



Apprenticeship and Graduate Development Report

Committee Personnel

Date of meeting 23 August 2019

Date of report 7 August 2019

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 is committed to managing staffing and resources effectively and in line with its overall priorities and budgets available. Efficiency reviews and restructuring activity has resulted in the overall headcount reducing by 13% over the last 5 years from 535 to 465 FTE at 31 March in 2014 and 2019 respectively (equivalent FTE as at 31 March 2010 was 689). However, our investment in learning and development has increased by 50% from £106k to £160k for the same period acknowledging the need to adopt new technology, systems and techniques in order to deliver effective services: *“more with less”*.

SPT has also identified the need to strengthen capability across the organisation, and particularly in areas directly impacted by the Subway Modernisation programme, and has created a number of opportunities for longer-term development programmes such as apprenticeships and graduate development opportunities where these help us address emerging skills gaps.

As previously reported to the committee in February 2019, SPT works to maximise the benefits from the Apprenticeship Levy which sees SPT contribute £62k each year. West College Scotland, which runs SPT's Engineering Apprenticeship programmes (both Modern and Adult), draws down circa £37.5k directly from Skills Development Scotland in 2018/19 to deliver our scheme, as well as a further £10k through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

3. Current position

3.1 Apprenticeships

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 currently has five engineering apprentices who have successfully completed their first year in full time education (June 2019). This includes two Mature Apprentices selected from our Maintenance workforce. This cohort will return to college on a day release basis starting at the end of August 2019 and they will continue their development programme onsite, getting involved in both current maintenance activity as well as testing and commissioning activity in conjunction with the Technical Support and Spares Supply Agreement (TSSSA) team.

It is anticipated that two of the Modern Apprentices will achieve an HNC by June 2021, based on their pre-existing qualifications/learning, with the remaining apprentices achieving an NC (which is the level down from HNC in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)). Consideration will be given to continuing day release for a further year based on progress, individual potential and an assessment of alignment with career opportunities available within SPT, supporting those staff to gain an HNC.

As part of operational readiness and regular review of resource planning for Maintenance, a further two Mature Apprentices have been selected from the Maintenance team to start an engineering apprenticeship in August 2019. This will mean a total of seven apprentices being supported by SPT at this time.

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 with any forthcoming change proposals subject to SPT's normal governance and consultation procedures. 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

A number of graduate development opportunities have been created across SPT within departmental resource plans and established headcounts. Each graduate follows a tailored development programme focused on gaining experience through a series of structured work placements supported by training and development. This is designed to ensure progression towards an appropriate professional qualification in accordance with the respective chosen professional institute's criteria.

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 within Projects, with two graduates developing into Assistant Project Manager and Assistant Project Engineer posts within two years, and previously Financial Services, where Trainee Accountants have progressed into qualified accountancy roles.

SPT has recruited four graduates within the last 18 months placed within Engineering (March 2018), Subway Operations (July 2018), Policy and Planning (September 2018) and Human Resources (December 2018), with a fifth graduate due to join the Projects team (August 2019).

Whilst graduate opportunities require significant management input and oversight as well as training investment, the individuals themselves bring fresh thinking, knowledge of the latest technologies, systems and methodologies and a determination to learn and contribute to change. SPT is keen to retain these highly skilled people in the longer term, with ongoing performance development and regular consideration of salary progression within our normal pay and grading framework.

In addition, over the last three years SPT has also hosted a number of student placements over the summer months with each student being given a defined project to complete in support of ongoing SPT priorities. Students have contributed to a wide range of projects within

Engineering, Subway Maintenance, Subway Operations, Projects and Human Resources and have presented their findings and recommendations to the senior management team.

4. Recommendation

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

5. Consequences

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| 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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