



TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

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### **Plymouth Transport and Highways**

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Mr. Ross Johnston  
Secretary to the Plymouth Local Access Forum  
Democratic Support  
Floor 1  
Civic Centre  
Plymouth  
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Please ask for: Adrian Trim

Date 10 February 2012

My Ref:

Your Ref

Dear Mr Fairchild,

### **University Student Placements**

Thank you for your letter dated 19 January 2012 regarding the above.

As you have quite rightly stated the Council is going through a period of significant change and the demands on our resources are greater than ever. You will no doubt be aware that we have embarked upon a significant re-organisation which has seen the number of council departments reduce to 3 directorates and we are in the process of cascading that change down through our management structure. We therefore need to be cautious about making decisions today when the structure of individual teams may be very different tomorrow.

However, as a key employer in the city we recognise that we have an important role to play in promoting and delivering growth and there are benefits to all involved if we put ourselves in a position to offer placements along the lines you suggest.

Working with Plymouth University we have developed an online process whereby university students may register their interest in an unpaid work placement with us. We are currently working on a way to allow individual service areas to express an interest in such a placement setting out a basic job specification so that we can match students with potential placements. This programme is ideal for students who perhaps wish to spend their summer or Easter holidays gaining valuable work experience. It is however limited in that it can only ever be short term and as we cannot offer any payment we cannot oblige attendance.

We are therefore also working with the university to develop a more formal arrangement where students can take year long paid work placements as a part of their university undergraduate degree. As we are paying a wage for the duration of the placement attendance is a requirement and this would seem the more appropriate avenue in the specific example you provide. I have every confidence that when this programme is fully developed my officers will be keen to explore it but it

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will be for them to determine the benefits to be gained from doing so against the financial implications to the individual work area.

I would also add that we have recently teamed up with Jobcentre Plus to create a separate initiative, called "Skills 4 21", which is designed to increase the employability of those between the ages of 16 and 24 who

receive Jobseeker's Allowance. Those on the programme will get guidance on personal skills such as timekeeping, workplace behaviour, appropriate dress, team working, business-based interpersonal skills and telephone manner. Skills 4 21 has been implemented in a number of local businesses throughout the city as well as within the council.

I trust that this information is of interest to you and should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Adrian Trim  
Plymouth Transport & Highways