



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL CARE HEALTH & WELL-BEING  
CABINET BOARD**

**9th December 2021**

**Report of the Head of Adult Services - Angela Thomas**

**Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected** All Wards

**DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENT LIVING HUB AT B'SPOKED**

**Purpose of the Report**

This report is to seek Members approval to enter into a 90-day consultation period to develop an Independent Living hub at B'spoked where people can learn new and develop existing skills in a safe environment.

**Executive Summary**

B'spoked is a training and employment centre the purpose of which is to provide people who have low to moderate learning disabilities the opportunity to develop employment and training skills which they can use to move on to other training and employment opportunities.

It is proposed to enhance the training and employment model and develop it to become an independent living hub by creating two new training flats where people can develop daily living and independence skills and where assessments can be carried out by practitioners. This will take place alongside the continuation of some of the existing workshop groups where people can develop work based skills,

especially those that will benefit the individual and the local community, i.e. cycle workshop, woodwork, café and cooking. Arts and crafts will no longer be available at B'spoked as during the pandemic people have been successfully supported to engage in arts and crafts projects at home with on line support, and this will continue. People will also be signposted and supported to attend local community arts and crafts groups.

B'spoked is currently a resource aimed at people aged from 16-66 but the aim is to make the service available to younger people from 14+ who are in transition from Childrens to Adult Services and offer them the opportunity to develop independent living skills.

### **Background**

The purpose of B'spoked is to provide opportunities for people with low to moderate learning disabilities to develop employment based skills in order for them to move on to other training, employment or community based activities. However, it has evolved over the years for some people to become a long term day service despite the aim of B'spoked being to support people to transition to other opportunities.

The current building which is located at Neath Abbey will be adapted to include areas where people can be supported by staff to develop new and build on existing skills, as well as skills which will enable them to progress to other training opportunities or employment. The newly created areas will include two training flats, each with a kitchen, bathroom, living room and bedroom (although these areas will not provide accommodation for people to live in but will be a training facility). Use of assistive technology will be facilitated by including up to date equipment within the training flats to enable people to try this equipment and devices and develop the skills to use this technology within their own environment.

The new resource will also enable social care practitioners to assess people's skills and abilities, and in line with their personal outcomes develop person centred care plans.

The plan also includes improving the existing IT provision within B'spoked to support more people to develop IT skills. This will also support independent living building on the skills people have used during the Covid-19 pandemic and recognising that social media plays a significant role in promoting friendships and relationships alongside managing finances and budgeting, paying bills, ordering shopping etc.

The facility will also be designed to meet the needs of young people aged 14+ in transition to adulthood who will also be able to use the resource to develop their skills. It is anticipated that their parents/carers will also be able to access the service to enable families and young people to work together with support from professionals, to enable young people to develop the skills required for independent living and community participation. Social care practitioners will be able to gain an understanding of a young person's ability and resilience whilst working alongside parents and carers to increase their confidence in the young person's skills and choices.

The support will be provided by the existing staff group from Bspoked who hold relevant teaching or training qualifications e.g. teacher training, PTTLS or equivalent. This group of staff will continue to deliver the workshops currently in place but will each focus some of their time to deliver the new programme of work with aim being to encourage people to develop independent living skills.

Social Services Transport has traditionally been available to transport service users from their homes to Bspoked. Many of these individuals use public transport or have access to their own transport and use of these methods of transport will be encouraged where appropriate as part of their independent living plan.

### **Financial Impacts**

There will be a cost implication in developing the building to create the areas within the building which will replicate a living environment.

The estimated costs of remodelling the current premises are around £100,000 which includes fireproofing the area around the kitchen so that the upstairs area can be used for a training apartment. This cost will also include upgrading the existing IT provision, and reconfiguring and replacing the toilet blocks.

A bid has been made for this money from ICF capital funding, but there is no guarantee that this will be awarded and so funds may be required from Local Authority capital budgets. A local company have also agreed to make some improvements to one of the designated flats as part of their community programme at no cost to the Local Authority. Should funding be agreed from the ICF capital funding bid the work by the local company will be enhanced to improve the flat.

If this project does not go ahead due to lack of funds it is likely that the opportunity to develop the Independent Living Hub will be lost or delayed. More people with learning disabilities will become dependent on care being provided to them rather than their skills being developed and reducing their need for long term care. People with learning disabilities will also be denied the opportunity to reach their potential.

The cost of the current service per annum is £473,870 with an additional £201,009 spent on transport. No additional revenue funding is being sought.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Integrated Equality Impact screening assessment on seeking approval to consult in respect of making the proposed changes to Bspoked to create an independent living hub has been undertaken to assist the Council.

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the

Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 1, for the purposes of the meeting.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

The service at Freshstart in Croeserw will remain in place to serve the people who live in that area. Bspoked will remain available to all eligible people. Transport needs will be taken into account and alternative opportunities to promote independent travel will be explored.

### **Workforce Impacts**

There are no post deletions suggested in this proposal and staff will remain on their current grades undertaking the same type of work but with a clear focus on supporting individuals to develop independent living skills alongside the skills they develop with a view to progressing on to work and training. Their job descriptions will focus on this element of work and therefore a formal management of change and consultation with the staff will be required. The staff already have relevant training or teaching qualifications and additional training will be provided to them to support their Continued Professional Development.

### **Legal Impacts**

No implications.

### **Risk Management Impacts**

As this document seeks approval for a consultation period only there are no notable impacts.

### **Consultation**

This report seeks members' approval to enter into a full 90-day public consultation involving all stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

That members approve a formal 90-day public consultation period in relation to the future model of service delivery at Bspoked and the development of the Independent Living Hub, in principle, subject to the award of funding.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

- a) To enhance the service to support people with low to moderate learning disabilities to develop independent living skills alongside the skills they may need to progress to work or training.
- b) To support people to reach their potential.
- c) To reduce peoples' need for statutory care and support.

## **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 2: Consultation Strategy

Appendix 3: Easy Read document

## **Officer Contact**

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