SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE FOR BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY

SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP TO CONSIDER

MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS IN COUNTY DURHAM

June 2004
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Many years ago, I served my time as an apprentice electrician with the National Coal Board. This training was invaluable to me in my future career. The traditional apprenticeship has now changed beyond recognition. Nevertheless, the benefits of an apprenticeship are still very relevant to the modern economy.

In County Durham, we need a well-trained workforce tailored to the needs of business. The future well-being of the County depends upon retaining good employers and attracting new employers. The modern apprenticeship schemes are an important element of seeking to ensure the right training is provided to serve the right type of jobs needed in County Durham.

This investigation started with a simple issue about the difficulty of finding a plumber or an electrician. There is, however, a much wider requirement to promote and encourage modern apprenticeship schemes to improve the skills of young people in the County and provide them with qualifications which they can take with them to employers.

There is evidence of good practice in the County but the message from this report is that there is a great deal to do to extend modern apprenticeship schemes. We have noted that young apprenticeship schemes are now to be introduced. This is a forward-looking move but we will need to provide encouragement in County Durham for these schemes to achieve their purpose.

I would like to thank all the Members of the working group and the witnesses who gave evidence to us.

Councillor Ray Pye
Chairman of the Working Group
MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS IN COUNTY DURHAM

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Improving skills of people in County Durham is a priority for the Council. In the Strategic Vision recently adopted by the Council, the need to work with employers to increase modern apprenticeship options has been identified. At a more practical level, this working group was also set up with a simple issue in mind – how difficult it is to find a plumber or an electrician. The economy of the County depends upon a complex combination of issues. Service industries are important to the well-being of the County. The working group, therefore, set off to investigate the position of training to increase practical skills in the County.

1.2 The project was prompted by a survey carried out by the Lifelong Learning Partnership. Jeanette Trafford, Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator, explained that, following a survey of a representative sample of employers, including over 1,500 telephone interviews, some worrying findings had emerged:

In County Durham:-

- there was a continued concentration on a low wage and low skilled economy,
- the percentage of people with basic skill needs in County Durham was above average,
- the comparatively poorer levels of qualification attainment contributed to the industrial structure in the County,
- the majority of organisations do not employ any graduates,
- there appeared to be a drive to encourage young people into higher education rather than apprenticeships.

PRESENTATION BY THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

1.3 To start the project, Julian Chambers and Djabri Hassan from the Learning and Skills Council, gave a general overview of Modern Apprentices in County Durham.

1.4 Julian explained that the traditional apprenticeship was beginning to disappear by the 1980s. Market changes and the reduction of large manufacturing and industrial organisations had a significant impact. Nevertheless, there continued to be demand for employers for young people to be trained. In the 1990s, modern apprentices were developed against a broad framework. This involved an extensive range of skill based training.

What are Modern Apprenticeships?
1.5 There are two levels of modern apprenticeship. The first is the foundation and the second is the advanced. Both forms of modern apprenticeship must be linked to placement with an employer although foundation apprenticeships could have a delay at the start. The length of training for a modern apprenticeship varies according to the particular industry. For example, retail training was normally about fourteen months and engineering was normally three to four years.

1.6 The qualification for an advanced modern apprenticeship was Level 3 of the National Vocational Qualification. The foundation apprenticeship involved Level 2 of the NVQ. In addition, both forms of apprenticeship provided the opportunity for the apprentice to gain technical certificates which assisted in the marketability of the apprentice.

1.7 It was explained that the training courses for modern apprentices were funded by the Learning and Skills Council. Their current budget was £9 million per annum. This funding was entirely market led and not capped. There was a guarantee that if an employer was prepared to take on a modern apprentice the training costs would be met by the Learning and Skills Council.

1.8 It was reported that numbers of modern apprenticeships in the County had reduced in the last five years by approximately 25%. This was entirely related to demand.

1.9 The numbers of modern apprentices in the County was explained with a breakdown about numbers in each sector area. The total number of advanced modern apprenticeships in September 2003 was 792. There were also 1,448 on the foundation course making a total of 2,764.

1.10 Councillor Michele Hodgson explained her experience in relation to retail management and the difficulty in finding out appropriate information about modern apprenticeships. She suggested that from the employers’ point of view, a single point of contact was essential because it was not clear at present where employers should go for assistance in engaging a modern apprentice.

1.11 It was explained that the maximum age for modern apprenticeships had recently been raised so that the modern apprenticeship could continue beyond 25 years of age so long as the course started before the apprentice reached that age. There was also a skills pilot in the northern region related to apprentices over 25 years of age.

1.12 In relation to the staying on rate, most apprentices completed their course although there were some sectors where there were a significant number of apprentices who failed to complete the full course.

*Plumbing*

1.13 Plumbing was seen as an attractive career and there were high numbers of modern apprentices taking plumbing courses at present. Most
courses were over–subscribed. For example, there were 200 applicants for the plumbing course at New College with only 36 places available.

1.14 There were basically insufficient employers to absorb all the candidates. This was having a disincentive in that some young people were prepared to wait to get on a plumbing course which was having a knock on effect on other sectors.

**Electricians**

1.15 There was a small programme to train modern apprentices as electricians in the County. Again, this was very much employer led and the Learning and Skills Council had little influence over these courses. There was a lack of employers willing to take electricians as apprentices.

**Employer Engagement**

1.16 Some discussion took place about the reasons why employers were reluctant to take on modern apprentices. A number of factors were put forward relating to the level of wages in some industry sectors and also a lack of employers in some sectors such as child and elderly care and also in catering in some parts of the County. There were also some issues about the high entry requirements in some sectors, for example, motor vehicle and engineering.

1.17 It was also noted that in some sectors like hair and beauty, hospitality and catering in Durham City and in some rural areas, there were a lack of learners willing to participate in modern apprenticeship courses.

1.18 The latest government initiative – 21st Century Skills – Realising our Potential presents a significant challenge. In summary, the government has indicated that there is a need to act in five key areas:-

- Employers’ needs for skills must be centre stage and the supply of training must respond to those needs.
- We must raise ambition in the demand for skills. This requires more encouragement and support to drive up skills and productivity in each sector of the economy.
- We must motivate and support more learners to re-engage in learning.
- Colleges and training providers must be more responsive to employers and learners needs.
- We must achieve better joint working.
1.19 Specifically in relation to modern apprentices, a target has been set that by 2004, 28% of young people will start a modern apprenticeship by the age of 22 years.

1.20 As far as the LSC is concerned, they have been charged with encouraging employers to provide more modern apprenticeship placements, recruiting more public sector apprenticeships, ensuring that qualified young people get better information about vacancies and encouraging employers to work together to expand the number of learning places.

1.21 Attention was drawn to the need for local authorities and the Health Service to participate to a greater degree in modern apprenticeship schemes. Looking at the National Health Service in particular, it appeared that there were only two modern apprentices employed by the Health Service in the County.

1.22 The extensive list of types of apprenticeships currently available are attached as an appendix to this report.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 The Terms of Reference for this investigation were as follows.

To review the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme in County Durham and consider any recommendations for improvement.

2.2 This was intended to assist the Council in the following strategic objectives:

- To create and retain jobs in County Durham.
- To create a diverse and robust employment structure with high quality jobs.
- To create an adaptable and skilled workforce.
- To further the challenges set out in the Strategic Vision.

3. THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ECONOMY

PRESENTATION BY BRUCE ELLIOTT, COUNTY DURHAM AND TEES VALLEY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONFEDERATION

3.1 Bruce Elliott gave a presentation from the local NHS entitled “The Powers and Perils of Modern Apprentices”.

3.2 He gave a summary of the background to the role of the Workforce Development Confederation. The Confederation was funded by the NHS. Its boundary covered the whole of County Durham. Its role was to
work closely with health trusts and other stakeholders from health and social care to develop a workforce strategy.

The Current Position

3.3  • In County Durham, there were 13,500 employees in the Health Service.

• Modern apprenticeships will provide an opportunity to continue education – and the Health Service was now working toward this goal.

• There are only two modern apprenticeships within County Durham (based in administrative roles at the University Hospital, Durham).

• The current ‘trained’ workforce currently comes through the University route.

3.4  It was suggested that parents and young people do not understand the role of Modern Apprentices in some professions and this may be because public perception is that apprenticeships were only available in the more traditional occupations. Recent adverts involving young people about modern apprentices had been beneficial and it may be that there is a need for more publicity of this nature. There is also a perception that there is a need to go to University to become a nurse and until we change this approach we are not going to attract some people into the industry. The publicity concerning young people working in the care service may need to be more user friendly.

3.5  Bob Elliott from the Social Care and Health Service added that there are now two levels of nursing. One was via a degree, but we have to impress on possible candidates that there is an alternative route into nursing through experience and training in the job.

The Opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships to Make a Difference

3.6  • The demographic time bomb – comparatively, the County’s population is getting older and there are falling rolls at schools. At present levels 30% of all school leavers would need to join the NHS just to maintain current levels.

• Occupational standards have been reviewed and look more attractive to people wanting to work in care.

• Patient care must be the focus e.g. if there are problems with waiting times at one centre then the patient should be offered an earlier appointment at another centre/hospital.

Some Issues and Challenges

3.7.  • Improving the prospect of career entry programmes for young
people has perhaps been hindered in the past because of the risk factor being considered greater in terms of employment than the learning opportunity. Therefore there has been little marketing aimed at young people in the past.

- There was a need to improve links with schools with a view to introducing schools co-ordinators – the Workforce Development Confederation has approached STEPS (a project in Tyne and Wear engaging the schools) to expand their work across the whole region.

- Age limits have been restrictive on some working practices in the past and whilst there is no legislation to restrict young people being present in some environments e.g. operating theatres, national bodies have concerns over the risk element and potential legal issues. However, Newcastle Hospitals do have a policy of allowing work experience students into these areas.

- Contracting is a problem as, despite a good relationship with the Learning and Skills Council, their ‘regulations’ are very prescriptive and are largely focused on the 16-19 age group. Although the scheme does apply up to the age of 25, but this creates difficulty in developing schemes that can attract mature entrants too.

### Plans for the Future

3.8

- There was a plan to have at least one career entry programme for Health and Social Care in place to commence in September 2004. This will be for young people and mature students. The proposal was a minimum of 26 students in County Durham. There was a problem to overcome in that the LSC has an age cut off of 25. The programme will focus on the caring profession.

- Again, links with schools must be improved.

- Plans may be hindered in the area of working with the Children and Families Service and the mentally ill as there are guidelines on age limits that must be adhered to.

- The preferred target areas for the programme are the more deprived areas of the county.

3.9 In response to a question asking if there would be a contract where a modern apprentice has to stay with the ‘employing agency’ for a fixed amount of time after they have been trained Bruce Elliot replied that it would be a two year training scheme and there would not be a holding clause. He explained that this did not appear to be an issue for the Health Service. He added that currently the NHS was going through an ‘Agenda for Change’ and that this would also affect Foundation Trusts. This meant that all NHS staff would be on the same terms and conditions. This is due to be rolled out in April 2005 and pilots were
ongoing, locally at Sunderland City Hospitals and with the North East Ambulance Service. Following these pilots Health Unions (excluding the Royal College of Nursing) would have a national ballot. “Agenda for Change” would then start to be implemented in October 2004 in preparation for the national move in April 2005.

3.10 Bob Elliott from the Social Care and Health explained that his presentation was based on the NHS plan and how it links with local Health Trusts.

**Social Care and Health**

3.11 His role was:-

- Try to link up Social Care and Health Services with the NHS as it must provide a more joined up service.

- Looking at training of staff.

- Looking at the Independent and Voluntary Sector – there are currently four strategic care alliances – Co Durham, Northumbria, Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear. The Service was already providing help in making bids to various funding pots and has raised £50,000 in 2003/4 and have been successful in attracting £110,000 this year. Other grants require a 50% spend in the Independent Voluntary Sector. It is hoped that this will roll out to increase Modern Apprentices into services. From the grants already received they have enrolled six modern apprentices employed by the independent and voluntary sector.

- Looking at career pathways in Social Care and Health through apprenticeships that allows them to step off the route to work into their chosen field or to continue training to degree level. Funding for training could be achieved through the Learning and Skills Council but paying them is the issue.

3.12 In answer to the suggestion that recruitment is the problem Bob said this was not the case as there were plenty of unemployed people the main issue is who is going to pay them as they need to be given a realistic wage.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES IN THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ECONOMY**

3.13

- Data on modern apprentices is not collected systematically at present – the working group may wish to recommend this.

- There are currently only two modern apprentices within the Health Service in the County.

- There are over 150 modern apprentices within Tees Valley.
• Much needs to be done, but there is a realisation that considerable improvement is required.

• A programme is proposed in September 2004 to promote 26 modern apprentices in the Health Service and Social Care and Health in County Durham. This may need support.

• There is a need to publicise the initiatives which are being pursued. This is an issue that the working group might like to promote. Anita Atkinson would speak to Bruce Elliott about this issue straight away.

• The aim of targeting in areas of deprivation is one to be supported.

4. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

Presentation by Lynda Thornton About ‘Modern Apprentices and Durham County Council’

4.1 Lynda Thornton, Principal Personnel Services Officer, presented Members with a brief presentation about the current position relating to Modern Apprentices with the County Council.

4.2 Lynda explained that the County used to have about fifty placements per year across a range of occupational areas. Since 2002, the County Council is no longer a managing agent for the training of modern apprentices. Numbers of modern apprentices employed by the Council have declined in recent years.

4.3 There are thirty modern apprentices currently employed by the Council in the following areas:-

11 administration
3 civil engineers
5 accountancy
5 highways maintenance
3 quantity surveyors
1 heating and gas engineer
1 painter
1 roofer.

4.4. The following issues were raised:

• How can we increase the numbers of modern apprentices with the County Council – Lynda said by Service Departments providing more funds.

• There is a great shortage of skill based trainees and workers and we must get more people involved and departments need to work together to get more young people involved.
• If mature persons have to be retrained why cannot they be retrained as modern apprentices in the County Council.

Summary And Issues For Consideration

4.5
• The numbers of modern apprentices employed by the County Council has reduced significantly in recent years.

• The Council needs to do more to encourage employers to participate.

• We need to ensure the public sector sets an example. This will require further investigation of the position in regard to local authorities and the Health Service.

• We need to understand why some young people go into higher education rather than pursue modern apprenticeships which might be more suitable for them.

• A One Stop Shop for small employers was raised because there was a suggestion that employers were not sure whom to contact.

• We need to know how the County is standing in relation to the national target of 28% of young people under 22 involved in modern apprenticeships by 2004.
5. **A PRIVATE SECTOR PERSPECTIVE**

**THE ESH GROUP**

5.1 As part of this project, Phil Young, a director of the Esh Group of Companies, gave a presentation to the Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee about their initiative in relation to training.

5.2 As background, Phil explained that Lumsden and Carroll Construction, the civil engineering company of the Esh Group, has been leading an initiative for a group of seven small and medium enterprises and formed a new company called I4NE (Investors for North East Ltd.) to tackle the regional construction workload currently dominated by national companies.

5.3 The companies within this consortium were all local to the north east and shared common values and strategic objectives. They saw their businesses as being under real threat from larger national organisations who were increasingly taking local work from them and sending the wealth generated out of the north east.

5.4 The consortium took the view that if the north east is to be sustained through the protection and growth of its economic and social structure, the initiative led by the Esh Group should be considered by other local and regional organisations in the north east.

5.5 The companies within Investors for North East Ltd. were Coupe Construction Ltd., Hall Construction Services Ltd., Lumsden and Carroll Construction Ltd., Fred Mence (Construction) Ltd., New County Road Servicing Ltd., Northumbrian Roads Ltd. and Rainton Construction Ltd. Collectively, these companies employed over 1,000 people with a turnover of over £100 million pounds.

5.6 The Esh Group had a number of constituent parts – Lumsden and Carroll Construction, Dunelm Castle Homes, Dunelm Property Services, Deerness Fencing, Sones Landscaping, Bartram Walker M & E Services, Mechplant, North East Construction Training and Bardon Esh Waste Management. To tackle resource issues, the Esh Group had introduced a scheme to take on more local modern apprentices. A major feature of this scheme was partnership with Deerness Comprehensive School. The initiative had been named ‘Fit for Employment’ and was partly funded by One North East and the Learning and Skills Council. The scheme had achieved Pathfinder Status. Modern apprentices came from pupils at Deerness Comprehensive School and also some from Trinity School which dealt with special needs pupils.

5.7 In essence, the scheme involved up to 100 pupils per year being initially involved in the process. This was then reduced to 20 who proceeded to a formal apprenticeship arrangement. The Esh Group had a workforce of approximately 600 staff and a turnover of roughly £70 million.
5.8 Phil explained that the scheme had been a considerable success. In terms of the young people who trained as modern apprentices, there were many stories of pupils with very low self-esteem who had found a new purpose in the modern apprenticeship process. The head teacher of Deerness Comprehensive was particularly supportive of the scheme and could see the benefits to the pupils’ education. Whilst there needed to be considerable commitment from the teachers at school, this investment appeared to be repaid significantly.

5.9 Phil explained that the gender split for apprentices was now approximately 50/50%. The scheme was being rolled out to a wider area involving Moorside, Gilesgate and Fyndoune Secondary Schools.

5.10 Phil Young was also the regional chairman of Constructing Excellence which was an initiative for driving change through construction in performance, productivity, image and people issues. Through Constructing Excellence, it was possible to try to encourage other employers to follow this initiative. Assistance has also been given by the Esh Group to Stockton Borough Council to set up a pilot scheme known as "Fit for Employment (Stockton)" which is due to start in September.

5.11 The Learning and Skills Council confirmed that this initiative was an outstanding example of the introduction of modern apprenticeships. The government had set a very challenging target in respect of the number of modern apprentices undergoing training. Durham County’s contribution to the national target indicated a current shortfall of about 19% in terms of placements. There was a need to publicise the benefits of modern apprenticeships and a national TV campaign would be starting shortly aimed at employers. In discussing this issue, there was a view that more face-to-face discussions were likely to be more successful.

5.12 It was noted that the County Council had recently set up a framework for its procurement in relation to civil engineering and building works. The Strategic Alliance which had been produced meant that currently the Esh Group did not provide any services to the County Council. This was an issue which needs to be considered carefully by the Council.

A VIEW FROM A SMALLER EMPLOYER

5.13 Another employer who had participated in the Modern Apprentices scheme in the County was approached for its views. This firm had taken on one modern apprentice. They were asked how easy it was to find out information about the modern apprentices scheme. The employer found out about the scheme by contacting training providers known to them rather than using any publicity. They indicated that it was more knowing where to look rather than as a result of lots of publicity which resulted in them pursuing this initiative. They indicated that it was easy to get information from each provider about the details of training schemes.

5.14 This firm found a modern apprentice very quickly but indicated that this was perhaps more by good luck. They did indicate that a number of trainers they contacted did not get back to them with prospective
candidates. They saw the modern apprentice scheme as a cost-effective way of exploring whether their company needed to create a new administrative job role to support existing staff and operations. If the training period indicated a need for a permanent position, they would have a modern apprentice ready to step into the employed role. They indicated that they felt they were fortunate to qualify for funding.

5.15 In terms of barriers to increasing the number of modern apprentices, the main issue raised was insufficient work but there was also concern about line management and supervision particularly in the early days of training.

5.16 This firm did not include a clause in their employment contract with the modern apprentice requiring them to stay with the organisation for a period of time after they achieved their qualification. The main issue was whether an employed position could be offered.

5.17 The main improvement which this firm suggested which might increase the take-up by the private sector was more awareness amongst businesses.

**OTHER VIEWS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR ABOUT THE MODERN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME**

5.18 Stewart Watkins from the County Durham Development Company was asked to give an overview of the modern apprenticeship scheme as viewed by the Development Company.

5.19 He explained that, as part of the County Durham Development Company's annual after-care programme, interviews with 200 company leaders in the County took place regarding the status of their business and the problems they are facing. This provided an opportunity to assess the modern apprenticeship schemes.

5.20 The feedback suggested that the modern apprenticeship scheme is still very popular with traditional industries with a particular concentration on mechanical and electrical engineering. However, it seemed that even on Aycliffe Industrial Park where a modern apprenticeship training centre is located, there was a poor view of the apprenticeships available. There was a suggestion that many young people were more interested in an IT career. This was despite the fact that above average salaries could be obtained once an apprenticeship is completed.

5.21 Stewart explained a number of examples as follows:-

**An Engineering Company**

5.22 The low staff turnover in the company has resulted in an ageing profile with many engineers being over 50 years. However, the company has experienced difficulties in recruiting apprentices, currently having three when six to ten would be more appropriate.
Mechanical Servicing Company

5.23 There was very little staff turnover and long term employees contributed to an ageing workforce. There were major recruitment issues for mature apprentices who were willing to work away for 23 days per month.

Manufacturer

5.24 The company had three staff who had been trained through the Youth Training Scheme but no apprenticeships were offered because there was a view that young apprentices ‘all want things handed to them on a plate’.

Food Manufacturer

5.25 The firm was very concerned about the attitude and quality of modern apprentices of which they had had experience.

5.26 There were, however, some success stories.

Engineering Company

5.27 This company had a continuous apprenticeship programme generating most of their 15 skilled staff over many years.

5.28 In relation to training, the County Durham Development Company received generally good feedback regarding the training organisations in the County. One issue which is commonly raised is the lack of financial support for ‘essential’ courses such as legislation and health and safety. There was a belief that training was expensive.

5.29 In relation to skill shortages, it was explained that there were two categories:-

- Lack of qualifications
- Location specific shortages

5.30 The County contains a diverse range of industry and a significant proportion of this is in the high technology sectors. However, these companies require highly qualified staff, sometimes beyond degree level and they found it difficult to find these staff in the local area. Although regional universities are producing the right students, there seems to be a low percentage of these that remain in the area and many were attracted by higher salaries in the south. An example of this was explained in relation to an electronics manufacturer, who, despite extensive regional recruitment advertising, open evenings and recruitment agencies, the company failed to attract engineers. They were reluctant to recruit staff from elsewhere in the UK as relocation is costly with a low return in commitment. Accordingly, they have resorted to recruiting engineers from the Far East which has met with success.

5.31 Another issue raised by the County Durham Development Company was the fact that the County and, indeed, the region, had historically a poor
image. There is a view which is expressed from time to time outside the region that the County is still dominated by coalfields. There is much work to be done to communicate the desirability of the north east as a good place to live. An example of this is a biotechnology company which pays above the industry average and has a world-class reputation and low staff turnover. However, when they lost their quality manager, they failed to recruit a replacement. Anonymous head-hunting produced a good selection of candidates. However, once the location was revealed prior to interview, candidates have not pursued their interest to final interview. Feedback suggests that Durham was not seen as a desirable location to relocate their families.

5.32 **East Durham Business Service**

In the east of County Durham, initiatives are underway to increase the number of modern apprenticeships offered by local firms. This is particularly welcome in an area that is recognised in terms of deprivation generally. Improving skills in local people provides sustainability long-term for communities in the County. This initiative is being led by the ‘East Durham Business Service’ and features as part of the Community Strategy for East Durham. ‘Aim High Centres’ will assist with this approach.

**SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

5.33 The experience of the Esh Group indicates that, with the right approach, modern apprenticeships can not only succeed, but can be an important factor in improving educational attainment and focus for young people, and, at the same time, providing sustainability both in terms of workforce and economic activity. The example of the Esh Group should be promoted by the Council as a direction for others to follow. Indeed, the County Council itself needs to consider carefully how it can, within the procurement processes, ensure that firms introducing such local initiatives can be given the opportunity to provide services to the Council.

6. **EVIDENCE FROM CONNEXIONS COUNTY DURHAM**

6.1 The Working Group visited the offices of Connexions County Durham to have a discussion with Janice Bray, the Executive Director of this service. The working group also had the benefit of a discussion with a modern apprentice currently employed by Connexions. As their commitment to opportunities for young people, Connexions employed up to six modern apprentices each year.

6.2 Janice explained the philosophy behind the Connexions service. Some members of the Working Group were familiar with the former Careers Service. Janice explained that there had been many changes in this service. Their general Mission Statement was to achieve “the best start in life for every young person”.

6.3 Tony Blair in 2000 had indicated:
“The best defence against social exclusion is having a job and the best way to get a job is to have a good education, with the right training and experience. Getting this right offers the prospect of a double dividend. A better life for young people themselves, saving them from the prospect of a lifetime of dead-end jobs, unemployment, poverty, ill-health and other kinds of exclusion. A better deal for society as a whole that has to pay a very high price in terms of welfare bills and crime for failing to help people make the transition to become independent adults.”

6.4 Janice explained why the service needed to change their approach. In particular they were much more focused on providing the “right” services for young people. She referred to a quote from the National Youth Agency in June 1999 as follows:

6.5 “Young people do not organise their lives to fit neatly into the boundaries of public service departments. There is a need, in particular, for services to focus on the key transition processes in young people’s lives – school to further (or higher) education; education to working life; living in the family home to living independently of it.”

6.6 The principles of the Connexions service involved a joined-up approach with eight key principles –

- Raising aspirations
- Meeting individual need
- Listening to the views of young people
- Inclusion
- Partnership
- Community involvement in neighbourhood renewal
- Extending opportunity
- Evidence-based practice

6.7 The vision of Connexions was to enable all young people in County Durham to realise their full potential. Young people are, and will continue to be, at the centre of all activities.

6.8 In 2004/5 the Connexions service will receive £4.8m of funding from the Department for Education and Skills. Other funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the European Social Fund, and the National Lottery will add a further £850,000. Expenditure on services aimed at young people aged 13-19 years in the County was in the region of £10,000. Connexions have nearly 160 staff of which nearly 80 are advisers. The service operates on the basis of 5 area teams within the County.

6.9 The service had a number of targets relevant for the modern apprenticeships project. The basic target from the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Education Authority was:-
• to increase the proportion of 16-year-olds obtaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C (or equivalent) by four percentage points between 2002 and 2004.

• by 2004, 92% of 16 year-olds should obtain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to G (or equivalent) including English and Maths.

6.10 As far as the LSC was concerned, they had a target shared by Connexions:–

• To increase by 2004 by three percentage points the number of 19 year-olds achieving a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 2 compared to 2002.

• For 80% of 16-19 year-olds to be in structured learning by 2004.

6.11 There were also wider targets involving reduction of truancy and reduction in under-18 contraception rates.

6.12 A number of targets had been set by the County Durham Partnership. The relevant ones for this project were a reduction in the percentage of young people leaving education and training who are not in education, training or employment. Janice explained that this target of 16.3% had already been achieved and the aim was to reduce this further.

6.13 In relation to specific groups there was a target to improve the level of participation in education, employment and training for care leavers aged 19 so that levels for these groups are at least 75% of all young people in the same area by March 2004.

6.14 Shared targets with the Youth Justice Board were that:–

6.15 90% of 13-19 year-olds supervised by the Youth Engagement Service are in education, training and employment by March 2004.

6.16 Increase the proportion of 16-19 year-old mothers in education, training and employment.

6.17 Reduce the proportion of young people with a drug-related problem or referred to specialist support.

6.18 To reduce the number and proportion of young people whose activity is not known.

6.19 Janice explained how the service was working closely with all partners to focus on outcomes for young people.

6.20 Marilyn Bell from the Learning and Skills Council indicated at the meeting that currently County Durham is 17% behind the national target of achieving 28% of young people under 22 in modern apprenticeship schemes in 2004.
6.21 Janice suggested that to increase the number of modern apprentices in County Durham she thought that the Local Authority had a key role in terms of “value-added” initiatives to influence the number of modern apprenticeships, not simply directly but by its involvement with the business sector on a cross-cutting basis.

6.22 **Summary of Issues in relation to Connexions**

- In County Durham we are 17% behind the target for modern apprenticeships for young people under 22.

- To improve the position, the County Council should consider including modern apprenticeship issues in procurement arrangements.

- Consider incentives linked to training and employment for young people.

- Greater encouragement of employers to participate in modern apprenticeship schemes.

- Greater public sector involvement in modern apprenticeship schemes.

- Include questions about modern apprenticeships during the budget discussions with County Council chief officers.

- Consider whether discussions are necessary with unions about modern apprenticeship and terms and conditions.

- Suggest that the bureaucracy relating to modern apprenticeships be reduced to encourage employers to participate?

- Suggest to employers that training local young people is a more sustainable option for steady growth in the County.

- Perhaps a stronger voice for employers is necessary to encourage employers to participate.

- Support the Social Care and Health Service who are intending to introduce a new scheme which could involve 26 modern apprentices (10 with the County Council, 10 with the Acute Trust and 6 with the Priority Trust).

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7. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION – TRANSFORMING LEARNING, BUILDING SKILLS – WHAT ROLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT?**

7.1 A discussion paper was issued in 2002 by the Local Government Association which had some helpful suggestions for improvement.

7.2 The vision set out by the LGA was:-
“How can every 14-19 year old get easy access to a tailor-made education and training package that is comprehensive, attractive and likely to encourage more young people to continue to learn and develop.”

7.3 The LGA set out the context and the need for change as follows:-

“There is overwhelming statistical and anecdotal evidence that young people are not getting what they deserve and employers are not getting the young people with the skills they need.”

7.4 The short term improvements recommended by the LGA were:-

- Developing local leadership.
- Improving accountability and strategic direction.
- Local Government training.
- Support for young people including independent information and guidance and financial support; and
- Increasing the quality and supply of work placements.

7.5 In terms of local authorities, the LGA suggested that Councils need to realise their potential in training and development. They are often the largest local employer. However, they indicated that training in local government overall was decreasing. In 2001/2, they found that the average training expenditure per employee in local government was only £159.

8. VIEWS OF THE TUC

8.1 Written views were submitted by Kevin Rowan, TUC Northern Regional Secretary, which are set out below.

8.2 “The TUC is very supportive of modern apprenticeships and believes that all levels of government should lead by example in taking on apprentices. Local authorities could play a particularly important role in this regard. The TUC also believes that governments can play a critical role through their procurement policies to encourage wider take-up of modern apprenticeships. The TUC made some comments along both of these lines in response to the Local Government Association discussion document ‘Transforming learning, building skills – what role for local government?’ The TUC would, therefore, very warmly welcome steps taken by Durham County Council to lead in these areas.

8.3 “The TUC would like to see Modern Apprenticeship opportunities opened up for young people across both traditional and non-traditional areas of apprenticeship. Modern apprenticeships are highly segregated, and the TUC would welcome proactive efforts to address this. Raising the number of women in non-traditional areas, as well as the number of
young people from ethnic minorities and with disabilities should be an important part of any strategy to take on modern apprentices. A supportive learning and working environment are key factors to consider in achieving the goal.

8.4 The TUC believes that quality is a key element of successful apprenticeships. Unions can play a key role in this regard, and the TUC is seeking to promote union engagement in modern apprenticeships. As an example, Union Learning Representatives may act as mentors for apprentices and, where this has occurred, retention rates for apprentices have been very high.

8.5 Quality apprenticeships include ensuring that apprentices have a broad range of learning opportunities, quality instruction and support, as well as unquestioned time off for attending any college-based component of their apprenticeship. The TUC believes that employed status and decent wages are also critical.

8.6 Within the Northern Region, the TUC have a very well-established team of staff concentrating on raising awareness across the full learning spectrum, from skills for life, to higher end skills and including the promotion and engagement of trade unions in modern apprenticeship programmes with employers. Part of the role of the TUC has been to brief trade union officers and activists in the learning agenda, outlining the contemporary learning environment and initiatives and also highlighting the role of trade unions and the benefits to trade union organisation as well as to employers.

8.7 The Chairman of the Working Group also had a discussion with Anne Hansen, Learning Services Co-ordinator for the Regional TUC. She drew attention to the important role of Union Learning Representatives for work force training issues. She was enthusiastic about assisting the County Council if they intended to increase the number of modern apprentices employed by the local authority.

8.8 Anne also pointed out that, in September 2004, the Employer Training Pilot, which currently applies to Tyne and Wear, would be extended to County Durham. The rationale behind the Employer Training Pilot was that a key barrier to employers training low skilled workers was the cost of giving them time off to study. The training pilot was designed to address this issue.

8.9 The pilot was designed to encourage employers to train low skilled employees particularly those who do not have NVQ Level 2 qualifications. Incentives were provided to employers for the cost of releasing employees during normal working hours. In effect, posts are ‘back filled’ so that productivity is not affected.

9. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS – YOUNG APPRENTICESHIPS AND ABOLITION OF THE AGE LIMIT
9.1 In May 2004, the Department for Education and Skills announced new initiatives for apprenticeships.

9.2 The Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, said that these new reforms would be a major boost to business and productivity. Working through the Sector Schemes Councils, employers will also be put in the driving seat in terms of the design and development of apprenticeships. He indicated that:

“Apprenticeships are one of the best ways we can fill our skills gaps. They provide young people and adults with an ‘on the job’ training experience which gives them the direct skills needed in the workforce.

I am delighted that many leading businesses are today committing themselves to apprenticeships. But we need more employers to get involved which is why the Learning and Skills Council is launching a specific marketing and advertising campaign to get more employers on board.

The new ‘Young Apprenticeships’ represents one of the most exciting developments for young people since the introduction of GCSEs in 1986 and fits in with Mike Tomlinson’s work on 14-16 reform. It will mean that motivated and able pupils could spend up to two days a week learning ‘on the job’ skills in a workplace. This will be an exciting prospect for any pupil wanting to pursue industry specific vocational programmes on top of the core national curriculum”.

9.3 The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, said:-

“The Government is strongly committed to expanding and improving the Apprenticeship programme in this country which will aid the push towards our objective of full employment.

Apprenticeships, which were dying a few years ago, have now already risen to 255,500 in England. We must work in partnership – employers, individuals and Government – to ensure that even more businesses and even more young people are benefiting by the end of the decade through this new Apprenticeships offer, which is testament to the growing and central importance of education, training and skills to the whole future of the British economy”.

The reforms will deliver a more flexible, stronger Apprenticeship ‘ladder of opportunity’ beginning at the age of 14. These improvements will consist of:-

- Brand new ‘Young Apprenticeships’ for 14-16 year olds. They will be a high quality opportunity for motivate pupils who could spend up to two days a week in the workplace learning a trade. Initial opportunities will be in engineering, automotive industries, business administration, logistics and the arts and creative industries.
• A ‘Pre-Apprenticeship’ offer. This will be based around the very popular ‘Entry to Employment’ programme for young people that have potential but are not yet already or able to enter an Apprenticeship or maybe currently disengaged and disenfranchised from learning.

• ‘Apprenticeships’ at level 2 (replacing the Foundation Modern Apprenticeship)

• ‘Advanced Apprenticeships’ (equal to 2 good A levels or Level 3 qualification and replacing the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship).

• Opening up of ‘Apprenticeships’ to adults by scrapping the arbitrary 25 year old age limit. Development work will begin immediately with the licensed Sector Skills Councils.

With demand from young people outstripping the supply of places on offer from employers, the launch will be backed up by a major Learning and Skills Council advertising and marketing campaign targeted at increasing the number of employers offering places.

Bryan Sanderson, Chairman of the Learning and Skills Council, said:

“A recent survey by the Learning and Skills Council showed that 44% of organisations who reported skills shortages, said they lost business as a result. There is no excuse for a poorly trained workforce.

Apprenticeships provide businesses with the solution they need to thrive in the 21st Century. I hope many employers respond to this ‘call to arms’ and join the Apprenticeships revolution. We now have a real chance to remove the skills deficit and improve productivity”.

The Apprenticeship Task Force welcomed the improved Apprenticeships programme. Sir Roy Gardner, Apprenticeship Task Force Chairman and Chief Executive of Centrica plc, said:

“A record number of young people are making an enhanced contribution to their employers’ success by raising their skill levels, motivation and productivity. We want to encourage more business leaders to consider the value Apprenticeships would bring to their businesses.”

The Learning and Skills Council working with employer organisations will drive forward the new reforms to make sure they are fit for purpose and meet employers’ needs. The Learning and Skills Council will:

• Give employers via the Sector Skills Councils a bigger role in the actual design, content and entry requirements of ‘Apprenticeships’.

• Develop greater ‘portability’ arrangements so that an Apprentice can take a part-completed Apprenticeship with them if they move employer.
• Create a ‘clearing house’ for school leavers. This will match prospective trainees to employers, providing for aspiring apprentices what the UCAS cleaning system provides for aspiring students.

• Work towards awarding ‘Accredited’ status for those who successfully complete an Apprenticeship. At present, an Apprenticeship is not a recognised qualification in its own right.

• Explore the development of credit-based qualifications in Apprenticeships to better meet the needs of employers.

• Review financial incentives for apprentices to maintain the attractiveness of the Apprenticeships programme.

• Consider financial incentives to encourage more small and medium sized employers to get on board.

• Will introduce an eight week probationary period for the trainee and employer.

9.4 Whilst the young apprenticeship scheme needs to be given the opportunity to fulfil its purpose, some concern has been expressed about the impact of this scheme on the willingness of employers to be fully committed to the modern apprenticeship process.

10. JOB LOSSES AND TRAINING

10.1 A working group was set up to consider job losses in County Durham. In considering the evidence which emerged from this investigation, it was clear that the issue of training was key to seeking to retain jobs in the County. Many of the reasons for closures of major seats of employment in the County are related to issues which are very difficult for the Council to influence. One of the strongest influences has been globalisation. One area in which there is more opportunity to influence issues relates to the training of people in County Durham. For this reason, this investigation in relation to job losses has been included in the modern apprentices report.

VISIT TO GLAXOSMITHKLINE – 21ST AUGUST 2003

10.2 Following a presentation by Stewart Watkins from County Durham Development Company about the way in which agencies have addressed the many major job losses suffered by the County in recent years, Members decided to look at a case study about a recent example of a major job loss. The aim was to look at this issue particularly from the point of view of the employees.

10.3 The general strategy was to speak to GlaxoSmithKline to gain their perception of the process. The working group would then speak to other
parties to come to a general view about how successful the agencies have been.

10.4 The original terms of reference proposed for the project were to review the way in which the relevant agencies addressed the job losses suffered at GlaxoSmithKline at Barnard Castle focusing particularly on the impact on the employees and consider any possible improvements for future job losses within the County.

10.5 On the 21st August, members of the working group met with Alan Bell, GlaxoSmithKline’s Human Resources Manager. He gave a presentation about the general issues concerning the job losses at GlaxoSmithKline at Barnard Castle.

10.6 Alan Bell explained that GlaxoSmithKline was a global pharmaceutical research and manufacturing company with a turnover in 2002 of £22 billion. Its global manufacturing and supply network had 95 sites across 38 countries.

10.7 One of GlaxoSmithKline’s manufacturing sites was in rural County Durham at Barnard Castle. The premises at Barnard Castle opened in 1944 and has been the town’s largest employer ever since. GSK have had Investors in People accreditation since 1995.

10.8 Alan explained that GlaxoSmithKline played a leading role in the prosperity of the area, putting £50 million per year into the local economy through salaries, business spin-offs etc. The company had also chosen to contribute substantially to the environmental, educational and social well-being of the area through many community based projects.

10.9 Alan pointed out that for decades the perception was that a job with the company was a job for life. Just as the rural community was reeling from the effects of foot and mouth disease in June 2001, the company announced for the first time compulsory redundancies of up to one-quarter of the 16,000 workforce.

10.10 Alan explained how the ‘downsizing’ exercise had been carried out by the company and the care they had taken to mitigate the impact on staff. Particular care was taken to minimise compulsory redundancies and to carry out effective consultation.

10.11 The company introduced a number of measures to support employees both to deal sensitively with those identified for redundancy, and to help those employees remaining in the business to cope with the loss of colleagues and retain motivation, commitment and morale.

10.12 In relation to those employees who were to be displaced, an employee support centre was set up to assist with career guidance, job search, CV preparation and letter writing, interview techniques, training and further education opportunities, business start-up, information about the Employment Service, Job Centres and benefits, pre-retirement seminars, basic computer skills, financial planning and the provision of facilities.
such as fax, phones, pcs, photocopier, leaflets, booklets and contact names and addresses.

10.13 In addition, the company had made a major contribution to the Teesdale Enterprise Fund. This fund was available to anyone wishing to establish a new business in Teesdale and to existing businesses in Teesdale looking to expand. As a result of setting up this fund, over 91 applications were received and 88 grants made, totalling nearly £500,000. 247 jobs were attributed to the fund.

10.14 Arising out of the discussion, Members asked for a copy of the company’s absence management scheme for comparison purposes with the County Council’s procedures.

DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF AMICUS – 20TH JANUARY 2004

10.15 Having considered the point of view of management in relation to an example of major job losses, the working group was anxious to look at the issue from the point of view of the employees affected. Accordingly, a meeting was arranged with Amicus who were one of the unions at the Barnard Castle plant of GlaxoSmithKline.

10.16 Jez Stewart, full time official with Amicus, and Dave Bowron, work place representative, attended County Hall to participate in a discussion with members of the working group on the 20th January 2004.

10.17 It was explained that Amicus was a new union formed on the 1st January 2004 with over one million members. It was formed following an amalgamation with a number of unions including the MSF and the AEEU.

10.18 Dave Bowron had been involved in the day-to-day discussions about the job losses at GSK announced in 2001. Jez Stewart, as the full time official, was involved from time to time. A significant number of the employees at GlaxoSmithKline at Barnard Castle were in the predecessor unions now forming Amicus.

10.19 Dave Bowron explained that the consultation which had taken place with the union and the staff at the time was quite good and open. In discussing the general process by which redundancies were identified, the union officials explained that GlaxoSmithKline’s redundancy package was relatively generous. For this reason, there were a number of employees, particularly over 50 years, who were keen to volunteer to leave the firm with a package. Ironically, the union had been called to assist where employees had sought voluntary redundancy but this had been refused because the employer was in a key post.

10.20 Whilst the focus of the working group was originally to discover what assistance was provided to employees seeking alternative employment, it needed to be recognised that the situation in GlaxoSmithKline at Barnard Castle was not untypical of a situation where major job losses
are announced. The reality was some employees were willing to volunteer for redundancy.

10.21 The unions had sought information from GlaxoSmithKline to discover how many employees had secured jobs and the nature of those posts. The union officials indicated that those who sought alternative jobs in the main were able to obtain new employment. Some found employment in the pharmaceutical industry, but either had to move house or travel to Teesside.

10.22 In response to questions about the quality of jobs obtained, union officials thought that because the workforce was highly skilled at GlaxoSmithKline, many employees who lost their employment found new jobs of a reasonably similar standard. Some training of staff to continue to work at GSK but in different roles did happen but not to a great degree.

10.23 The general summary from the union officials was that GlaxoSmithKline had taken the downsizing exercise seriously and, in general, had set a good example in seeking to cater for the needs of employees. In particular, they had provided resources and funding, together with an employees support centre. Jez Stewart thought that the arrangements for GlaxoSmithKline compared well with other downsizing exercises which had taken place in the region.

10.24 The union officials thought that perhaps a shorter period of time would be more appropriate for the redundancy exercise to be completed because of the tension that this caused.

10.25 A wider discussion then took place about similar exercises in the future. The union officials indicated that, at GlaxoSmithKline now, the older employees had largely left which meant that there was a workforce which would be less able to cope with job losses. There was also an important issue of skills and training. The union officials were firmly of the view that the easiest jobs to protect were those which required high skills and qualifications. In the global market place, skills in the pharmaceutical industry were at a premium but there was a need for continual investment in such skills to ensure that jobs were retained in the County.

10.26 Further discussion took place about the modern apprenticeship scheme which provided an opportunity to introduce formal accreditation for a wide range of skills. This was a direction which the union officials fully supported. They drew attention to a pharmaceutical training initiative which was underway at Sunderland under the auspices of One North East.

**SUMMARY OF VISIT TO GLAXOSMITHKLINE AND DISCUSSIONS WITH AMICUS**

10.27 In discussing the downsizing process with GlaxoSmithKline, a number of important issues emerged, as follows:-
• The company had made significant investment in terms of staff time and financial commitment to seek to minimise the impact on employees.

• There was a constant need to ensure that agencies involved in assisting employees at risk co-ordinated effectively. A copy of the list of bodies involved in assisting employees at GlaxoSmithKline is attached to this note to illustrate the number and variety of organisations involved.

• The availability of comprehensive and user-friendly information and documentation particularly from bodies such as JobCentrePlus was emphasised.

10.28 In considering this issue with Amicus, the following main points had emerged:-

• Local authorities clearly have little influence over global or national market forces which create the pressure for downsizing.

• The experience at GlaxoSmithKline at Barnard Castle appeared to be a good example of a major employer and other agencies working together in partnership to seek to mitigate the impact of major job loss decisions.

• The investment from the employer was particular welcomed in seeking to provide opportunities for employees who had been displaced.

• One of the most effective courses of action to avoid job losses or to reduce their impact was to have a well-skilled workforce.

• Modern apprenticeships can provide significant benefits in the County to improve local workforce skills.
11. OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF ISSUES

11.1 The general position in County Durham in 2004 is that we are falling well short of the government's target of 28% of young people under 22 years engaged in modern apprenticeships nationally. Also, the number of modern apprentices employed by the County Council has declined over the last five years.

11.2 Working with employers to increase modern apprenticeship options is a Challenge set out in the Strategic Vision for County Durham. In the recently adopted priorities for improvement, the Council is seeking to create and retain jobs in County Durham, assist in creating a diverse and robust employment structure and also create an adaptable workforce.

11.3 Modern apprenticeships provide the opportunity to deliver part of this vision. It was noted that during the course of this investigation, the modern apprenticeship strategy was developing particularly in relation to young apprenticeships. It was also recognised that, recently, some services of the authority had identified the need to introduce modern apprenticeships within the Council’s structures.

11.4 The County Council has a key role to seek to encourage others in the County to embrace the approach to training through modern apprenticeships. It is also clearly important that the County Council should be seen to be setting an example in its own organisation. It must be appreciated that, whilst there are significant long term benefits of this training initiative, there needs to be a commitment in terms of resources, particularly in the short term. The resources may well be more related to time from staff to devote to the training needs of apprentices and also the allocation of ‘space’ within their contract to attend training courses. The training itself is, of course, funded by the Learning and Skills Council.

11.5 Accordingly, we are recommending more commitment from the County Council in relation to modern apprentices within its own workforce. We would hope that this could be a catalyst to encouraging others in the County.

11.6 In relation to the Health Service, there was a concern that County Durham does not compare favourably with Tees Valley in relation to the numbers of modern apprentices currently engaged. Whilst there are particular issues in relation to training in the health economy, the working group does think that health trusts in the County should consider this issue seriously. Increase in skills in the local workforce has a correlation to health within the County as does increased income. This holistic approach needs to be pursued.

11.7 There are excellent examples in the County in relation to the private sector. The Esh Group seems to us to have embraced the aims of the Council in relation to training of young people and are putting this into
practice with impressive results. We would like to celebrate this and encourage others to follow their example.

11.8 Particular areas which perhaps need attention in terms of the future of the County will be tourism and the health care economy. Those could be areas which are treated as priorities to improve the economy of the County.

11.9 Many members of the working group were not aware, at the start of this investigation, of the variety of modern apprenticeships now available. The list attached to this report may assist in understanding the radical change which has taken place in the opportunities for training through modern apprenticeships.

11.10 The investigation into job losses at GSK demonstrated the value of training to assist in retaining jobs in the County in an ever more competitive environment. Increasing the skills of local people may well be a more sustainable approach to the long-term improvement of the County's economy.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 To seek to improve the numbers of modern apprentices in the County in the future, we have the following recommendations:-

i. Durham County Council should consider setting an example in engaging modern apprentices. This would require:-

   a. A corporate commitment, greater understanding of the wide scope of modern apprenticeships and recognition of their value.

   b. Support to services in this initiative – for example, the recent suggestion from Social Care and Health needs to be encouraged.

ii. Health bodies should be encouraged to take on far more modern apprentices. Each health trust operating in the County should be asked to consider this issue.

iii. The example in the private sector from the Esh Group is very impressive and similar initiatives should be encouraged in the County.

iv. The Learning and Skills Council should be asked to increase the promotion of modern apprenticeships in County Durham including:

   • Considering a ‘One Stop Shop’ approach for employers to assist them in setting up schemes.
• Focusing on areas of the County which are recognised as ‘deprived’.

• Encouraging schemes in the Tourism sector and in Social Care and Health.

v. The County Council should seek to raise the issue of modern apprenticeships as part of its well-being powers:-

a. In its functions such as Economic Development Grants and assistance to industry.

b. In its procurement arrangements.

vi. The current arrangement in relation to the Strategic Alliance which excludes local firms who are setting an example in relation to modern apprenticeships should be carefully reconsidered.

vii. The young apprenticeship scheme is generally to be welcomed but employers must still be encouraged to be fully involved.

viii. The Strategic Partnership for Education and Lifelong Learning which is to take the lead for Challenges 4 and 5 in the Strategic Vision should be asked to regularly review County Durham’s position in relation to modern apprenticeships.

ix. This project should be reviewed six months after the report is considered by Cabinet. The focus should be on the numbers of modern apprentices in place and projected.
MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP

Councillor R. Pye (Chairman)

Councillor Armstrong  Councillor Cordon
Councillor Firby      Councillor Forster
Councillor M. Hodgson Councillor O’Donnell
Councillor Stradling  Councillor Watson

MEMBERS ATTENDING THE VISIT TO GLAXO

Councillor Pye       Councillor Firby
Councillor Priestley Councillor O’Donnell
Councillor Barker    Councillor Coates

MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETING WITH AMICUS

Councillors:  J Armstrong, Blenkinsopp, Coates, T Forster, E Foster, Hogan, Priestley, Pye and Watson.

Co-opted Member:  Mrs. S Stevens
TYPES OF MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE – (Overall, there are more than 160 available across more than 80 industry sectors)

- Accounting
- Advice and Guidance
- Agricultural Crops and Livestock
- Amenity Horticulture
- Animal Care
- Arts & Entertainment
- Aviation
- Bakery
- Beauty Therapy
- Broadcast, Film, Video & Multimedia Industry
- Builders Merchants
- Building Services Engineers
- Business Administration
- Call Handling
- Ceramics
- Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Petrochemical Manufacturing and Refining Industries
- Cleaning & Support Services
- Clothing Industry
- Community Justice
- Construction (Craft)
- Construction (Technician)
- Cultural Heritage
- Customer Service
- Distribution, Warehousing and Storage Operations
- Driving Goods Vehicles
- Early Years Care & Education
- Electrical & Electronics Servicing
- Electricity Industry
- Electrotechnical
- Emergency Fire Service Operations
- Engineering
- Environmental Conservation
- Events
- Farriery
- Fence Installation Industry
- Fibreboard Packaging
- Financial Services – Banks and Building Societies
- Fire Detection & Alarm Systems
- Floristry
- Food and Drink Manufacturing Operations
- Furniture Industry
- Gas Industry
- Glass Industry
- Hairdressing
- Health and Beauty Therapy
- Health and Social Care
- Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVACR)
- Hospitality
- Housing
- Industrial Applications
- Information & Library Services
- Information Technology and Electronic Services
- Insurance
- International Trade & Services
- Jewellery, Silversmithing & Allied Trades
- Laboratory Technicians Working in Education
- Land Passenger Transport: Maintaining
- Automotive Vehicles
- Land-based Service Engineering
- Learning & Development / Direct Training and Support
- Management
- Man-made Fibres
- Manufacturing (Engineering)
- Marine Industry
- Meat and Poultry Processing
- Mechanical Engineering Services: Plumbing
- Metals Processing
- Motor Industry (Vehicle Body and Paint Operations)
- Motor Industry (Vehicle Fitting)
- Motor Industry (Vehicle Maintenance and Repair)
- Motor Industry (Vehicle Parts Operation)
- Motor Industry (Vehicle Sales)
- Newspaper
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Oil and Gas Extraction
- Operating Department Practice
- Optical Manufacturing Technician
- Paper Manufacturing
- Payroll
- Personnel Support
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Photo Imaging
- Photography & Photographic Processing
- Physiological Measurement Technology
- Polymer Processing
- Polymers/Signmaking
- Ports Industry
- Print & Printed Packaging
- Procurement
- Production Horticulture
- Providing Financial Services
- Rail Engineering
- Rail Transport Operations
- Residential Estate Agency and Residential Property Letting & Management Agency
- Retail
- Road Haulage and Distribution
- Safety, Security and Loss prevention
- Sales and Telesales
- Sea Fishing
- Security Systems
- Signmaking
- Sport, Recreation & Allied Occupations
- Steel & Metals Industry
- Surface Coatings Industry
- Telecommunications
- Textile Industry
- Textiles
- The Equine Industry
- Timber Industry
- Travel Services
- Water Industry (Process Operations)
- Wholesale, Distribution, Warehousing & Storage