

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016**

**THE ANGUS OFFER FOR TEACHERS**

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND LEARNING**

**ABSTRACT**

This report summarises action taken to consider the possibility of the development of an ‘Angus Offer’, a package to encourage teachers to work in Angus. It asks for Committee approval to take forward a number of actions in this regard.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) Consider the progress made in exploring potential incentives to encourage new teachers to Angus
- (ii) Agree to the proposals outlined in section 5 of this report.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit

Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens

Adults maximise their potential through learning opportunities

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Report 2/16 summarised the current position in Angus Council in relation to teacher numbers. The challenges to the maintenance of teacher numbers were discussed alongside a summary of the action being taken to meet these. A number of proposals were agreed in this report including that work is undertaken to develop an ‘Angus Offer’ consisting of a range of attractive options aimed at encouraging teachers to work in Angus. This could include a number of incentives for attracting new teachers to Angus such as:

- A golden ‘hello’ payment linked to contractual commitment
- Support with housing
- Support with transport
- Support with professional learning finance
- Allocation of experienced support mentor
- Support with personal childcare costs

It was indicated that this work will involve undertaking a benefit assessment to determine that any potential investment was worth the expected return.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 A cross-council officer workshop was established to consider the cost-benefit analysis of potential features of an attraction package. This included representatives from schools and learning, children and young people, legal and democratic services, finance and human resources. Each feature of a potential package was considered alongside an analysis of current policy and practice. The issue of equity was central to all discussions.

#### **4.2 Golden Hello**

It was noted that other local authorities who had tried this approach had not experienced a significant positive impact on recruitment. Angus Council's teacher numbers are more stable than other areas of Scotland and the group agreed that the cost-benefit analysis to a 'golden hello' being part of any package at this time was not considered good value. Consideration was given to providing a financial enhancement to teachers with specific qualifications in shorter supply in Angus such as Technical Education and Mathematics. An analysis of the national picture with regard to training and recruitment of these specialist teachers again led to the conclusion that there was little benefit to the additional cost of providing this enhancement alongside the changes to policy work that would be required in order to ensure equity. Overall the group agreed that this was not an appropriate feature of any package. It was however considered appropriate to review the availability and amount of the Council's relocation package for all employees as this would encourage permanent employees and residents to live and work in Angus.

#### **4.3 Housing Support**

It was noted that another Scottish local authority had entered into a partnership with a private organisation to offer newly recruited teachers reduced cost housing. In Angus the current availability of housing stock might mitigate against the viability of this type of incentive. Even if this were an option; a relationship would have to be established with the private sector. In addition, as standard tenancy agreements may not be appropriate, the use of Council Housing stock could be problematic. The group therefore agreed that as housing costs in Angus are lower in comparison with other areas of the country, housing support should not form part of any attraction package. It was agreed that Council recruitment procedures for all staff including teachers should highlight the benefits of living in Angus including the relatively lower costs of housing.

#### **4.4 Transportation Support**

The group agreed that access to appropriate transport in Angus could be an issue for some employees including teachers. It was acknowledged that work was already underway to explore options for providing support with transport in relation to car leasing by the Human Resources team. It was recognised that this is an issue for all employees and the group recommended that this aspect of the attraction package be developed in line with potential support access to options for all employees.

#### **4.5 Professional Learning Finance**

It was recognised that many effective professional learning opportunities for teachers were now offered 'free', in the sense that connections are being made by schools and teachers and collaborative learning experiences are being arranged. In addition there is significant expertise from within and across schools and central teams which is regularly shared and developed. Schools also have small professional learning budgets to support innovation and staff training in areas of school improvement. The group agreed that any enhancement to newly recruited staff in this area would potentially lead to inequity and be divisive.

#### **4.6 Mentor Support**

The group considered that new teachers to Angus were already well supported and this may well contribute to the relatively high retention rate. It is however possible as part of any package to provide a new teacher with a named link in the schools and learning team to provide additional support and help make connections between newly recruited teachers.

#### 4.7 **Personal Childcare Costs**

The group considered whether it would be possible to provide childcare support for new employees with young family. It is possible that this would be an attractive element to any package to allow new teachers to return to work full-time. Again however, the group felt that this was something that would be a supportive measure for existing employees as well as new staff. Within a five year period early learning and childcare will likely be enhanced to the provision of 1140 hours. In the meantime there would be a financial implication for providing this to employees. Childcare support in the form of salary sacrifice is already available to employees. Essentially childcare costs are removed from salaries before tax providing an employee benefit. The group agreed that this could be publicised to employees more to increase uptake and as a recruitment/retention incentive.

#### 4.8 **Other**

It was acknowledged that some other Scottish local authorities have explored recruitment of teachers from other countries, most notably Ireland and Canada. This has usually been implemented with the support of an external agency. The group considered that the cost-benefit analysis of this approach. It was felt that current vacancy levels did not, at this time, warrant such an approach but this is a future option should circumstances change. It is possible however, to advertise in other countries and have some presence in their university careers fairs and this can be explored further.

Establishing a microsite for the recruitment for teachers is another possibility. This can include highlighting the many positive aspects of living and working in Angus and share positive and motivational stories of current teachers, schools and innovations. We plan to do this by August 2016.

It was recognised that the first 'grow our own' primary teacher courses were underway in partnership with the universities of Aberdeen and Dundee. It is suggested that further discussions are held with university colleagues about the possibility of providing similar programmes for secondary subjects in shortage areas such as the STEM subjects. These discussions are underway and we will report the outcome to a future Committee.

### 5. **PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Human Resources to lead work to explore policy and practice changes to: the provision of relocation expenses; car leasing; salary sacrifice for childcare costs; the establishment of a specific recruitment microsite.
- 5.2 Children and Learning team to discuss potential extension to the 'grow our own' teacher schemes with University staff
- 5.4 Children and Learning team to explore developing a presence in Irish universities to encourage recruitment to Angus.
- 5.5 Children and Learning team to establish enhanced mentoring arrangements for new teachers.

### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 It is anticipated that any costs in relation to any packages of support be met from within existing budgets. A full analysis of the provision of early learning and childcare costs will be undertaken and subject to final committee approval.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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