



Report to Resources Committee

5 November 2013

Title: Mears Apprenticeships - Update

Report of: Director of Customer and Communities

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on Apprenticeship activity undertaken by Mears Plc in Gateshead.

Background

2. Mears Plc outlined in the bid for the contract that they would build on their track record of investing in apprenticeships and work experience schemes by developing a Joint Employment Skills Plan (in conjunction with TGHC) . Mears gave a commitment to employing a minimum of 1 apprentice per £1m annual turnover in Gateshead.
3. As a consequence Mears, have partnered with Gateshead College on both the recruitment process and the provision of relevant training courses for apprentices to support the delivery of the apprenticeship scheme.
4. Attached as an Appendix is a table which provides some background information the 27 apprentices currently employed within Mears.

Summary

5. To support the delivery of the apprentice scheme Mears and Gateshead College have developed an apprenticeship scheme and introduced an apprenticeship selection process as follows:-
 - Gateshead College advertise the apprenticeship opportunities on the Government web-site. The site advertises in local schools and Colleges and various other recruitment centres.
 - The College receive the applications and choose a number of candidates for interview and test (CITB-Construction Skills Structured Learning Exercise)
 - Approximately 30 candidates take part in an Assessment day.
 - The assessment days are arranged by both Mears and Gateshead College with the assessments undertaken at the College. The groups are made up from operational

supervisors, managers and the training co coordinator from both branch and the Mears Group training representatives. The day consists of a presentation by Mears which provides an overview of the business and outlines the commitment to the Apprenticeship scheme.

- Following the assessment day the numbers are further reduced to approximately 20 for interview. The interviews take place at the Mears office and are carried out by 2 operational managers and the Mears apprentice coordinator.
 - During the Apprenticeship progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks with the Apprentices, their Mentor/Manager, Mears Apprentice Coordinator and the College contact. These reviews are an opportunity to address any issues the student may have to ensure the apprentice is given the best support available.
 - Mears have advised Gateshead College that they are keen to work with them on any further projects they may have to promote the Construction Industry and have offered the support of a Business Ambassador if required.
6. Gateshead College have recently nominated Mears as the Employer of the Year in the National Apprentice Awards.
7. Paul Gough, Head of Commercial Operations at Gateshead College stated: " Mears are an exemplary organisation intent on making a difference to the communities they operate in by creating jobs for local people; investing in Apprentices and continually developing their workforce to stay competitive".
8. A regular meeting has been established with Gateshead Councils job linkage team, Mears and TGHC. This meeting reviews the development of the apprenticeship scheme and considers the contribution Mears make to the training and skill development of their workforce.

Next Steps

9. Discussions are underway with Mears, Gateshead College and Gateshead Council regarding February 2014's intake of apprentices.

Link to values

10. This report relates to the following company values: -
- Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Caring and respecting
 - Embracing equality
 - A commitment to all our employees.

Impact on tenants

11. How we deliver services ensures that we provide services based on a sound understanding of the needs and priorities of our customers.

Risk Management Implications

12. There are no risk management implications directly relating to this report.

Financial Implications

13. There are no financial implications directly relating to this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. This report relates to our approach to ensuring that we are considering the impact on our employees and customers.

Value for Money Implications

15. There are no value for money implications directly relating to this report.

Health Implications

16. There are no health implications directly relating to this report.

Environmental Implications

17. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

18. The joint meeting between Gateshead Council, Mears and TGHC supports the delivery of the apprenticeship scheme.

Recommendation

19. To note the apprentice activity undertaken by Mears Plc in partnership with Gateshead College linked to the repairs contract in Gateshead.

APPRENTICES

The table below identifies the current total of 27 apprentices within the Gateshead business made up as follows:-

- 7 transferred during the TUPE transfer to Mears
- 7 employed into Mears September 2012 recruitment process
- 8 employed into Mears February 2013 recruitment process
- 5 employed into Mears September 2013 from recruitment process

7 Transferred During TUPE Transfer to Mears

Apprenticeship	Course Length	Current Section	Current Year	Current Status	Training Provider
1 x Joiner	3 Years	Voids	3rd	3 rd year of a 3 year course	Newcastle College
1 x Gas Plumber	4 Years	Gas Team	3rd	Completed a Level 2 in Heating and Ventilation and has now been enrolled on the Level 3 Gas Cert	Newcastle College
1 x Roofer	3 Years	R&M	3rd	Completed Level 2 and is currently working on Level 3. Problems evidencing some of the processes for the level 3 but work has taken place with our sub-contractors and the College to source the type of roofing required	Newcastle College
3 x Gas Plumbers	4 Years	Gas Team	4th	Completed the Level 2 and 3 in Plumbing and Gas and are currently awaiting the final ACS exam	JTL*
1 x Electrician	4 Years	Electrical	2nd	Currently attending College on a day release	Gateshead College

* JTL is a not-for-profit charity operating in Gateshead, who offer advance apprenticeships in electrical, engineering maintenance and mechanical engineering services comprising plumbing, heating and ventilating and refrigeration air-conditioning.

7 Employed into Mears September 2012 Recruitment Process

Apprenticeship	Course Length	Current Section	Current Year	Current Status	Training Provider
1 x Electrician	4 Years	Electrical	2 nd	Joined Mears September 2012 in the first Apprentice intake. Currently attending College on a day release	Gateshead College
1 x Gas Plumber	2 Years	Gas Team	2 nd	Joined Mears September 2012. Had already completed Level 2 Plumbing with another Apprenticeship. Has been enrolled on the Advanced Apprenticeship through Mears (Gas)	Gateshead College
4 x Multi Skilled	3 Years	R&M	2 nd	Joined Mears September 2012. This is a new style Apprenticeship with Gateshead College, initiated by Mears for the needs of the business. Apprentices have completed the key skills required and are working on the Painting and Preparation units of the Course. The course covers Bricklaying, Joinery, Plastering, Roofing and Brickwork. As this is was a new course it is developing very much around the requirements of Mears. Gateshead College have publicised this course with other Employers in the area, using Mears as an example and have had lots of interest.	Gateshead College
1 x Business Administration	2 Years	Business Support	2 nd	Joined Mears September 2012. Currently attending College on a day release.	Gateshead College

8 Employed into Mears February 2013 Recruitment Process

Apprenticeship	Course Length	Current Section	Current Year	Current Status	Training Provider
2 x Electrician	4 Years	Electrical	1 st	Joined Mears in the February 2013 Apprentice intake. Unable to enrol in College until September but are currently getting valuable experience on site and gathering evidence for future use	Gateshead College
1 x Gas Plumber	4 Years	R&M	1 st	Joined Mears Feb 2013. Attending College on day release	Gateshead College
1 x Roofer	2 Years	R&M	1 st	Joined Mears Feb 2013. Attending College on a day release, The College are working in conjunction with a local Roofer to provide the training.	Gateshead College
2 x Multi Skilled	3 Years	Voids	1 st	Joined Mears Feb 2013. One apprentice has joined the September group at College as he has completed the key skills required. The other has joined a new group.	Gateshead College
1 x Customer Care	2 Years	Customer Services	1 st	Both Joined Mears Feb 2013. They don't attend College on day release as their course is being run via the new e Cordia online system. The tutor sends them assignments online which they complete and submit. The tutor visits them on site every 3 weeks or so.	Gateshead College
1 x Business Administration	2 Years	Business Support	1 st		

5 Employed into Mears September 2013 Recruitment Process

Apprenticeship	Course Length	Current Section	Current Year	Current Status	Training Provider
1 x Plumber Gas	4 Years	R & M	1 st	Joined Mears Sep 2013. Attending College on day release	Gateshead College
1x Plasterer	3 Years	R & M	1 st	Joined Mears Sep 2013. Attending College on day release	Gateshead College
1x Painter & Decorator	3 Years	R & M	1 st	Joined Mears Sep 2013. Attending College on day release	Gateshead College
2X Multi Skilled	3 Years	R & M	1 st	Joined Mears Sep 2013. Attending College on day release	Gateshead College