

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF
PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY M. FALLAIZE**

Preamble

PwC recently published a report commissions by the States entitled costing, benchmarking and prioritisation, which included the following comments in relation to the States' Apprenticeship Scheme:

"The Apprenticeship grant which costs £474k should be reviewed to align with UK practices where the ability to pay by employers is assessed before the grant is paid. Such mechanisms should be deployed locally and include restricting the number of apprentices on the scheme per company.

The length of qualifying through the Apprenticeship programme is also significantly longer than equivalent UK programmes, in some cases 3-5 years versus 12-18 months in the UK. This is partly as a result of the day release courses deployed locally. This potentially disadvantages the student and raises overall costs per pupil. The method of delivery and duration of apprenticeships should be reviewed.

Alongside the review of courses and how they are delivered, the CoFE should review the terms of the apprenticeship grant and course fees given to and charged to local employers. A number of "ability to pay" provisions should be considered..."

Question

1. Does the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture ("the CfESC") agree with the observations and recommendations made by PwC in relation to the States' Apprenticeship Scheme?

Answer

Yes the Committee does agree with the observations and recommendations made by PwC in relation to the States Apprenticeship and welcomes the opportunity to update you on the actions already taken.

The Committee would also wish to note that expenditure on the apprenticeship grant has been reducing steadily in recent years.

2016 Actuals - £423,935

2017 Forecast - £417,000

2018 Budget - £397,175

Question

2. Does the CfESC intend to review the objectives, operation and funding of the States' Apprenticeship Scheme along the lines recommended by PwC?

Answer

The College of Further Education team have been doing a huge amount of work to develop the current Apprenticeship Scheme. In September 2016 the College commenced a review of the Scheme, engaging with current employers, students, staff and other stakeholders.

The aims of this review were to

1. Evaluate how the scheme was currently perceived amongst key stakeholders
2. Evaluate any opportunities and appetite for change as well as explore how we could widen the breadth of the scheme without increasing the cost.

Over the last few years the College has been aware, through its various employer engagement events, that many sectors on the island would value supporting an apprentice but at present, the current scheme is open to only a small number of sectors. The review considered other models of Apprenticeship schemes from both the UK and further afield including Europe.

The PwC work was commenced and completed whilst this review was ongoing and confirmed the work already underway.

Phase 1 of the review identified clear areas for improvement and development. The first phase was completed in June this year presenting options to the Committee. The College is now working on phase 2 which is to develop the recommendations and bring a further proposal to the Committee late autumn 2017/ early Jan 2018.

The phase 1 review identified the following areas for development through phase 2

1. Improve communication with current employers, develop entry criteria in partnership with employers, and reduce the duration of the current scheme (as we are now in phase 2 -this work has already started to be implemented with apprentices starting this year on shorter courses; the College will be working with current employers to model how they would like to roll out entry criteria and then working with schools to ensure that is understood by all stakeholders).
2. Review the grant methodology – the Committee agreed that the grant method could be adjusted and phased out over a number of years. Work to model this will be completed in phase 2. The College has set up a working group looking at options for the grant. The working group will then produce a set of recommendations for the Committee on the grant methodology going forward. The Committee will also be asked to consider a recommendation that any savings from a change in grants could be used to expand the Scheme into other areas of our economy. There are a huge number of businesses who are in desperate need for training and skills development. This also links with the work on Skills being undertaken by the Committee for Economic Development through Skills Guernsey.

3. A review of the Apprentice Framework and Terms of Reference for the Scheme. The College has launched some extensive employer engagement events for later this term. These events are supported by Economic Development as well as the GTA University Centre. The main aim of these events is to have a clear focus on how any new apprenticeship provision would be shaped, what level of professional training is needed - many sectors have identified they need higher level professional technical skills. What kind of delivery model would suit the sector etc?

The phase 2 summary will aim to bring a proposal to the Committee for approval which defines the approach to the grant going forward. In addition there will also be a recommendation on how any new apprenticeship opportunities could be formed and costed in order to provide best value to meet the needs of the local economy.

Question

3. If the CfESC does intend to review the States' Apprenticeship Scheme, by whom will the review be undertaken, what will be the terms of reference and when will it be finalised to allow any changes to be implemented?

Answer

As highlighted above, the review of the States Apprenticeship Scheme is already underway and is being carried out by the College of Further Education in consultation with employers.

The Committee is expected to discuss any recommendations within the next few months.