



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

6th July 2023

Report of the Head of Education Development – Chris Millis

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Port Talbot Wards

Report Title: NPT Opportunity Hub Update and Lease Continuation

Purpose of the Report:

To give Members an update regarding the NPT Opportunity Hub and ask for a decision regarding lease continuation of the building.

Executive Summary:

The aim of the NPT Opportunity Hub is to offer residents a 'single front door' access to all employability services that NPTC have to offer namely, Communities for Work Plus, Workways NPT and New Horizons (Youth Service).

The Opportunity Hub is there to offer residents aged 16 plus, that are unemployed, NEET or Economically Inactive, an easily accessible and welcoming venue in the heart of the community that can help and support them to securing employment, or undertake training to move them closer to the labour market.

Since opening in January 2023, 282 residents from Port Talbot who were looking for help and support to secure employment have come into the centre and been referred to NPT Employability programmes. This highlights the need for a 'single front door' in the heart of the community to access to employability services. With the unit being in close proximity to the local Job Centre, it has also helped build good relationships, with the work coaches who often sign post their customers to the Hub.

There is currently a 12 month lease for the unit which is due to expire on the 31st August 2023 and we are asking for approval to continue the lease for a further 12 months from September 2023.

Background:

The Opportunity Hub has been developed in the heart of the shopping centre in Port Talbot in order to provide support for people with regard to upskilling, work development and also been a Warm Hub during the cost of living crisis.

The Hub has been renovated since gaining the lease and is well used by shoppers passing through the centre.

Achievements to date:

We have held monthly recruitment days in the Hub with local employers to help them fill their current vacancies. These events give our residents access to meeting the employers and find out what they require to be successful in securing employment with them. For example, we have had sector specific events such as Security, Health and Social Care, Construction and Admin. We have engaged a range of employers such as McDonalds, DVLA, numerous security companies, many care sector employers and Virgin Atlantic to name just a few.

We have engaged with 282 residents offering support with regard to employment or training since January 2023.

The Hub has been a designated Warm Hub for residents to come in for a free warm drink during the winter months, to help them with the cost of living crisis.

We have seen a drop in venue for people looking for advice and support. Currently the Hub has internal and external organisations attending on a weekly basis to offer support such as Citizens advice, Job Centre Plus, Direct Payments, Safe and Well team and the Community Fridge project.

We have delivered training courses in the Hub to upskill residents to enable them to have the knowledge, qualification and skills to find employment. We have held various training including Pet First Aid, Health and Safety, Emergency First Aid and Paediatric First Aid.

The team have held sessions for NPTC departments to attend and promote their vacancies and support people to apply for the jobs, such as Direct Payments.

We have become a place where residents can have information and contact details for all council support services. The informal nature of the centre is helpful.

The Hub has also gone some way to help all NPT Employability programmes to achieve their set targets from their funders which will prove the need for us to secure funding going forward.

The Opportunity Hub is best located in the Shopping Centre rather than a corporate building, as it has passing footfall of residents that are in the Shopping Centre for many reasons. On average we are having at least 3 referrals a day from people passing and coming in to find out what help we can provide.

If the Hub is able to extend the lease for a further 12 months, this will ensure that residents will continue to have access to a welcoming venue, offering advice, guidance, support and we will have the ability

to signpost to different organisations and services both within and out outside of the Local Authority.

We have had discussions with the Centre Manager in regards to extending the lease for a further year. Conversations have also been had with the Landlords, Estama, who have provided updated costs for 23/24. They are pleased with the addition we bring to the Centre for their customers and would gladly extend our lease for a further year.

Welsh Government Officers recently visited the Opportunity Hub and commented on what an excellent facility it is for the community and in a great location for engaging people that are passing by the shop.

Financial Impacts:

The projected costs for 2023/2024 are:

Lease costs	£14,000
Service Charge	£9,067
Insurance	£450
Running costs (estimated) electric, water, Internet	£6,000
Total Cost	£29,517

The above costs will be funded from the Welsh Government Communities for Work Plus budget.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A First Stage Impact Assessment has been completed and attached as Appendix A for your information.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no Valleys Communities implications associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts:

No Workforce implications associated with this report.

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no risk assessment issues associated with this report.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

To seek Members approval to extend the lease for the Opportunity Hub for a further 12 months.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The recommendation is made that Members approve the lease extension in order to provide local employability and wellbeing support for the community of Port Talbot.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Appendices:

Appendix A – First Stage Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

N/A

Officer Contact:

Chris Millis, Head of Education Development – c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk

Angeline Spooner-Cleverly, Employability, Skills and Poverty Co-ordinator – a.spooner-cleverly@npt.gov.uk

Kerry Jones, Employability Manager – k.c.jones@npt.gov.uk