

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

7th OCTOBER 2013

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

LEARNING AND SKILLS CENTRE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To update members of this committee of progress made in the development of a Learning and Skills Centre, within Phoenix House, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray and to identify next steps

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:-

(a) the progress be noted by the committee;

(b) officers pursue, within current resources, the opportunity to work with the DWP to access European Social Fund money and that a report is brought back to this Committee in December on progress. That report will also consider other options for funding, including approval of a project mandate for consideration for a capital allocation as part of the budget setting process for 2014/15.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This committee considered the development of the first floor of Phoenix House as a Life/Business skills centre at its meetings on 10th April 2013 and 10th July 2013. At a meeting on the 16th May 2013, the county wide Work and Skills Board supported the concept for the development of a Life/Business Skills Centre in Melton Mowbray, which we are currently branding as the 'Me and My Learning Skills Centre'. This builds on the work we have been doing through the Universal Credit Pilot and through the FSF funded Employment and Skills Project.
- 3.2 The overarching aim is to provide a coordinated approach to skills frameworks and to work with providers, services, businesses, and clients to make it seamless and easy, bearing in mind that often the most vulnerable need support in being able to access services, enabling them to maximise their chances of becoming digitally, financially and socially independent.
- 3.3 The aim is to get the centre up and running for a development phase as soon as possible, which we intend to run through until the 31st December 2014 (at the earliest). Specifically this development phase will be used to test out our learning to engage with employers, stakeholders and most importantly to engage with service users with a view to building the business case to run a full pilot from 2014, hopefully for a minimum period of two years. The council has invested in the first floor of Phoenix House, Melton Mowbray to start the development phase. This building is in the ownership of Melton Borough Council and has been successfully used over the summer for a similar purpose in preparing people for job opportunities with the new Sainsbury's development in Melton Mowbray.

Background

- 3.4 There is evidence of a clear need for this type of project as current information indicates that in 2012, 19.12% of Melton working age residents had either NVQ level 1 or no qualifications, compared to 17.04% in Leicestershire and 15.64% nationally. Melton is also below county and national averages for those trained to NVQ levels 3 and 4. This will be a barrier to people gaining employment or being able to earn sufficient money from employment to be able to cope financially in the future when welfare changes start to take full effect.
- 3.5 The Me and My Learning Centre will work with businesses to up skill residents, and ensure that those ages 19-64 years have access to courses that can help them to become more work ready.
- 3.6 Initial research has highlighted that between 750-900 families in Melton will either be families with complex need or demonstrating many of the signs of having complex needs. In depth research of 193 families specifically in Melton has shown 65% of them to have multiple needs such as poor educational attainment, unemployment, poverty, offending behaviour and poor health etc.
- 3.7 Creating Me and My Learning as a one stop shop, will improve skill levels, and support sustained employment by understanding the root causes of unemployment and enabling 'managability'.
- 3.8 The development of Me and My Learning will be phased to ensure that it meets the needs of the community and local business.

Phases

- 3.9 Phase 1: developing further need and resources required to run the project. Working with stakeholders and users to source funding streams to make the project financially secure and deliver in the most optimum way to secure the desired outcomes. A further report to members will be made before we move from Phase 1 to Phase 2. However, a project Mandate will be presented to this committee in December for their approval in order to include this project into the 2014/15 capital programme
- 3.10 Phase 2: Two year pilot, with a 12 month significant evaluation period to further inform business plan post end of two year pilot. Whilst the exact shape of the pilot will be developed as part of Phase 1 some initial thoughts include use of customer service staff, extension of the pilot into a redevelopment of ground floor and leveraging in of wider range of partner activities.
- 3.11 Phase 3: Financially secure one stop learning and skills centre for all partners and residents to provide a coordinated approach to supporting people back to work.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are clear links to some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan specifically:
- Support people and businesses through the economic downturn
 - Meet the Economic needs of Borough

- Improving the well-being of vulnerable people

4.2 Links to national policy include:

- Can the Work Programme Work for all user groups?
- Local Support Service Framework covering local authority role in the roll out of Universal Credit
- Service Transformation: A better service for the citizen, a better deal for the Taxpayer

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The development phase of the project is able to be implemented at a surplus to the Council. Expenditure of £10,160 is required as outlined at Appendix A. Set against this; this initiative together with the Sainsbury's initiative during the summer has generated income of £14,100. It is estimated that further rentals will be achieved during the development phase of £3,400. This means the estimated surplus for the development phase is £7,420.

5.2 A key part of the development phase will be to work with partners, stakeholders and users to shape development of the business case for the 2 year pilot as part of a funding bid process. There is potentially a significant funding opportunity emerging through our work as a Universal Credit Pilot to access some European Social Fund money, although this will definitely require match funding to be achieved. Between now and December officers will explore this and how we might be able to maximise the opportunity, such as for example linking to other initiatives with similar aims such as the Foyer project. There could also be funding opportunities provided through some of the funding allocated to the Leicester, Leicestershire Economic Partnership as well as potentially via the Local Support Service Framework proposed by the DWP to underpin the rollout of Universal Credit. As these are also likely to include an element of match funding it is suggested that this initiative is considered for a capital allocation as part of the budget setting process for 2014/15.

5.3 After the Two year pilot stage, the council would establish from the mid- evaluation report, the impact and effectiveness of the facility, and therefore use this evaluation to build a business case to ensure that the facility becomes self sustaining in the future.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods in consultation with the solicitor to the Council and head of central services ensure appropriate Legal and Property implications are taken into account when developing documents relating to the occupancy of Phoenix House.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 No direct connection to community safety for the development phase. However, once into Phase 2, employment, raising aspirations and skill level could have an impact on ASB and improve quality of life for residents of the Borough

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed, however, an equalities analysis has shown that through this targeted approach positive impact have been identified. During Phase 1, the evaluation and monitoring will include equalities impact.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 **Probability**

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Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1,2		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Additional income assumed is not realised
2	Assumed Costs are too low
3	

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No impact on climate change

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation is being planned for partners and the community. The community will be asked to inform delivery, as well as business.
A Partner event has been planned for the 4th October and community event to be planned for November 2013

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All residents within the Melton Borough will be able to access the Me and My Learning centre.

Contact Officer: Gemma Sanders/H Rai

Date: 16th September 2013

Appendices: Capital and Revenue costs of the Development Phase of the Me and My Learning Centre.

Background Papers: None

Reference: X drive/Committee/CSA/2013/14/071013/Learning and Skills centre

Revenue Expenditure	
Additional Costs:	
Furniture	£680
Redecorate entrance hall	£390
Buzzers/monitors	£1,900
Electronic equipment/Wifi	£1,640
Door for EMC to make secure	£1,250
Marketing	£1,050
Caretaker/cleaner	£2,670
Water coolers/drink machines	£500
Total Additional Expenditure	£10,080

Appendix A: Capital and Revenue costs for Development Phase of Me and My Learning up to March 2014.

Income	
Rent: estimated use	£3,400
Rent: Paid	£9,600
Service charge (Learn Direct only)	£4,500
Total Additional Income	£17,500
Net surplus to March 2014 with estimated rent:	£7,420