

14 July 2011

Links to Work: Supported Employment Service – Update on future of the service.

Ward(s) : All

Portfolios: Councillor Barbara McCracken – Social Care and Inclusion

Executive Summary:

Links to Work continues to provide employment opportunities for adults with disabilities incorporating, light industrial packing and assembly supporting local industries such as Squires, Yale, Author Hough's and Icon etc. (Walsall, Wolverhampton, and Telford).

The service has now consolidated from three sites to one (Electrium Point).

Seven work streams are being developed optimising the use of a single site

- Data Archiving
- Community Food Bank
- Old Halls Peoples Partnership
- Integrated Community Equipment Stores (ICES)
- Growing Links - Micro Enterprise
- Development of Recruit-ability Programme
- Minor Aids and Adaptations

Please see the main body of the report for a breakdown:

Reason for scrutiny:

Cabinet approved the approach to restructure Links to Work (Oct 2008)

Cabinet also directed that we should do all we can to maintain a service for those service users with a disability who currently attend Links to Work.

Cabinet instructed Social Care and Inclusion to explore opportunities available to the Council and its partners to provide sustainable employment opportunities to people with disabilities and for this to include a review of the future role of Links to Work.

The agreed approach was development of future services designed to minimise the impact on service users who attend Links to Work.

Maintain a service to provide employment related activities, modernising the approach to maximise service user's strengths and develop social inclusion.

Recommendations:

That: Scrutiny and Performance Panel

1. Support Links to Work in developing Supported Employment Services.
2. Support initiatives regarding employment and the Working Smarter Programme.

Background papers:

Links to Work Preparation and Supported Employment Service – Decision on the future of the Service – Cabinet Report October 2008.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – March 2009

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Links to Work - Work Preparation and Supported Employment Service - Decision on the future of the Service – Cabinet Report July 2009

Links to Work - Work Preparation and Supported Employment Service - Decision on the future of the Service – Cabinet Report July 2009

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – October 2009

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – November 2009

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – January 2010

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – February 2010

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – March 2010

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – July 2010

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel – Sept 2010

Links-to-Work work Preparation and Supported Employment Service. Update on the future of the Service.

Links to Work Preparation and Supported Employment Service Social Care and Inclusion and Regeneration - Property Services. Lease to the Council of premises at Electrum Point, Forge Road, Willenhall. Seek approval.

Resource and legal considerations:

Financial

There will be an annual cost to the Council of £68,500 plus a Service charge plus outgoings.

Social Care and Inclusion have identified funding to meet the costs associated with the development of the service.

Legal

Asset Management, Legal Services, Social Care and Inclusion (Links to Work and Direct Provision (Day Opportunities) have secured the lease on Electrium Point

Social Care and Inclusion (Links to Work and Direct Provision (Day Opportunities) is responsible for future compliance for the terms of the lease and provision of services from the resource.

Citizen impact:

The continuing developments at Links to Work will mean that employment services are still provided and consolidated into one area making it easier to provide the services to their clients.

Environmental impact:

The proposal will not have any direct environmental impact save that it will consolidate a service into one location thus reducing the need of staff and customers to travel between various locations.

Performance management:

The service development will provide a secure base for the various activities and avoid disruption of existing performance and client based goals and the proposed developments including social enterprises that may impact on Employment opportunities for the vulnerable previously scrutinised and approved by cabinet.

Equality Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The development of the units at Links to Work will lead to the continued provision of a supported employment service and Direct Provision (Day Opportunities) Service.


Consultation:

Strategic Property Board has been informed of the continuing developments at Links

to Work.

Contact Officer:

Michael Hicklin Service Manager Provider Services

 . 01922 658375

hicklinm@walsall.gov.uk

Report

Seven work streams are being developed optimising the use of a single site at Electrium Point. Those work streams are as follows.

- Data Archiving
- Community Food Bank
- Old Halls Peoples Partnership
- Integrated Community Equipment Stores (ICES)
- Growing Links - Micro Enterprise
- Development of Recruit-ability Programme
- Minor Aids and Adaptations

1. **Data archiving** / data recovery / data scanning / data destruction. The services overall expectation is that all current outsourced Adult Social Care data archiving services are re negotiated and centralised at Electrium Point. This would include a review of the current Iron Mountain corporate contract, consolidating, rationalising and reducing costs. This service would be able to sustain two adults with disabilities into employment utilising the Recruit-ability and Recruit-ability Plus Programmes.
2. **Community Food Bank**; supported by Black Country Food Bank, Adult Social Care and Inclusion and Walsall Housing Group. Developing Electrium Point as a food distribution hub distributing to points across the borough one in each area team. Links to Work would effectively support the Black Country Food Bank providing floor space, equipment, racking, vehicles, freezers, fixtures and fittings etc. This fare share outlet in partnership with the Council would distribute to new and existing local community groups distributing food to disadvantaged families. This development would be able to sustain two adults with disabilities into employment utilising the Recruit-ability and Recruit-ability Plus Programmes.
3. **Old Halls People's Partnership**; Supporting Old Halls Peoples Partnership in a furniture restoration and distribution project. Electrium Point provides the opportunity for this Third Sector Partner to store and restore furniture which is then distributed to vulnerable adults and families.
4. **ICES:** The Joint Commissioning Unit and the Integrated Community Equipment Stores (ICES) are currently negotiating a potential move to Electrium Point. Links to Work already provides storage space for the Councils emergency stores, previously operating over three separate sites, combining Occupational Therapy store and Children's equipment stores.
5. **Growing Links**; A Social Enterprise Project Manager has been assigned to Links to

Work from Strategic Transformation Services to evaluate Growing Links the Councils community gardening initiative that has provided services to Walsall citizens for several years. There may be an opportunity to develop a Micro Enterprise focusing on the Social Care remit by developing or adapting the current service.

6. **Development of Recruit-ability Programme (Plus)**, Recruit-ability and employment opportunities for citizens with diverse disability needs. Currently twenty Service Users are employed at Links to Work supported by the Councils Recruit-ability Programme. All qualify N1 146 nation indicator for adults with a learning disability in employment and contributing a National Insurance contribution. Continuing developments of this scheme will significantly increase this number.
7. **Minor Adaptations**, In November 2010 Links to Work began a project in partnership with the Integrated Community Equipment Stores (ICES) and Walsall Housing Group, fitting minor aids and adaptations. Links to Works involvement has prompted increased activity in this area and discussions are in progress to formalise the partnership and Links to work becoming sub-contractors for Tomlinson's the current contracted provider. The expectation is that adults with a disability will be mentored / shadowed by Tomlinson's staff. This development would be able to sustain two adults with disabilities into employment utilising the Recruit-ability and Recruit-ability Plus Programmes.

We would like scrutiny to approve the above activities, and will be happy to report their success where necessary.