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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**Subject: Apprenticeship Provision**

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To update the Board on the provision of apprenticeships in the city and provide opportunity for Members to seek assurances on the continued delivery and accessibility of apprenticeships for young people in Coventry.

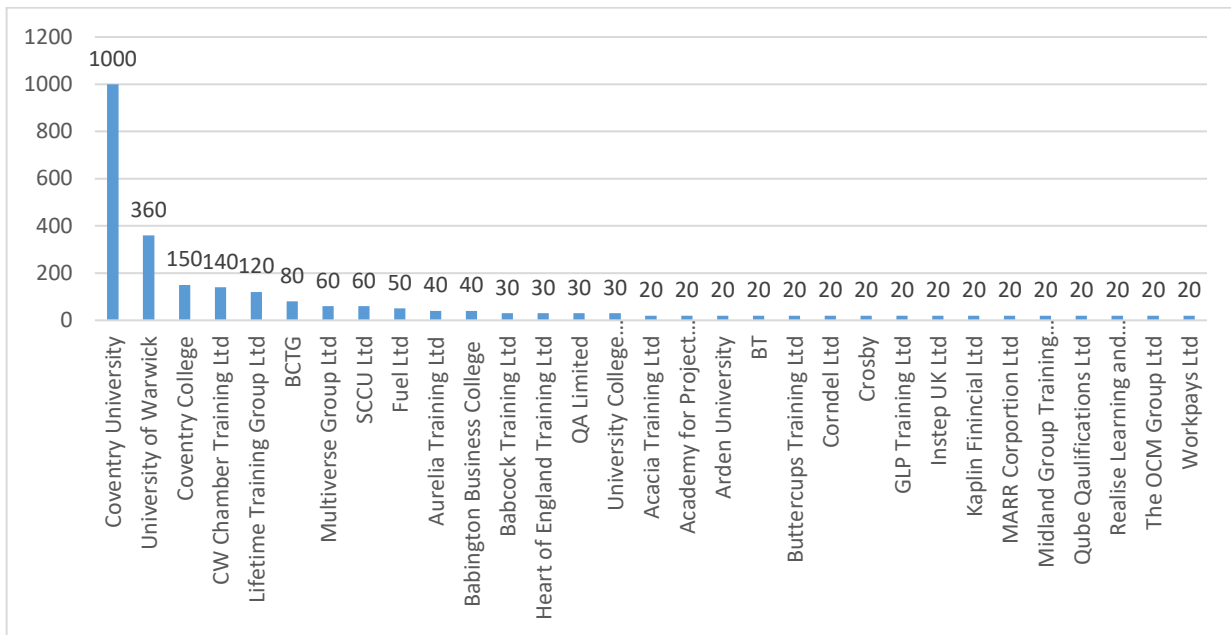
**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the content of the briefing note and Appendix A and B
  - 2) Support the work done by the Council to support the delivery of apprenticeships in Coventry
  - 3) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member or partners.

**3 Apprenticeship Landscape in Coventry**

- 3.1 **The apprenticeship provider market is fractured with multiple providers:** In Academic Year 2021/22, there were 52 apprenticeship providers in Coventry. 42 of these providers had less than 50 apprentices and 21 providers had 10 or less apprentices. This is mostly due to the nature of an apprenticeship with them being designed around employer need. Smaller Independent Training Providers are often used to provide particular technical skills needs. See Table 1 overleaf.

**Table 1: Coventry apprenticeship delivery by provider:**



- 3.2 Universities are the largest providers of apprentice training in Coventry:** In academic year 2021/22, Coventry and Warwick University were the training provider for 1360 new apprentices, just over 50% of the total. This reflects a continuing shift towards Higher and degree level apprentices (LV4,5,6 and above). Further information on this shift is in Appendix A.
- 3.3 Coventry College currently has 2.45% of Coventry apprenticeship delivery.** This is a further reduction from 2021/22 where there were 2700 apprenticeships starts in Coventry in Academic Year of which only 150 were with Coventry College. The college halted recruitment in 2022/23 due to difficulties recruiting staff to the Building Services area of the College.
- 3.4 Other large providers of apprenticeships in Coventry:** CW Chamber Training started 140 apprentices at a range of levels in a wide range of subjects including accountancy, business admin, childcare, customer services, hairdressing, teaching assistants and team leadership. Next largest are Lifetime Training Group who have a similar range to CW Chamber as well as providing civil service and NHS apprentice training and BCTG who offer over 100 different apprentice training programmes.
- 3.5 Apprenticeship training providers struggle to recruit tutors for ‘shortage’ occupations:** Colleges and other training providers struggle to match the salaries that can be earned within industry. This is particularly the case in ‘trade’ construction occupations such as plumbing, carpentry and electrical. This a national issue and one that has been identified by the West Midlands Local Skills Improvement Plan, which has been developed by Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce. Coventry City Council have already tried to engage businesses with a request sent to over 8000 Coventry and Warwickshire businesses to support with providing tutors, for example by day realising staff. Unfortunately, no businesses responded to our ask. We will therefore address this issue on a regional level through the LSIP.

## **4 Coventry City Council work to support Citywide Apprenticeships**

- 4.1 **Coventry City Council do not control apprenticeship funding:** Apprenticeship funding is administered by Central Government through the Department for Education (DfE). Coventry City Council do not have direct control over what apprenticeships are delivered or the quality of delivery.
- 4.2 **Promoting apprenticeship uptake with employers:** Coventry City Council support businesses through our business support services to consider apprenticeships as a way of recruiting new staff or upskilling existing staff. Support is given on apprenticeship funding and finding suitable apprenticeship providers. Apprenticeship vacancies can be advertised through the Coventry Job Shop. This can include the pre-screening of candidates and the setting up of pre-apprenticeship training.
- 4.3 **Supporting apprenticeship training providers:** In addition to linking apprenticeship training providers to employers Coventry City Council chair a Apprentice Provider Network which shares best practice and shared solutions to market issues.
- 4.4 **Working strategically through Skills Strategy Action Groups:** Coventry City Council lead four Skills Strategy Action Groups which work collaboratively with a wide range of partners to deliver Coventry's Skills Strategy Priorities. Action Group 4 works specifically to support skills for businesses and this includes strategic work to consider apprenticeship creation. Action Group 2 is working to develop strong skills progression pathways through NVQ Levels; 1 to 3, including pathways to apprenticeships which start at NVQ Level 2.

## **5 Coventry College Existing Apprentices Plan**

- 5.1 **Coventry college currently has 240 apprentices:** This represents only 4% of Coventry College total learner population. Apprentice training provided includes: Construction trade occupations such as bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing as well as car mechanics, engineering, customer services, business administration and early years. The majority of the apprentices are in the 18+ age cohort.
- 5.2 **90 existing Coventry College apprentices who have an end date in this academic year will complete with the College:** They will be supported by the apprenticeship team to ensure successful achievement.
- 5.3 **Coventry College effectively used strong partnership with Warwickshire College Group (WCG):** Coventry College are not able to continue providing apprenticeship training beyond this academic year due to the 'inadequate' rating for apprenticeship only provision, from Ofsted as a result of an over reliance on agency staff in the construction trades which is where most of the apprenticeships are based. This was not a 'choice' but a requirement. Rather than leaving existing apprentices and their employers to find their own new apprenticeship training provider Coventry College have used their strong partnership with WCG to provide suitable provision.
- 5.4 **124 apprentices will transfer their training to WCG:** The majority will complete their study at either the Rugby or Leamington campuses. An additional 26 apprentices have the option to transfer to other local providers for specialist pathways that the WCG do not provide, to include plastering, painting and

decorating and vehicle damage paint. It is worth noting that due to the nature of apprentice training, with only 20% of training being completed 'off the job', travel to Rugby or Leamington will only be required for one day a week at most. For some apprentices this will be less than one day a week, and approximately 44% will not be required to attend the college at all depending on the nature of their apprenticeship. Many apprentices receive the majority of the training either online, through their training provider proving workplace assessment or through undertaking work-based projects relevant to apprenticeship. A number of these apprentices either live or complete their apprenticeship with employers outside of Coventry.

Appendix A: Background on Apprenticeships

Appendix B: National Foundation for Educational Research Report

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