

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

South Area Council Meeting:

27th February 2015

Agenda Item: 7

**Report of South Area Council
Manager.**

**South Area Council Provision of Training for Local Businesses and Provision
of Apprenticeships**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present to the South Area Council a summary of the training provision available to local businesses as a result of its recent business survey, and to present a range of costs for South Area Council approval.

1.2 To seek approval for costs to employ a number of apprentices as part of the 'Tidy Team' commission.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the South Area Council notes the range of short training courses for local businesses outlined in Section 4.3 and the basic IT skills course in section 4.4 of this report.

2.2 That the authorisation be given to the Service Director, Stronger Safer and Healthier Communities, in consultation with the Chair and Area Council Manager, to approve expenditure for training courses for local businesses, taking into account price and the ability to meet the needs identified in the business survey, to a maximum total value of £20,000.

2.3 That the South Area Council agrees the proposed venues for the courses outlined in Section 4.12 of this report.

2.4 That approval be given to provide the wages costs for 4 apprentice positions within the 'Tidy Team' to a value of £24,000 for a year.

3. Background

3.1 In September 2013, the South Area Council agreed its four priorities, against which it wished to commission projects from its devolved Area Budget. These priorities were:

- Access to Local Information & Advice
- Improving the Local Environment
- Improving Opportunities for Young People
- Growing the Local Economy & Supporting Local Businesses

4. Business Survey

4.1 In order to strengthen its understanding of the needs of local businesses, the South Area Council commissioned an in-depth face-to-face business survey, which was completed in December 2014.

4.2 From this survey of 88 local businesses, a range of support needs for businesses were identified and presented to the South Area Council at its meeting on 19th December 2014.

4.3 At this meeting, the South Area Council gave in-principle agreement to fund training to support the Top 5 business needs identified by the survey, which were:

- Promoting and marketing your business (47 businesses)
- Support for Business Development (28 businesses)
- Health & Safety (26 businesses)
- First Aid (25 businesses)
- Social Media and Web Development (24)

4.4 It was also agreed that the South Area Team would research available provision in more detail, and report back to the next meeting of the South Area Council on 27th February 2015 with a range of outline costs for approval, to enable the development of a programme of business short courses to be developed and delivered within the South Area.

4.5 In its research, the South Area Team also decided to include generic IT skills, which was the 6th highest choice (with 21 businesses expressing a need in this area) because all of the providers advised us that it would be impossible for them to train participants in social media, marketing or web development who did not already possess a good basic knowledge of IT.

4.6 In researching suitable provision, the Team also sought:

- Providers who would train small groups rather than large audiences, to ensure that businesses taking part would get a course tailored to their own specific needs
- Providers who would train in local venues, since many businesses indicated that time to travel to training was often a barrier for them
- Providers who were prepared (many were not) to run 'twilight/teatime' courses, since many businesses had identified that this would be the only time they were free to attend training because of business pressures
- A local provider for training, to keep the funding within the local economy, although this was not always possible. Where it was not possible, a provider from the region was sought
- Where possible, providers with experience of delivering for BMBC or recommended by Enterprising Barnsley were used, to ensure a basic quality standard

4.7 It has been a difficult and complex task to identify a range of providers and to compare provision in a 'like for like' way, as the organisation of the courses, course content and level of bespokeing varied widely. There were also a range of factors which could affect the final cost – for example, some providers wanted to visit the potential venues and assess the facilities/software available, but it was felt to be premature to do this prior to funding being approved.

4.8 For this reason, each of the areas has a minimum and maximum cost range identified. This reflects the differences in quotations provided. For each of the Top 6, the cheapest and most expensive provider is identified – however, it should be noted that the provision offered is not always identical and that the cheapest options may not always be the best on offer. For this reason, the South Area Council's approval is sought to fund the maximum potential costs, whilst recognising that in some cases, one of the cheaper options may be used if the course seems to provide better value for money or a more appropriate course content.

4.9 The cost ranges for the courses excluding general IT Skills are:

Course	Minimum quoted price	Maximum quoted price
First Aid 2 x 3 hour sessions for 25 students	£900 Emergency Response Training Ltd	£1,980 Spectre Initiative Training
Health & Safety Level 2 H&S in the Workplace BIOSHH accredited 1 day course for 26 students	£620 Emergency Response Training Ltd	£3,796 Barnsley Council NB: Offered only Town Centre training – would not work in communities
Web Development Introduction to Wordpress 10 hour unaccredited course for 24 students	£1,440 Northern College NB: This price reflects a subsidy available from the SFA)	£6,000 Design Training NB: This would be a 2 day course for Dreamweaver, a more advanced package
Social Media/PR & Marketing NB: Most Marketing courses now also include use of social media To provide courses for 47 businesses – packages varied	£1,200 Angela Hutchinson Training consultancy 3 hour session on introduction to marketing & social media for groups of 12	£3,600 Social Progress 9 hour package on building a business plan, branding, raising your profile, social media for groups of 12

Business Development 3 hour unaccredited package for groups on 'Developing Your Business' for 28 businesses	£750 Angela Hutchinson Training Consultancy Groups of 12	£1,200 Enterprising Barnsley Groups of 10
Total costs	Minimum £4,910	Maximum £16,576

4.10 In terms of generic IT skills, there are a number of different packages available, which are outlined below. There is also a decision to make about whether or not to offer accredited courses. Some businesses may be put off by the extra time commitment required, whilst others may welcome the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification. There is also the possibility of offering both accredited and unaccredited courses, although the original survey did not ask which would be preferable.

Provider	Course	Costs
Dearne Electronic Community Village	14 hour Open College accredited ICT Entry Level 3 Award for 22 students in groups of 8 Covering Word processing, spreadsheets, Internet & Email, Social Media	£1,840
Get IT Together Barnsley	8 hour unaccredited 'IT for Business' package for 22 students in groups of 10 Covering getting started online, promoting your business through social media, online transactions, basic web design	£528 NB: Low cost is because the provision is part of the nationally funded Citizens Online programme
Northern College	24 hour unaccredited package of tailored sessions for 22 students in groups of 12 Covering word processing, spreadsheets, social media, internet & email, ebay	£3,840 NB: Because this is SFA subsidised, students would need to attend all sessions

4.11 As already outlined in Section 3.7 of this report, the lack of training available locally was highlighted by businesses as one of the key barriers which prevented them from accessing training. In recognition of this, providers were sought who were willing to deliver their training in local venues.

4.12 It is proposed that the courses are offered in 2 main 'hubs' (Wombwell and Hoyland) with all courses on offer in both sites. Both of these have access to good sized IT suites in their respective Libraries which could be booked for little or no cost, which would keep the overall costs of providing the training to a minimum.

5. Provision of Apprentices

5.1 On 19th December, 2014, South Area Council took the opportunity to consider its current priorities, as detailed in 3.1, and the work commissioned to address these. It was noted that finance had yet to be committed to support the priority 'Opportunities for Young People'.

5.2 A number of potential areas of investment were considered at that meeting, which included the Summer Holiday Internship, approval for which was given by South Area Council in February, 2015.

5.3 A further area for potential investment, which Members were supportive of, was the provision of apprenticeship places as part of the 'Tidy Team' commission. Although this was included in the original tender information and subsequently in the contract, there were a number of difficulties in fulfilling this obligation which were detailed in the report to the Area Council in December, 2014.

5.4 Since this date, Forge Community Partnership/Anvil CIC, together with the Area Council Manager have liaised with the organisation 'First for Apprenticeships Barnsley' an impartial brokerage service for Leeds City Region apprenticeship funding.

5.5 Forge/Anvil have managed to secure funding for 1 apprenticeship place with associated training which includes wages costs, and for additional training costs for another 4 apprenticeship placements. Therefore, in order to provide 5 apprenticeships within the 'Tidy Team' Members are asked to approved the wage element of 4 apprenticeship placements at a cost of £6,000 which equates to a total cost of £24,000 for one year.

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Date: 16th February 2015