

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

12th FEBRUARY 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

ME AND MY LEARNING

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 Project Mandate and Business Case attached as Appendix A and B, including the £22,000 needed for the capital works at Phoenix House, is approved.**
- (b) **The progress to date is noted by the committee**
- (c) **A further report on charging for room hire beyond March 2015 is brought back to a future meeting later in 2014**
- (d) **Temporary changes to the establishment outlined in Appendix C are noted.**

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, 10th July 2013 and 3rd December 2013. 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, business and clients to become digitally, financially and socially independent. For example this will enable residents to manage their claims online and become better prepared for work.
- 3.3 The European Social Fund Bid was successful, with a total bid amount of £781,577, with total match funding from Melton Borough Council £395,350. The bid will run from the 1st February 2014 to the 31st March 2015. To be able to maximise this opportunity, £22,000 is required to undertake the capital works on the First Floor of Phoenix House. There will be an evaluation report to look at the longer term sustainability of the project. The Project will focus around 5 key issues; Homelessness, Health, Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Drug and Alcohol Support. Please see the Project Mandate and Business Case (Appendix A, section C1 and Appendix B) for further information, including outcomes and targets.
- 3.4 During the period up to 31st March 2015 rent and other charges are covered by the ESF funding. Providers will be asked to deliver training and skills workshops, which will primarily but not exclusively be based within Phoenix House. Providers will be invited to

use Phoenix House on a 'no rent' basis until 31st March 2015, but for all providers, we will be endeavouring to secure longer term arrangements with rent (based on existing fees and charges approved by PFA) to be paid on the basis of usage from April 2015. This arrangement will need to be reviewed (approximately Nov/ Dec 2014) prior to the end of the ESF Bid period, i.e. before 31st March 2015.

3.5 Currently Melton Borough unemployment statistics are (from Nomis and Jobcentre figures) stated below. The target cohort will predominantly be drawn from these numbers;

Jobseekers Allowance	455
Employment Support Allowance	640

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 Capital works required transforming the first floor of Phoenix House into Me and My Learning will be £22,000 which we are asking the Committee to approve. This will allow for 4 training rooms to be created. Funding was recommended to be allocated to the project by members at the Strategic Planning Away day subject to the approval of a mandate at the next meeting of this committee. This recommendation was considered by full council at the budget meeting held on 5th February 2014. Further details are provided in Appendices A and B respectively.

5.2 For a breakdown of the staffing implications of the ESF bid, please see Appendix C

5.3 During the 14 month period the rent and other service costs are covered by the ESF Bid.

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 ESF Bid. However, 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 will be completed, at present, an equalities analysis has shown that through this targeted approach positive impact has been identified.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 Probability

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Very High A			1	
High B			4	
Significant C	2			
Low D		5	3, 6	
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

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Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Continuity of staffing within the Project
2	Building not ready on schedule
3	Partners do not agree to using the building
4	Partners not agreeing to use the building after the ESF period
5	Audit and Monitoring process for ESF is stringent and funding does not meet criteria
6	We do not reach the numbers required to access the funding

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No impact on climate change

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation with the Public, Partners and Staff has occurred.

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 Ruigrok/H Rai
Date: 23rd January 2014

Appendices: A- Mandate for the Project
B- Project Documentation (Business Case).
C- Staffing

Background Papers: None
Reference: X drive/Committee/CSA/2013/14/071013/Learning and Skills centre.