

Matthew – Corporate Services Graduate

I spend three days a week working in the scrutiny of policy and performance and two days in Human Resources (HR). In scrutiny my main role is to organise meetings so councillors can hear the concerns of local business and see how the council is performing and seek improvement. I have responsibility for identifying how the council's policies and performance affects local business. I arrange meetings, prepare presentations and brief council members of the issues which have been raised. I help gather evidence and make recommendations on how particular areas can be improved.

In HR I have been designated to work on one of Sandwell's five priority areas and I organise meetings to generate ideas. I have also done administration. It is difficult to say what a typical day is – each day is different. It's great as you can pick and choose what you do. Some days, when my manager is not there I have to use my own initiative.

When I applied, I didn't really know exactly what I wanted to do. I knew it was important for me to work in the voluntary sector or the public sector. I thought the traineeship was good in two ways: it would help me find out what I wanted to do, and also, in twelve months it would give me a lot of varied experience. I was fortunate to be offered two jobs; I accepted this job because I knew I would get all round experience working for a local authority and that influenced my decision.

Following my degree in Journalism, I did a Masters degree in Political Journalism. University made me more confident and broadened my horizons. It also improved my communication skills. I then worked as an intern at Oxfam and I definitely believe this helped me get my current job. I am doing the Institute of Leadership & Management Level 3; I don't spend much of my free time working on it as I prefer to focus on it within the allocated time.

I have developed many skills from my roles. I have been given the opportunity to go into a High School as a teaching assistant. I now know I really want to work with young people and I hope to go into teaching so this experience will put me in good stead to realise my ambition.

Scrutiny. Transformation