

Forward Plan reference number: 'Not applicable'

Report title: Drawdown From Everyone's Essex Reserves - NHS/ECC Shared Apprentice Proposal	
Report to: Councillor Christopher Whitbread - Chancellor of Essex and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance	
Report author: Shammi Jalota, Head of Equalities & Partnerships. Shammi.jalota@essex.gov.uk	
Date: 13 October 2023	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 Everyone's Essex sets out the strategic aim to make Essex a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy. Within that aim there are commitments to improve skills and the create job opportunities for all. And we know that organisations like ECC and NHS need a skilled workforce with capacity to deliver the changing and growing needs of the aging population, whilst having specialist skills in complex care, prevention, and early intervention support, and being able to manage difficult behaviours and those with multiple support needs.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to the draw down of £49,000 from the Everyone's Essex Reserve (£8,000 in 2023/24, £36,000 in 2024/25 and £5,000 in 2025/26. This funding will contribute towards the cost of employing two new Apprentice posts working across Essex County Council (ECC) and the NHS. The NHS have agreed to contribute £10,000 which represents the balance of the cost of the two new posts.

3. Background and Proposal

- 3.1 ECC want to lead the way as an anchor employer, providing meaningful opportunities for those looking for entry level work into long term careers. It is important we can identify and offer career pathways and training to attract more people into care and retain those already in the sector as part of the Health Integration Plan Apprentices bring numerous benefits to the organisation in which they work.
- 3.2 This proposal is to create two apprenticeship posts within Adult Social Care (ASC), (North Quadrant), that will work jointly across ECC and the NHS (Suffolk and North East Essex). By partnering with the NHS to host two apprentices in known skills shortage areas, we have an opportunity to bring to life the value

these opportunities can bring for both the employer, community, and apprentice.

- 3.3 This proposal aims to support the County Councils commitment to Levelling Up Essex. We know that there are cohorts that are furthest from employment, such as those with learning disabilities, Young adults (16-25) who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months and children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities, or mental health conditions (taking an all age approach).
- 3.4 The report is seeking drawdown from Everyone's Essex Reserve of £49,000 to fund 2 fixed term apprentice opportunities. For 2023/2024 and 2024/2025; £8,000 in 2023/24, £36,000 in 2024/25 and £5,000 in 2025/26. The breakdown of how this will be spent is set out in paragraph 6.1 of this report.
- 3.5 The apprentices roles will be employed as Community Support Worker apprentices within ASC and complete a level 2 Healthcare Support Worker qualification. They will work within 2 of their neighbourhood teams, working alongside professionally qualified social workers and occupational therapists.
- 3.6 As part of their apprenticeship programme, they will complete their level 2 Healthcare Support worker qualification. Most of the work and learning will be undertaken within ASC however the apprentice would be expected to undertake a work placement that is at least 13 weeks in duration within the NHS to complete their 'off-the-job' training element of the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship programme will be for a total period of 18 months.
- 3.7 Our award-winning Entry to Work team will support the service and apprentice in order to maximise the success of the programme and for the individuals. A robust evaluation process will be completed and the following measures will be implemented:
 - a. Apprenticeship Completion Evaluation: this assesses the successful completion of an apprenticeship, confirming whether the apprentice has fulfilled all requirements and achieved their qualification.
 - b. Destination Tracking Analysis: this analysis focuses on the post-program outcomes for apprentices, specifically examining their ability to secure long-term employment opportunities within ECC, NHS, or external organisations, thereby measuring the program's effectiveness in facilitating career placements.
 - c. Candidate Experience Feedback: this is to ensure the ongoing improvement of our apprenticeship programme, regular feedback will be collected from apprentices regarding their experiences and learning.
 - d. Hiring Manager Feedback Assessment: this actively seek feedback from Hiring Managers who have engaged with the apprenticeship program, aiming to gain valuable insights into their perspectives and experiences.
 - e. Financial Return on Investment (ROI): this crucial metric evaluates the cost-effectiveness of the program by comparing its expenditures against the achieved outcomes, providing an essential measure of its financial viability.

- f. Skills and Knowledge Development Evaluation: assesses the extent to which participation in both ECC and NHS settings has contributed to the apprentices' understanding of public sector healthcare and will provide a platform for career opportunities.

Financial implications

4. The estimated cost of the two new posts is £59,000 (including £10,000 contribution from the NHS), a breakdown is provided in the table below

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£	£	£	£
2 x Apprentice posts ¹	10	39	5	54
Other costs	3	2	0	5
Gross cost	13	41	5	59
NHS Contribution	(5)	(5)	0	(10)
Net cost to ECC	8	36	5	49

- 4.1 Apprentices are paid national apprenticeship wage in their first twelve months and then the national living wage
- 4.2 It is currently assumed the apprenticeships will be in place in 2023.
- 4.3 Within the Everyone's Essex Reserve there is currently a balance of £5.7m funding set aside towards levelling up – there is therefore sufficient funding to be able to meet these proposed costs.

5. Legal implications

- 6.1.1 The Council's financial regulations state that all drawdowns from reserves must be approved by the Cabinet Member for Finance.
- 6.2.2. Drawing down of money from reserves does not authorise any expenditure that is a key decision or any significant changes to ECC services or funding which must be authorised by the relevant Cabinet Member

6. Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

6.3 The Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. ECC is a Disability Confident leader and offers Job Interview Schemes to any applicant who identifies as having a disability or being a Care Leaver or Veteran in the application process. This scheme guarantees an interview for anyone who meets the minimum requirements of the role. At this stage of the process we do not yet know who our applicants/Apprentices will be and if they have any protected characteristics. The Apprentices will provide support to vulnerable adults (and their families) to enable them to live healthily and independently.

7. List of Appendices

ECIA

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date 03.11.23
Councillor Christopher Whitbread, Chancellor of Essex and Cabinet Member with responsibility for finance	

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Councillor Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Levelling Up and the Economy	02.11.2023
Executive Director, Corporate Services (S151 Officer)	25.10.2023
[Michael Neumann on behalf of] Nicole Wood	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	13.10.2023
Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	