusive growth cohorts; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Residents not in employment ➤ Residents with low skills levels ➤ Young people not in education, employment or training, ➤ In work low earning individuals • We have identified a number of planned recruitment campaigns which support our Inclusive Growth aims. • We have committed to ring fencing suitable entry level positions, to the four inclusive growth cohorts and providing additional support through pre-recruitment training programmes.
3.2	<p>Job Start Scheme</p> <p>At its meeting on 5 October 2021, CMT agreed the Council’s participation in the DfC funded Job Start Scheme. The scheme is designed to support young people facing additional employment challenges due to the impact of Covid-19. It has helped to create job opportunities for 16–24-year-olds by funding positions with employers across all sectors, for a period of six months, increasing to nine months for those who meet additional criteria (i.e., young people facing multiple barriers).</p>
3.3	<p>Corporate HR along with colleagues in Employability and Skills worked together on this project to recruit and appoint nine young people to temporary roles on 28 March 2022 across the following Council departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and Organisational Strategy • The Office of the Chief Executive • Place and Economy Department • Legal and Civic Services.
3.4	<p>Four of the young people face multiple barriers to employment and secured a 9-month placement. All are progressing well and while there have been some “settling in” issues, line managers, Corporate HR and the Employability and Skills team continue to work with these young people to ensure ongoing support, encouragement and skills development. One young person has already gone on to secure permanent employment. Staff and</p>

residents will be able to read about the success of this project in the June edition of City Matters.

3.5 It has been agreed with DfC that four more young people who were reserve candidates can be offered temporary roles at Belfast Zoo. It is anticipated that these young people, if still available, will start their employment by mid-June.

3.6 Under the Job Start Scheme, DfC fund participating organisations for 25 hours per week at the national minimum wage. Within BCC Job Start participants are paid the actual rate for the job role and this is funded by the employing departments.

Ring fencing of vacancies to the long term unemployed.

General Operative

3.7 In previous years when recruiting for generic roles with multiple vacancies, a number of vacancies have been ring fenced to the long term employed and potential applicants provided with support and guidance to prepare for the application process through a pre-recruitment and training programme.

3.8 In April with support from the Employability and Skills Unit and Workforce Training (one of the organisations contracted to deliver employment academies on behalf of the Council), a number of general operative posts were ringfenced to the long term unemployed. A pre-recruitment and training programme to support applicants facing particular barriers to employment was delivered and there was extensive engagement with employability organisations across the city and in particular with disability organisations and the women's sector.

3.9 Seven participants successfully completed the programme and have been recommended for appointment. Pre employment checks are underway, with appointments to be made as soon as these have been completed.

Business Support Clerks

3.10 A recruitment campaign for Business Support Clerks is imminent and 25% of the permanent Business Support Clerk (BSC) vacancies (approximately 10) will be ring fenced to the long term unemployed. A two week pre-recruitment and training programme will be delivered to around 20 participants nominated from employment organisations across the city. An extensive engagement exercise with employability organisations across the city is

	<p>planned and in particular with disability organisations and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations.</p> <p>Other employment academies</p>
3.11	<p>Employability & Skills have also been working with HR colleagues in CNS to deliver the following Employment and Upskilling Academies for BCC as an employer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services Employment Academy to encourage and support people to apply for hard-to-fill community centre posts, with 16 people currently completing this academy in preparation for recruitment timeframes. • Transport Upskilling Academy for 20 OSS staff to gain their Category C (lorry driving) licence with the aim of gaining a better job. The plan here is to support an additional 20 staff. • Scoping and planning other academies for hard-to-fill posts such as Category C and Category C+E. <p>Financial & Resource Implications</p>
3.12	<p>There are no financial implications to this report.</p> <p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p>
3.13	<p>Corporate HR will work closely with external employability organisations and other partners including the ECNI, to ensure equality of opportunity and alignment to our inclusive growth aspirations. Employability outreach will be targeted at people who face multiple barriers to employment.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None