1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To present an update of the Y Prentis, Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, established in September 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 For Cabinet to receive the contents of this report which provides an overview of the activities to date and details of future plans.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Y Prentis was established as a not for profit company limited by guarantee in September 2012, overview details are presented in the appended leaflet. The purpose of the company is to deliver a Shared Apprenticeship Scheme across the South East Wales region in partnership with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The vision for Y Prentis is to ‘provide long term sustainable employment opportunities to help young people maximise their potential and gain fruitful future employment’. In addition Y Prentis has been designed to offer flexible options as a response to the growing demand for community benefit requirements within many construction based, development and maintenance contracts.

3.2 Y Prentis was established following a Cabinet decision on the 18th July 2012, to underwrite an overdraft to allow investment in the creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle to deliver the scheme, which is jointly owned by CMC² (MCC’s Community Interest Company) and Melin Homes.

3.3 Y Prentis is different from many other construction training schemes as Y Prentis employs the apprentices rather than the construction companies having to employ them, themselves. This means that apprentices are able to move flexibly between a number of employers.
in order to gain wide ranging experience in the industry whilst still being employed by Y Prentis. As a result Y Prentis apprentices can gain a full apprenticeship qualification whilst gaining many different working skills including brickwork, plastering, electrical work and plumbing, etc. Training and work placements are provided by local colleges in the South East region and a wide range of employers from small sole traders to large multi-national companies are involved.

4. REASONS

4.1 Y Prentis was initially established as a £2 million venture to create 105 apprenticeships across South East Wales in its first three years. The scheme is part of Welsh Government’s commitment to embed community benefits within public sector procurement using targeted recruitment and training solutions in order to aid job creation. Welsh Government believes that apprenticeships fuel the future essential skills base of the Welsh nation helping to inspire success in the individual and to bring huge benefits to the workplace.

4.2 As a Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, Y Prentis offers support to small businesses to capitalise upon supply chain development opportunities. The Construction Employment Forecast (2011-2015) identified that construction based employment is set to increase by 5% to 107,500; employment growth is expected to be strong due to the increase in housing renovation and maintenance activity; and the largest increase in growth will be among wood trades, interior fit out activities and labourers.

4.3 As a small company, Y Prentis is managed by a Programme Manager with support from an Employer Coordinator, a CITB Apprentices Coordinator and an Administrative and Marketing Assistant. The company is governed by a small Board of Directors which comprises of two Directors from MCC namely Rob O’Dwyer Head of Property Services and Facilities and Cath Fallon Head of Economy and Enterprise and two Directors from Melin Homes namely Adrian Huckin Director of Communities, Enterprise and Care and Peter Crockett Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Finance. In addition, the CITB has a seat on the Board as an Observer, which is held by Rob Davies, Regional Delivery Manager plus there are additional advisors who represent the construction industry. In addition, there is an Advisory Panel to the Board which is comprised of representatives from South East Wales Construction companies which includes Morgan Sindall, Cowlin, Balfour Beatty, Lovel, Wilmott Dixon, Interserve, McAlpine, etc. as well as local authorities and colleges. The purpose of the Advisory Panel is to:

- Advise Y Prentis Board members to ensure that Y Prentis is fit for purpose and meets the training requirements and needs of the construction industry;
- Provide placements for the apprenticeships which offer a wide range of experience to enable them to gain sector specific qualifications and employment;
- Offer advice regarding future recruitment patterns and needs; and
- Assist in influencing Welsh Government and training providers in prioritising training provision in line with industry requirements.
4.4 Y Prentis is funded from the following sources: CITB Attendance and Attainment Grants; Young Recruits Programme funding; and membership payments. Membership payments are paid by construction companies who are part of Y Prentis, the purpose of the membership fee is to pay towards a personal toolkit that each of the Y Prentis apprentices need when they start work and other items such as any additional training needs requirements and personal protective equipment. The fees are either paid weekly or annually dependent upon the size of the company and the number of apprentices.

4.5 To date 109 apprentices have started with Y Prentis and there are currently 70 apprentices who are under-going an apprenticeship programme. Ten of these are Monmouthshire residents, four of which have completed the programme and gained full time employment, two are currently working towards electrical and brickwork qualifications and four have left the scheme to go onto other positions. As a jointly owned Monmouthshire venture there are clearly plans to recruit more Monmouthshire apprentices across the scheme particularly with the impending start of the 21st Century Schools Build programme, when it is anticipated that at least a further ten apprentices will be recruited.

4.6 In terms of its future direction Y Prentis has now completed its second year of trading in September 2014 and repaid the £50,000 overdraft facility afforded by the Authority in February 2015. The company is now in a position whereby it has generated a surplus profit. An investment strategy is therefore being developed that will identify projects that Y Prentis can support which are likely to be capital and revenue-based and are likely to enhance training facilities or training provision to support further apprenticeship development or added value skills. In addition, the Board has taken a decision to offer wider, more technical apprenticeships such as civil engineering and quantity surveying and is anticipating that these new apprenticeships will form part of the new intake in September 2015.

4.7 As Y Prentis is the only CITB approved deliverer of Shared Apprenticeships in South East Wales it has special status which improves its opportunities for long term sustainability. Unlike project based funding schemes, Y Prentis is not time limited. The funding for Y Prentis comes from a wide range of sources including private sector income for wages and membership fees. The CITB grants which Y Prentis benefits from are funded via a levy paid by the construction industry rather than time limited external funding sources. All this provides Y Prentis with sustainable, core funding which will continue as long as the company is managed efficiently and effectively. In addition Y Prentis is guided by an Advisory Panel comprising of key players in the construction industry and clients offering contract opportunities. This unique relationship informs apprentice volume projections whilst providing a vehicle for training providers to match future course provision with future industry needs. This ensures that Y Prentis is driven and directed by the needs of the industry whilst also providing suitable work experience for the young people of South East Wales, as a result Y Prentis apprentices benefit from several advantages when seeking long term employment – they have a full framework qualification which is appropriate to their trade; they have wide ranging experience with several companies and they have job search support from the Y Prentis team.
5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 As this is an update report there is no associated resource or financial implications.

6. **SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The decisions highlighted in this report have no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications.

7. **SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only therefore there are no associated sustainability or equality impacts to be assessed.

7. **CONSULTEES:**

   Senior Leadership Team  
   Economy and Development Select Committee Members  
   Cabinet Members

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

   Appendix One - Y Prentis promotional leaflet (separate attachment)

9. **AUTHORS:**

   Peter Davies, Head of Commercial and People Development – peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk (01633) 644294  
   Cath Fallon, Head of Economy and Enterprise – cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk (01633) 748316
1. Y Prentis is sponsored by Construction Skills and Welsh Government to deliver shared apprenticeships in South East Wales.

2. The company was set up in October 2012 and is owned by Melin Homes and CMC².

3. Shared apprenticeships programmes aim to increase the numbers of companies supporting apprenticeships and the percentage of young people completing their apprenticeships.

4. Placements are for a minimum of 6 weeks and maximum of 2 years. Y Prentis works hard to ensure continuity of placements and help young people achieve their full framework qualifications.

5. Y Prentis employs apprentices on behalf of the industry and rotates them through hosted placements to enable employers to participate without having to commit to a full two year term.

6. Y Prentis aims to support 35 Apprentices between October 2012 and September 2013, increasing numbers to a total of 105 in subsequent years, responding to the needs of the construction industry in South East Wales.

7. Y Prentis is working with key public sector and housing association clients across the area to help them deliver their targeted recruitment and training targets against key projects (SEWSCAP, Arbed 2 ERDF, WHQS).

8. Construction companies and contracting clients can get involved in a number of ways:
   - Join our advisory panel and shape the project;
   - Support the programme as a member of Y Prentis and host some placements;
   - Both of the above.

Contact us
T: 01495 745910    E: enquiries@yprentis.co.uk
or 0800 9753 147
Employer: Y Prentis
Melin Homes, Ty Efail, Lower Mill Field, Pontypool, NP46LG
This is a new project which is offering additional apprenticeship opportunities for 16 – 24 year olds to enter the construction industry as an apprentice. Y Prentis offers the chance to gain NVQ level 2 and 3, whilst earning a wage.
Y Prentis is a new company launched by Melin Homes and CMC² and has been developed in partnership with Construction Skills.

Opportunities: Apprenticeship opportunities are secured at various times throughout the year. Each apprentice will work with a number of construction companies and across various construction sites in order to complete their NVQ portfolio. This is where the shared apprenticeship differs from traditional apprenticeships.

Length: Most apprenticeships cover a two year period, with progression from year 1 to year 2 subject to performance and conduct.

Trades: We generally offer opportunities in traditional trades such as Carpentry, Bricklaying, Plastering etc, but we also recruit Ground workers.

Recruitment: Recruitment is carried out with local colleges and in most instances and we generally recruit those who have completed a level 1 qualification and area working towards a level 2. Although we do recruit from a variety of sources for Groundworkers, so there isn’t a requirement for young people to be in college.
**Entry Requirement:**

With the exception of Groundworkers, all apprentices are required to hold a level 1 qualification or have successfully completed the Pathways to Apprenticeship programme. Applicants will need to undertake and pass a Construction Skills Assessment prior to being considered for Y Prentis Shared Apprenticeship Scheme.

**Hours of Work:**

Hours of work will be 37 hours per week and start and finish times will be determined by operational requirements of the hosting employer.

**Wages:**

- Year 1 - £120 per week
- Year 2 - National Minimum Wage

**Personal Protective Equipment:**

Each apprentice will be issued with suitable PPE in line with industry standards.

**Annual leave entitlement in days or hours as appropriate:**

Each apprentice will be entitled to 28 days annual leave per annum and is inclusive of Bank Holidays.

**Physicality:**

Work duties will be physical and so applicants will need to be aware of the rigour of the job.

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**Contact us**

For more information call Dafydd Langley on 01495 745910 ext 2204