



Apprenticeship and Graduate Development Report

Committee Personnel

Date of meeting 30 April 2021

Date of report 31 March 2021

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To provide the Committee with an overview of current Apprenticeship and Graduate development activity undertaken in SPT and note the ongoing work to support this organisational development

2. Background

SPT has identified the need to strengthen capability across the organisation, particularly in areas but not limited to those directly impacted by the Subway Modernisation programme, and this has created a number of opportunities for longer term development programmes such as apprenticeships and graduate development opportunities. The adoption of apprenticeships and graduate programmes also assist SPT to address emerging skills gaps within the organisation.

As previously reported to the Committee in February 2019, SPT has adopted an approach to maximise the benefits from the Apprenticeship Levy, to which SPT contribute circa £70k each year. Members will be aware that the Apprenticeship Levy is paid by all organisations with a payroll in excess of £3m, and is calculated as a percentage of its overall payroll.

West College Scotland, which delivers SPT's Engineering Apprenticeship programmes (both Modern and Mature), draws down on this fund directly from Skills Development Scotland to deliver our scheme along with other essential training for Maintenance and Engineering such as 18th Edition Wiring Regulations.

3. Current position

3.1 Apprentices

Engineering apprenticeships were introduced in 2018 and form a key element of the Maintenance operational readiness plan in terms of future skills development, alongside a broader programme focused on strengthening core skills across the workforce. This is deliberately planned ahead of the need to populate the new technician teams capable of maintaining the range of new assets which SPT is implementing.

SPT is currently supporting seven engineering apprentices at this time, made up of four mature and three modern apprentices who are at various stages of their development. We currently have two undertaking an HND in Engineering Systems after successfully achieving an HNC and three others who achieved their NC qualification and progressed to an HNC in Electrical Engineering. Both HNC and HNDs are being completed on a day release basis. All of the above also completed their SVQ level 2 in Performing Engineering Operations (PEO), and are currently working towards achieving their SVQ level 3 in Engineering Maintenance (Engineered Systems) which is based on work experience.

In addition, as part of operational readiness and regular review of resource planning for Maintenance, a further two Mature Apprentices were selected from the Maintenance team to start an engineering apprenticeship in August 2019. They are now both on track to achieve an NC in Electrical Engineering and an SVQ level 2 PEO by August 2022.

SPT expects that the Maintenance team structure and roles will change in line with modernisation activity in order to be fit for purpose in the future. As such, while it is not possible to guarantee future roles to any of our staff, including our apprentices, SPT will continue to monitor progress and individual performance closely with a view to retaining the right blend of skills and experience in the long term and work to maximise the benefits of our investment.

3.2 Graduate Opportunities

SPT recruited five graduates since March 2018 and placed them within Engineering (March 2018), Subway Operations (July 2018), Policy and Planning (September 2018), Human Resources (December 2018), and the Projects team (August 2019).

Each graduate follows a tailored development programme focused on gaining experience through a series of structured work placements supported by experienced work colleagues and training and development and is set personal objectives aligned to the appropriate professional body criteria for each significant part of their development and captured in their own graduate development programme handbook. This helps ensure progression towards an appropriate professional membership or qualification in their chosen discipline.

At each step of the graduate's development, both graduate and manager have time to consider and assess the contribution and skills gained through the graduate's assignments. This is captured by reflective statements contained within the graduate's development handbook, contributes to a more robust process and offers positive and constructive feedback as they progress through their placements. Recent progress reports with reflective statements are extremely positive.

Graduates are supported to gain the skills and expertise to enable their transition into an appropriate professional role within a two to three year period. SPT has already benefitted from this approach in the past and in January 2021 appointed the Graduate Engineer into the role of Assistant Engineer, Rolling Stock.

SPT is keen to offer our continued support and investment to help retain these highly skilled people during their professional development. This will help secure in the longer term individuals who bring fresh ideas, knowledge of the latest technologies, systems and methodologies and a determination to learn and contribute to change.

4. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the ongoing organisational development of both apprenticeships and graduate positions within SPT.

5. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>Investment in staff development is managed within budget.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>Investment in staff development is integral to SPT's strategy to continue to deliver effective services within a constrained budget.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

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