

CABINET

7 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

A.3 UPDATE ON CAREER TRACK AND ITS APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is to update Cabinet on the activities and progress since the Ofsted Inspection visit in November 2021, seeks its agreement for the continuation of the Career Track function and agree the new governance structure/format.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Career Track was established within Tendring District Council in 1983. Since then it has continuously provided apprenticeship opportunities within the organisation and for other external employers.
- The Council's sustained commitment to the Career Track apprenticeship programme has been a central plank of its work to develop a more skilled workforce and to "grow our own" employees of the future within Tendring.
- In the last 10 years over 500 people have taken part in a Career Track apprenticeship programme; success rates for the end of the 2021/2022 academic year is 84%.
- The Council's former Back to Business Agenda added value to the Career Track Programme by improving opportunities and the quality of apprenticeship schemes for young people. This agenda will include providing small/medium employer wage incentives to encourage the engagement of 10 new employers and fund 25% of the apprentice's wages. At the time of writing five employers have signed up to the incentive scheme.
- The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2024 has a focus on education through its priorities which include:
 - Develop and attract new businesses;
 - support existing businesses;
 - more and better jobs;
 - education - for improved outcomes.
- Career Track had its first full inspection by Ofsted between 3 and 5 November 2021 following the Education Inspection Framework. Career Track had previously had a successful Ofsted Monitoring Visit (a more 'light touch' inspection in June 2019). The full report following the November Inspection was published on 24 December 2021. The findings of the report graded Career Track as 'Requiring Improvement'. Following this

grading, Tendring District Council implemented a comprehensive Development Plan to address the improvement areas identified by Ofsted.

- An internal Development Group was established to monitor the progress against the actions identified within the Development Plan. The Development Group is chaired by the Deputy Leader, Cllr Guglielmi in his role as Portfolio Holder for Career Track, membership of the group also includes the Chief Executive; Assistant Director, Partnerships; Internal Audit Manager and the Executive Projects Manager – Governance. The Work Based Learning Manager and Organisational Development Manager report in to this group. The Internal Audit Manager and Executive Projects Manager were part of the Development Group to represent the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer in their overarching governance roles due to the findings of the Ofsted Report.
- To date the Development Group have met five times and following significant progress were able to sign off the Development Plan at the last meeting in June.
- Initial activity following inspection focussed on setting the foundations and getting them in place. This has involved adjusting Career Track resources to address the additional demands to meet inspection requirements.
- The services of a specialist company known as SDN (Strategic Development Network) were commissioned for their professional help and advice for policy and curriculum development which enabled a new curriculum to be written, fully meeting the requirements and expectations of Ofsted. The curriculum covers the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the standards, including personal development and behaviours and attitudes, which covers safeguarding, British values, Prevent, career development and health and well-being.
- SDN have supported Career Track with consultants/professionals who also work alongside and train Ofsted Inspectors. In addition, their services were used to support the completion of the RoATP (Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers) application in 2019 and in 2022, an apprenticeship training provider must be an approved provider on the register to be able to deliver apprenticeships. SDN have recently completed a review of the Development Group to assist in shaping a governance approach suitable for the ongoing provision of Career Track Apprenticeship.
- Career Track has formally launched OneFile, a training software package for the administration and management of apprenticeships. OneFile is used by at least 50% of all apprenticeship providers as it supports the learners more effectively and enables the provider to better monitor and ensure effective delivery of the curriculum. Career Track are now able to fully personalise learning, improve quality and increase engagement with their apprentices and employers, using the OneFile eportfolio software. This was funded by the Back to Business Agenda.
- A recent stakeholders briefing enabled Career Track to share a revised and updated mission statement, the success of OneFile and the new curriculum – this resulted in positive feedback from those who attended. All apprentices (and their supervisors and mentors) are using OneFile (dependent on where they are in their apprenticeship programme) and the benefits are already evident.

- The agreement for TDC (under the name of Career Track) to provide apprenticeship training rests with the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency). The organisation has an allocated account manager with the ESFA and the Work Based Learning Manager held monthly meeting with him to discuss actions and progress towards meeting the improvements required by Ofsted. The ESFA account manager approved the Development Plan and fully supported the progress being made. At the last meeting on 23 June 2022 the account manager agreed that the plan has been completed and consequently Career Track has returned to quarterly meetings until the next inspection.
- A Career Track self assessment report and its accompanying quality improvement plan is being finalised and will replace the Development Plan as the monitoring tool for quality, progress, development and achievement, This is an expectation of Ofsted and when complete will be shared with them and the ESFA.
- With the recovery phase / improvement changes now complete Career Track are returning to Business as Usual and the Development Group have recommended the membership is revised to align with a governance required by Ofsted for the ongoing provision of all apprenticeships.
- Career Track will seek to follow the AELP (Association of Employment and Learning Providers) Governance Code. It is based on the following expectations of good governance:
 - Putting the learner, apprentice, and employer first;
 - promoting high expectations and ambitions for learners, apprentices, and staff;
 - listening to learners, employers, and staff;
 - promoting inspirational training, teaching, and learning and assessment;
 - creating a safe environment for learners and apprentices to train, learn and develop;
 - providing strong strategic leadership and challenge to the senior team;
 - demonstrating accountability to all stakeholders, including publishing accurate and timely information on performance;
 - ensuring the achievement of equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the organisation.
- Under the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework it is a requirement that an apprenticeship training provider follows the Further education and skills handbook criteria for governance, as identified in the AELP Governance Code.
- The aim of the Tendring District Council (Career Track) Apprenticeship Governance Board is to achieve effective governance, that:
 - Sets the tone from the top and ensures that delivery matches up with an organisation's values and ethos;
 - provides strategic direction and control to Career Track by creating robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational outcomes and financial performance;
 - requires confidence and ability to challenge conventional wisdom, ask tough questions and nurture strong relationships.
- The Terms of Reference (including agenda) of the Apprenticeship Board are set out in

Appendix C, were agreed, in principle, at the final meeting of the Development Group. The first meeting of the Apprenticeship Governance Board will take place in October 2022, with three meetings being held per year, termly, with a report to Cabinet following the final summer term meeting, each year.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) notes the implemented progress of the Career Track Apprenticeship Scheme since the Ofsted Report in December 2021 requiring improvement;**
- b) approves the Terms of Reference of the Career Track Apprenticeship Governance Board, to be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Finance and Governance, whose responsibilities include being the Portfolio Holder for Career Track; and**
- c) continues its support for Career Track and their priorities and the longer term commitment to continue to explore opportunities to deliver the Service at no net cost to the Council.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The recommendations enable Career Track to work towards achieving a 'Good' Ofsted inspection result and continue to contribute to the economic, health and social wellbeing of the District.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option is to cease the Career Track Apprenticeship programme. Career Track would not meet the Ofsted requirements or the expectations within the ESFA agreement and the council would not have to fund the overspend in the budget for 2022/2023.

This would result in a significant impact on the local community; including local employers and Tendering young people and their families.

Therefore this option is not recommended.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2024 puts Community Leadership through Partnerships and A Growing and Inclusive Economy at the heart of everything we do, and within that it has a focus on education through the following priorities:

- Develop and attract new businesses;
- support existing businesses;

- more and better jobs;
- education - for improved outcomes.

Career Track's vision is to be recognised as a 'Good' provider of apprenticeships; engaging learners in the development of workplace knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable them to actively contribute to the economic, health and social wellbeing of the district:

- To educate, engage and inspire;
- to inform, advise, support and mentor;
- to establish and maintain high quality standards in apprenticeship training;
- to safeguard and promote the welfare of our learners.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Career Track worked with SDN to create a curriculum for each of the apprenticeships they deliver. The curriculum now meets the expectations of Ofsted and sets out the aims of each programme of education and training. It also sets out the structure for those aims to be implemented, including the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be gained at each stage.

SDN have engaged a Senior Associate who supported Career Track to strengthen how governance impacts on the apprenticeship programme and to also meet the Ofsted requirements.

Communication with our apprentices, supervisors, employers and other partners is key, particularly since the inspection; a formal stakeholders briefing was held in June 2022 to ensure they are kept up to date with our progress and are able to make an important contribution to the future development of Career Track.

Monthly meetings were held with the ESFA Contract Manager to ensure the correct progress was being made following the inspection.

Audit Committee received a formal report in March 2022 and a further update was given at the Audit Committee's meeting held on 29 September 2022.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	YES	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant effect on two or more wards <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Involves £100,000 expenditure/income <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise significant for the service budget
		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	25 August 2022

The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

None	
FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<p>The Service remains committed to delivering the Career Track Service at no net cost to the Council through reviewing both its costs but also opportunities to generate additional income. It is however recognised that this will not necessarily be achievable in the short term whilst the various associated activities are undertaken.</p> <p>It is therefore likely that there will be a net cost in 2022/23 of up to £45,000, which is currently included in the Council's Corporate Investment Plan for separate consideration. In terms of future years, the position will be kept under review as part of the wider Corporate Investment Plan and Financial Forecast processes.</p>	
X	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:
The above comments are supported by the Section 151 Officer.	
USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY	
The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:	
A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	Tendring District Council (Career Track) Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	Tendring District Council (Career Track) Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	Tendring District Council (Career Track) Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference
MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
<p>The progress of Career Track will be monitored at the termly governance meetings and recorded formally with a continued yearly report to Cabinet.</p> <p>Ofsted will undertake a monitoring visit no earlier than 7 months after the initial inspection (November 2021) and a full inspection visit will follow within the Ofsted Inspection guidelines.</p>	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
Career Track need to achieve a 'good' grading at the next Ofsted visit in order to continue providing apprenticeship, and to maintain the approved provider status with the ESFA. With the work identified and undertaken in the development plan and the newly established governance board will ensure that the areas that required improvement have been addressed and implemented.	
EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS	
Having undertaken an equalities impact assessment, the conclusion is that the proposal does not impact on the protected characteristics.	

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

Career Track offers apprenticeship opportunities to people and employers from the Tendring district, adding money back into the local economy. This in turn improves health and wellbeing, increases self-esteem, raises educational attainment and enhances employability skills and experience; providing a positive example to others.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030

None

OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder

As above

Health Inequalities

As above

Area or Ward affected

All wards

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Career Track is the name used by Tendring District Council for its apprenticeship service.

In 2017 the government changed the criteria for providers to be allowed to deliver apprenticeships. Under the new rules, Career Track was no longer eligible to operate as a sub-contractor of Colchester Institute. To secure its future, the decision was made to apply, through the national tender process, for Career Track to gain Approved Provider status on the national RoATP. The tender application was successful.

In order to provide apprenticeships the organisation has to continue to be an Approved Training Provider with the ESFA. Periodically, the ESFA announced that providers have to re-apply to remain on the Register, usually referred to as the RoATP. All approved providers are subject to inspection from Ofsted. On Inspection, Ofsted grades the organisations it inspects as Excellent; Good; Requires Improvement; or Inadequate. Its Inspection Reports are published here www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports.

An Ofsted Inspection with an 'Inadequate' rating would usually result in withdrawal of contract from the ESFA. When applying to be on the RoATP providers are asked to provide information on their Ofsted rating and details of actions to address areas identified as Requires Improvement or Inadequate. The ESFA may take this into account when deciding whether to re-approve a training provider.

From September 2019 Ofsted introduced the Education Inspection Framework and inspectors make judgements on the following areas:

- overall effectiveness
- the quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management

In June 2019 Career Track successfully re-applied to continue their Approved Provider status with the ESFA. In the same month Career Track also received a Monitoring Visit from Ofsted. A Monitoring Visit is a 'light touch' visit and the report does not provide a rating. The wording in the report and the verbal feedback received, appeared to suggest the service was on the right course to gain a Good rating from a full Ofsted Inspection – the Common Inspection Framework was used for this inspection.

The service made a number of plans for further improvements and developments for the following year. However, these plans were not actioned due to the impact of Covid upon the organisation in 2020; the Work Based Learning Manager was seconded to assist HR in its work supporting the workforce and the remaining team managed to keep the service running and put in extra time to ensure apprentices received extra support to help mitigate isolation and potential mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

The numbers of apprentices supported by Career Track declined during 2020 as a result of the Covid Pandemic but increased rapidly during 2021 to reach and even exceed the numbers of 2019. At the time of the full Ofsted Inspection in November 2021 the numbers stood at 53; there are currently 45 apprentices on the programme. Vacancies are advertised regularly and apprentices join the programme and successfully achieve on a weekly basis.

Apprentices are placed with a number of local authorities including Maldon, Braintree and Colchester and GP Primary Choice Ltd. Career Track has recently been approved as a provider for all Suffolk authorities to deliver the Public Service Operational Delivery Officer Apprenticeship Standard. In addition Career Track has apprentices with local businesses, the largest of which is Silverton's and it also provides apprenticeships for the Virtual School, Kent (run by Kent County Council).

The Ofsted Inspection in November 2021 was the first full Ofsted Inspection for Career Track since 2005 as previously it was subcontracted with Colchester Institute and therefore was not subject to inspection in its own right.

Shortly after the Ofsted inspection, Career Track received notification that it was to submit its application to remain on the RoAPT by the end of January 2022. A request was made for an extension and the deadline was extended to the end of April 2022. The full application to remain on the register was submitted at the end of April 2022. Notification that our application was successful was received on 28 July 2022.

Ofsted will undertake a monitoring visit no less than 7 months following the original inspection date and a full inspection can take place up to 24 months after the original inspection.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Cabinet May 2021

Cabinet resolved to continue its support for Career Track and to support its priorities for the

next 18 months, including an increased emphasis on supporting local firms as part of the Council's Back to Business priority.

The Audit Committee received a report at its meeting on 31st March 2022, from the Assistant Director for Partnerships regarding the Council's Response to the Report of Ofsted following its Inspection of Career Track in November 2021. Minute 31 of that meeting refers and is set out below.

"The Committee was advised of the Development Plan, and took each of the five inspection categories in turn and stated what was being planned to address each area. The document identified the key milestones and progress by using a RAG (Red, Amber and Green) system. and progress against it and proposals to supplement the membership of the proposed Governance Board with representation from local employers and from the apprentices themselves. Members commented on the need to ensure the capacity of Board Members, along with the balance of skills within its membership, was appropriate for the role of the Board.

The Assistant Director (Partnerships) also confirmed that oversight of the Career Track service was provided by the Council's Human Resources and Council Tax Committee and by Cabinet through reports to them.

RESOLVED that the Audit Committee -

- (a) notes the report, the findings of the Ofsted inspection and the success of Career Track over the years; and
- (b) endorses the Development Plan and the actions currently being taken."

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

There are none.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Ofsted Inspection Report
APPENDIX B – Career Track Development Plan
APPENDIX C – TDC (Career Track) Apprenticeship Board Terms of Reference

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Name	Debianne Messenger
Job Title	Work Based Learning Manager
Email/Telephone	dmessenger@tendringdc.gov.uk 01255 686313