



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

Report of the Head of Education Development – Chris Millis

Matter for Decision:

Wards Affected:

All

Proposal for the Council to enter into Leases of 3 separate premises for Employability, Skills and Outreach provision by Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate

Purpose of the Report:

To obtain Members approval in principle for the Council to enter into leases of 3 separate premises situated in Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe required for employability skills and outreach provision by Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

Executive Summary:

The Employability Manager manages the delivery of Employability and Skills themed projects namely Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, Communities for Work Plus Young Persons Guarantee, Skills and Training, Legacy Fund and Rural Development Plan.

The directive from Welsh Government is that it's essential that we look to increase engagements for our projects from within our communities. The provision will enhance joint working with not only colleagues from other directorates, but external partners such as DWP, Working Wales, Careers Wales, Welfare Rights and PaCE. Each Hub will provide a holistic employability, skills and outreach facility for those seeking help and support in a friendly custom made building with experienced staff there to help.

Background:

Various programme leads from internal and external departments/organisations meet on a monthly basis and look at referrals and engagements onto projects such as Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, DWP, Workways+, PaCE, Youth Service. During the Pandemic referrals to all employability programmes dropped dramatically, numbers have started to increase, however still remain lower than pre-pandemic. Welsh Government have asked if we can increase engagements within the programmes to ensure communities and employers are supported as we start to open up.

Before Christmas we trialled a Hub at Aberafan Shopping Centre, where internal departments within NPT and external partners were scheduled to work on set days. This proved to be a huge success, and WG have asked if we can replicate this service within the three main towns, Neath, Pontardawe and Port Talbot.

We investigated current NPTC buildings in the areas, but the buildings did not meet the needs of the projects we aim to deliver, therefore we had to source alternative arrangements and looked elsewhere within the towns. 2 of the sites will offer on-site training courses, and aim to provide a friendly drop in environment where participants will not feel threatened about entering into a new building, it will be warm, welcoming and will provide a holistic

approach to employability, skills and training as well as encouraging other agencies to join us on site.

The proposal is for Communities for Work Plus to enter into leases of premises in each of Neath Port Talbot and Pontardawe for an initial fixed period of 12 month only from which will be run a programme of activities scheduled throughout the week to support, advice and help to those who need it.

To date Unit 2 within Aberavon Shopping Centre Port Talbot and 6 James Street Pontardawe have been identified by the Employability Manager as potentially being suitable for the provision of the service.

It is anticipated that a suitable premises will be identified in Neath within coming weeks.

We will also look to support local employers with their recruitment of staff at these venues. In the trial before Christmas in Aberavon Shopping Centre, we had some employers attend certain days to speak with people about the vacancies they had. We are in an unusual time where we have employers crying out for staff, and having vacancies they cannot fill, and we offer them the opportunity to come in to our venues to promote their jobs, but it will also give residents the chance to come in a speak with the employers and find out more about the roles before they apply. Mentors will also be on hand to help people complete applications/create CVs to give to the employers on the day.

Financial Impacts:

All costs associated with the rent, running costs and outgoings will be funded through existing budgets within the Communities for Work Plus programme. Pontardawe £6,000. Aberafan Shopping Centre £14,000, still awaiting costs for Neath.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

1. 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.
2. The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

We are seeking to lease a premises in Pontardawe, therefore we will be delivering a service in the Valleys Community. This will be a positive impact to the Valleys Communities.

Workforce Impacts:

There are no Workforce implications associated with this report.

Legal Impacts:

There no Legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

Lease agreements, thorough site inspections and financial aspects will be undertaken before occupying the buildings.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment that approval is granted in principle for the Council to enter into the lease of Unit 2 within Aberavon Shopping Centre Port Talbot and 6 James Street Pontardawe on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Property & Regeneration and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Education and Development to source a suitable venue for Neath Town Centre on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Property & Regeneration.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To approve the lease agreements for the 3 buildings to provide a holistic employability, skills and training outreach facility for those seeking help and support in a friendly custom made building with experienced staff there to help.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is for immediate implementation.

Appendices:

Impact Assessment – First Stage

List of Background Papers:

None

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