

Local Government Future Skills Programme – Update noted etc.

8 With reference to the minutes of 6th August 2024 approving the updated Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan, including an action under the Future Skills Programme to deliver the Local Government Skills Project, there was submitted and noted a report by the Chair, Local Government Future Skills Working Group and Chief Officer, People Resources, North Lanarkshire Council regarding an update on the progress with the work of the Local Government Future Skills Working Group and the Regional Skills Devolution Group, advising that

- (1) at the first meeting of the Local Government Future Skills Working Group on 5th December 2023, it was agreed that addressing shortages within Planning Departments would be the initial focus and that the Chief Executives' Group (CEG) had received an update report on 25th April 2024 and had agreed a proposed approach for the Glasgow City Region (GCR) Planning Graduate Apprenticeship Programme, which would involve working closely with the University of the West of Scotland to develop a fully-funded, work-based learning degree qualification in Town Planning;
- (2) following a presentation to the CEG on 24th October 2024, the Chair had written to Heads of Planning and Heads of Human Resources (HR) across GCR to ask them to review and confirm their commitment to both the 2-year Masters programme and the 4-year Undergraduate degree course;
- (3) to better understand wider Local Government Training Opportunities, the Programme Management Office (PMO) had conducted a survey with the Member Authorities (MA) Heads of HR to map existing local authority training provision from school work experience places through to graduate posts to capture the level of activity across Local Government and identify best practice that could be shared;
- (4) it was proposed that at the next meeting of the Local Government Future Skills Working Group, that MAs would present project best practice, with an aspiration to develop a consistent programme and share best practice across the 8 MAs;
- (5) the Regional Education Collaborate (REC) had committed resource to undertake an audit of current Developing the Young Workforce activity to better understand provision in place across the Region that would focus on Local Government, and that following the review, the REC would link with the existing GCR Employability Group and the Future Skills Working Group to determine the next steps;
- (6) Scotland's Local Government Workforce Report had been launched at the SOLACE conference on 6th September 2024 which identified many acute challenges in several job roles, especially in social care and social work as well as a number of professional roles such as trading standards officers, planners and environmental health officers, with the biggest barrier to recruitment noted as a lack of financial resource and pressures to make budget savings;

- (7) the Local Government Future Skills Working Group had agreed that the SOLACE report should provide the framework for the approach to be adopted across GCR, however, given the budget issues identified with planning, wider systemic issues needed to be addressed before another area of work could be tackled;
- (8) representatives from the Regional Skills Devolution Group had continued to engage with Scottish Government (SG) Skills colleagues to consider areas of opportunity to work in partnership and to support the delivery of the recommendations from the Withers Report (2023) and that a meeting had taken place with SG Modern Apprenticeship colleagues in late October 2024 to progress the discussion on the flexibility of funding; and
- (9) the PMO was working with Glasgow City Council and the Centre for Civic Innovation to utilise the Scottish Approach to Service Design to develop a more effective mechanism of employer engagement.