

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Health Scrutiny Panel      **DATE:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART 1** **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

#### **EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

This report provides detail on the review of employment support for disabled people currently provided by the Council at Speedwell Enterprises. It summarises the options considered for future provision of these services and makes recommendations on the proposed future model for service delivery which will be considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

##### **2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That the panel note and consider the review findings and the options and recommendations for the future

Consider and comment on the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October

- a) That the Council implement a new model for the provision of employment support for disabled people and determine the current supported business on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012
- b) That the Council facilitate the termination of the Work Choice contract with Shaw Trust to provide supported employment, with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012
- c) That formal 30 day consultation with affected support staff and workshop operatives and their trade union representatives be undertaken from the end of October to the end of November
- d) That comprehensive support be offered to displaced workshop operatives to assist them in finding alternative employment where possible or other suitable day time activities
- e) That support staff and other council employees affected will follow existing procedures and processes concerning redeployment and redundancy
- f) That the current Work Opportunities scheme continue to be provided directly by the council beyond April 2012
- g) That an extended Work Opportunities service for all disabled people of working age eligible for Adult Social Care services be implemented during 2012
- h) That the new service model is commissioned in line with procurement guidelines and legislation alongside other day opportunities services following consultation and market testing.

- i) That the Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing in consultation with the lead Commissioner be delegated to agree the provider of the new service following the tender process

### **3 Community Strategy Priorities**

- 3.1 Implementation of the recommendations of the review of employment support for people with disabilities and services provided at Speedwell Enterprises will contribute to the delivery of Community Strategy priorities in a number of ways:

#### **Community Cohesion**

- Promoting involvement of adults with disabilities in employment, training and volunteering;
- promoting social inclusion for people with disabilities;
- reducing inequalities by increasing access to employment, skills development and employment opportunities for disabled people.

#### **Health and Wellbeing**

- improving access to skills development, volunteering, work experience and employment opportunities for disabled people.
- Promoting independence of vulnerable people

#### **Economy and Skills**

- Providing employment training and support to people with disabilities to enable them to improve their skills and enhance their opportunities to access to colleges, work experience and jobs.

### **4 Other Implications**

#### **(a) Financial**

Employment support services for disabled people are currently provided by the Council through the Speedwell Enterprise service.

The gross budget for the service is £555,000. This includes grant income of £144,000 per year received from the Shaw trust to provide the Work Choice scheme and additional income generated through contract work undertaken in the workshop.

The income generated through contracted work varies year to year. The income target identified within the budget is £70,000 in 2011/12. The actual income from contracted work in 2010/11 was £70,713.

The net budget for the Speedwell service (ie the Council's contribution to the service costs) is £341,000.

The proposals in the report, if approved by Cabinet, would result in permanent savings of approximately £100,000 to £120,000 per year pending further market testing.

Grant income for the Work Choice contract would be lost, as would income from contract work.

There would be one-off redundancy costs of approximately £170,000. The payback period would be 18 months.

The suggested future service model would be provided initially by the Local Authority with the longer-term tendered service being commissioned in line with procurement requirements and guidelines.

**(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

The provision of supported employment for disabled people as provided through the Work Choice scheme is not a statutory requirement. However, Slough Borough Council has a statutory duty to commission services for those who meet Adult Social Care eligibility criteria.

The contract with Shaw Trust to provide the Work Choice scheme commenced in October 2010 for a period of five years. The contract can be terminated immediately upon the Shaw Trust giving notice if the supported business ceases or threatens to trade or operate as a supported business. It is understood that the Shaw Trust will invoke the termination provisions of the contract following consultation with the council.

Individual assessments of needs and skills of all workshop operative staff affected have been carried out, and significant levels of support will be given to find alternative employment for them.

The Council will comply with legal requirements for all staff.

**(c) Equalities Impact Assessment**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

The assessment recognises the negative impact that the proposals will have on staff affected, and notes in particular the adverse impact on disabled staff members.

An action plan to mitigate the negative impacts has been developed. This includes significant levels of support to enable displaced staff to access alternative employment options. Individual assessments of needs and skills have been carried out to inform this work.

The proposed new service model will have positive impacts in terms of supporting increased numbers of disabled people who are eligible for Adult Social Care services to access employment, work experience, volunteering, training and skills development.

**(d) Workforce**

There are two elements to the workforce at Speedwell.

There are seven staff in post providing support to disabled people involved in the Work Opportunities scheme and the Work Choice scheme. In addition,

there are 24 Slough Borough Council 'workshop operatives' provided with supported employment through the Work Choice scheme. These are all disabled people.

There will be workforce implications resulting from the options outlined in this report. These will be primarily around staff being served their redundancy notices. However, there will be a consultation process that will be followed whereby staff will be supported through the redeployment process to mitigate against potential redundancies. We will also be seeking additional support for the workshop operatives from external agencies to further identify opportunities outside Slough Borough Council.

## **5 Supporting Information**

### **5.1 Background/Context:**

5.1.1 Over the last four years the Council has implemented an extensive change programme in Adult Social Care to improve outcomes for service users and through developing to improving the range services provided to local people.

5.1.2 A number of new services have been introduced and others redesigned to improve the range of provision available to meet the needs of service users. These include:

- Re provision of residential care services for older people
- Investment in Extra Care facilities
- Establishment of the reablement service
- Reconfiguration of day care services for people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities

5.1.3 These initiatives have proven successful in improving outcomes for service users and have achieved the aims of:

- Reducing the number of people admitted to residential care
- Promoting independence
- Enhancing the integration and engagement of Adult Social Care service users in the wider community

5.1.4 This programme is continuing in order meet changing needs and increasing levels of demand. In order to achieve this in the current financial climate it is essential that any changes in services will need to deliver efficiencies and ensure the most effective use of resources to provide value for money while also delivering improved outcomes for local people within reduced resources

### **5.2 Review of employment support for people with disabilities**

5.2.1 As part of the development and improvement of service provision, a review of employment support for people with disabilities has been undertaken during 2011.

5.2.2 Access to employment, training and skills development is an important issue for all people, however disabled people face a range of additional barriers when seeking employment. These can take a number of forms

including physical barriers to access, additional support requirements and prejudicial attitudes of prospective employers

5.2.3 In undertaking the review the objectives and outcomes to be achieved through any proposed changes to current provision included:

- Increasing the number of disabled people eligible for Adult Social Care services benefitting from support to access employment, work experience, volunteering, education and skills development
- Increasing access to mainstream employment for disabled people
- Delivering improved services within reduced costs

5.2.4 A project group consisting of Council officers was established to undertake the review. Staff, workshop operatives service users and families were informed of the review, and regular meetings with the staff and operatives most directly affected have been held as the review has progressed. Further details of consultation during the review are given in section 11 below.

5.2.5 Assessments of individual skills and social care needs have been completed for all workshop operatives and for users of the work opportunities service.

5.2.6 The review has considered good practice examples from other areas and as well as the national policy context for provision of employment support for disabled people. Further details of national policy issues are set out in section 5.4 below.

5.2.7 Consideration has also been given to value for money issues and costs as well as the service quality and outcomes delivered. These have been balanced against the needs of individuals engaged in the current service and the anticipated future demands of service users.

5.2.8 The project group examined a number of possible options for the future provision of employment support services for disabled people and considered a range of service options taking into account:

- The objective of maximising access to mainstream employment, work experience, training, volunteering and skills development for disabled people, particularly for those eligible for Adult Social Care support
- Increasing the number of people benefitting from services
- Needs and abilities of current service users and staff
- Views of key stakeholders consulted during the review
- Costs of each option and any associated savings

### **5.3 Current Provision:**

5.3.1 Employment support for people with Disabilities is currently provided by the Council through Speedwell Enterprise. The services are located on the Wexham Nursery site. Heating and other utilities for the Speedwell service have been provided through facilities jointly shared with the nursery which closed in August 2011.

- 5.3.2 There are two distinct elements to the service.
- 5.3.3 **Opportunities Group.** This service provides support to 30 service users with Learning Disabilities who are eligible for Adult Social Care services. Referrals come from the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities. Users are placed in employment, volunteering, work experience or colleges for between 1 and 15.5hrs per week. It is based on the Speedwell site and the 'workshop' is used as part of an 'induction' training programme. There is one co-ordinator and one other support post (currently vacant).
- 5.3.4 **Work Choice Group (formerly Workstep programme)** – From September 2010 this service has been provided under contract with Shaw Trust. The contract stipulates 30 places and runs for 5 years with income to the council of £144,000 per year to provide 'supported employment'. This employment is mainly provided in a workshop setting. The funding is used to provide a contribution towards the salary costs of the workshop operatives. All operatives work 21 hours per week. Referrals come through various sources including Job Centre Plus, Shaw Trust and other Local Authorities. People accessing the Work Choice scheme do not need to meet the Fair Access to Care eligibility criteria for Adult Social Care services, though six of the current workshop operatives do meet these criteria.
- 5.3.5 As at the end of August 2011, there were 28 people in supported employment under the Shaw Trust contract, 24 of whom are employed in the workshop and are employees of Slough Borough Council. Of the Local Authority supported employees, 14 are on long-term contracts, and the other 10 are on short-term contracts of up to two years. The other 4 people are employed by other organisations.
- 5.3.6 Of the 28 people supported through the Work Choice scheme, 10 have mental health problems, 12 have a learning disability or learning difficulty and 6 have a physical disability
- 5.3.7 The service has a number of long term and short term commercial contracts with a variety of companies such as Air Bus and Yoplait for packaging, construction and hand finishing of products. There is also a contract under which the operatives put the finishing touches to Greetings cards that are sold in the Royal Palaces, and 'one off' contracts for Children in Need and Comic Relief.
- 5.3.8 In addition to the workshop operatives there are six other Council staff currently employed to manage the service and provide support to the disabled staff.
- 5.3.9 The concept underpinning the Work Choice scheme is one of 'progression' whereby disabled people seeking employment are referred to the Supported Employment provider and are taken on as employees for a period of up to 2 years. During this time they gain experience of the work environment and receive support and training as set out in individual Personal Development Plans with a view to them moving on to mainstream employment. There are additional incentive payments in the contract for any progressions made.

- 5.3.10 The Workshop provided by Speedwell has been in operation since the 1970s. It started life as a factory making mobility carts for the disabled. It therefore pre-dates the Work Choice scheme and as a result does not respond fully to the 'progression' ethos. For example, 14 of the workshop operatives are long standing employees of the Council, some with 20 years continuous service.
- 5.3.11 The gross budget for Speedwell Enterprise is £550,000. When income from the Shaw Trust Work Choice contract and from commercial work undertaken in the workshop is taken into account, the net budget for the service is £341,000.

#### **5.4 Review Findings:**

The review has highlighted a number of key issues related to the objectives and outcomes to be achieved which have informed the options considered and the recommendations for future provision.

##### **5.4.1 Access to employment support for disabled adult social care service users**

The Work Choice scheme is accessed through various sources including Job Centre Plus, Shaw Trust and other Local Authorities. Some of the disabled people supported on this scheme do not live in Slough.

Six workshop operatives meet adult social care eligibility criteria and are already in receipt of care package support with three more receiving supporting people funded support. The other 22 operatives do not meet eligibility criteria.

Access to the Work Opportunities scheme is through the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities. All people referred to the scheme are eligible for Adult Social Care services and come from Slough

Of the two service elements currently provided, the Work Opportunities scheme is therefore better placed and designed to promote access to employment support for Adult Social Care eligible service users.

During 2010/11 Adult Social Care Services in Slough provided support to a total of 1,257 disabled people of working age. This is broken down as:

- Physical disabilities      371
- Learning disabilities      317
- Mental health              569

Many of these service users could benefit from access to services to support them into employment, work experience, volunteering, education, training or skills development.

The current service model is providing a limited number of places and only supports a small proportion of eligible service users.

There are opportunities to increase the number of disabled people eligible for Adult Social Care services benefiting from employment support through refocusing service provision.

There is relatively low turnover and throughput in both the Work Choice and Work Opportunities schemes.

Within the Work Choice scheme, the scope for increasing opportunities for people to access the service is limited by the relatively small number of placements available within the contract, and further restricted as almost half of these are permanently occupied by long-term contracted staff.

The current Work Opportunities model has not had sufficient focus on achieving moving people on through the service and as a result increasing the number of people benefiting.

There is scope to increase throughput in the Work Opportunities scheme and increasing opportunities for more people to benefit from the support provided through a remodelling of the service which gradually reduces and withdraws support where appropriate as placements are secured and service users are settled.

#### **5.4.2 Increasing access to mainstream employment**

During the last five years, 31 people have progressed from the Work Choice scheme into full-time employment. During the same period, 38 people have progressed into part-time employment from the Work Opportunities scheme.

The Work Choice scheme is only partially able to achieve progression into mainstream employment as almost half of the workshop operatives (14) are on long term contracts with the Council which compromises this objective.

24 of the 28 people in supported employment under the Work Choice scheme are based within the workshop at Speedwell rather than in mainstream employment.

The Work Opportunities scheme is therefore best placed to achieve the objective of increasing access to mainstream employment as all the placements arranged are in integrated, community based settings.

Skills assessments have demonstrated that, with appropriate support and advice, those currently benefiting from the services provided at Speedwell Enterprise would be able to access mainstream employment, work experience or volunteering opportunities.

The most recent year from which comparative data is available for analysis is 2009/10 which shows that :

For learning disabilities, Slough's performance in terms of the proportion of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment was 7.5% compared to a South East Average of 10.2%

For mental health, the proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in paid employment Slough's performance was 11.2% compared to a South East average of 6.6%

Performance for both areas increased in 2010/11 rising to 7.9% for learning disabilities and 11.9% for mental health. With regard to mental health

services, there were 94 out of 789 people in contact with secondary mental health services in paid employment. However, only 10 of these people benefited from the services provided in the workshop at Speedwell indicating that this service is not a significant contributor to this performance.

#### **5.4.3 Value for Money and unit costs**

An analysis of unit cost information shows that the overall cost of the current Speedwell service at £555,000 supporting 60 disabled people across the Work Opportunities and Work Choice schemes has a unit cost of £9,250 per disabled person.

There are two support posts (one currently vacant) dedicated to the Work Opportunities scheme supporting 30 disabled people with a salary budget of approximately £51,000

There are five posts specifically dedicated to supporting 30 operatives on the Work Choice scheme with a salary budget of approximately £108,000

The Shaw Trust contract income is used to subsidise the salaries of workshop operatives, but the Council contributes a further £2,670 towards each position. The total subsidy for the Work Choice placements if this is applied to all 30 places on the programme is £80,100

The Work Opportunities scheme is the more cost effective of the two employment support services currently provided, supporting similar numbers to the Work Choice scheme but at much lower cost.

Were the Council to redesign services and replace the workshop model with one based on the Work Opportunities scheme it is anticipated that up to 50% more people could benefit from the service at reduced cost.

#### **5.4.4 National Policy review**

An assessment was undertaken of the current employment support services and their delivery against national policy objectives.

In June 2011 the Government, through the Department for Work and Pensions, published the report 'Getting in, staying in and getting on – Disability employment support fit for the future'. This independent review was conducted by Liz Sayce, the Chief Executive of RADAR which is the UK's leading pan-disability organisation.

In July 2011 the Government, issued a consultation document based on the recommendations made in the review report. Consultation closes on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

Key recommendations in the report include:

- Money should follow the individual so they can work where they choose, rather than the Department funding disability-specific workplaces or facilities. Over time, all specialist disability employment

support should be made available through individual budgets so individuals can select the support that best meets their needs.

- Support should be evidence based with a focus on supporting people into open employment with ongoing and flexible support and rapid job search rather than assuming a series of stepping stones are needed first, with provision for rapid support and adjustments to aid job retention

The review noted that there was ***'total consensus among disabled people's organisations and charities that .. factories were not the model for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'***.

It also concluded that ***'money should be used to support individuals to achieve their employment aspirations in the widest range of jobs and careers, rather than to fund disability specific workplaces or facilities'***.

The review made specific recommendations on the Work Choice programme. These included:

- When existing Work Choice contracts expire, specific guarantees of funding to supported business places should cease so that funding follows people rather than facilities.
- When Work Choice contracts end consideration should be given by the Department for Work and Pensions to rolling this funding into individual budgets with the Access to Work programme. This would simplify the system into one general Work Programme and one individual budget-based programme so individuals have a choice over the support that they most need

The consultation paper states that future decisions about the strategy for supported businesses and the Work Choice programme will be informed by the results of the consultation. It notes that the Work Choice programme is already moving 'away from the direct funding of supported business places, for example, phasing out the direct financial subsidy of supported places in local authority owned businesses'.

Over recent years there has been a general shift away from the provision of supported employment in workshop settings. For example, Work Choice services have been closed in Brent and in Luton.

It is clear that at a national level, the longer term policy aspiration is to provide individually tailored support for disabled people to enable them to access employment in mainstream settings. Local policies must reflect this agenda.

The current Work Choice provision at Speedwell is a disability specific factory model. The recommendations of the national review clearly indicate a move away from such provision.

The Work Opportunities model is more in line with the national policy as it is focused on supporting people into open employment settings.

Any proposed new service model will need to better reflect the national policy direction with the emphasis being placed on supporting access to mainstream employment for disabled people with support tailored to meet individual needs.

#### 5.4.5 **Review Conclusions - The Need for change**

The policy context, objectives and desired outcomes for supporting people with disabilities in terms of employment has changed significantly since the services currently provided by Speedwell Enterprise were established. In particular there is a greater emphasis on providing opportunities for work experience, training and access to mainstream employment to maximise people's life chances and minimise social exclusion.

The current employment support services for disabled people only partly meet these objectives and outcomes.

The Work Opportunities scheme provides access to mainstream work and volunteer placements for people with Learning Disabilities who are eligible for Adult Social Care Services. It has been relatively successful in securing employment for service users and achieves the outcome of integrating service users into the community. However, there is no similar service for people with other disabilities.

Within the Work Choice scheme, a number of the operatives are on short term contracts with the specific aim of progression into mainstream employment. However, there remain fourteen staff on long term contracts. This makes it difficult to achieve the progression and is in conflict with the objective of moving people on into open employment as there is no incentive for staff who are on local authority terms and conditions to move on to other employment. It also limits the number of people who are able to benefit from the service.

Whilst the Work Choice contract provides some funding to the Council to deliver supported employment, significant levels of additional resources are required to fund the salaries of workshop operatives, the support staff and to cover the overheads and general running costs of the factory.

The workshop provides much valued support and activity for the operatives, but it is not a financially viable or sustainable business enterprise. There are relatively small numbers of people who benefit from the service and turnover and progression rates into mainstream employment are low.

Most of the people on the Work Choice scheme are not eligible for Adult Social Care services.

The current services meet the needs of only a small number of disabled Adult Social Care service users who could benefit from employment support.

There are opportunities to increase the numbers benefiting from engagement in these services through service redesign and this could be achieved at a reduced cost.

## **6. Options for future service delivery**

A number of options have been considered during the review. These are summarised below with further detail set out in Appendix 1 and further analysis of the options in Appendix 2.

### **6.1. Option 1 - Maintain the status quo – retain existing service on the current site**

This option would see continuation of the current service on the Wexham Nursery site providing the Work Opportunities programme for people with Learning Disabilities referred through the Adult Social Care team and supported employment placements provided in the workshop under the Work Choice scheme following referral from various sources including; Job Centre Plus, Shaw Trust and other Local Authorities.

This option is not recommended as it:

- Does not maximise opportunities to achieve the objective of supporting people eligible for Adult Social Care services
- Does not have a specific focus on progression into open employment
- Does not enhance integration and engagement with the wider community
- Does not represent best value for money and deliver improved outcomes at reduced cost

### **6.2 Option 2 - Re-provide the existing service in a different location**

This option would see the relocation of the existing service to an alternative site. It would involve additional costs in terms of revenue and/or capital. The service could be located in existing commercial premises (if available and suitable) or in a Council owned building which would require fit-out for workshop provision and adaptations for disability access and use.

This option is not recommended as it:

- Does not maximise opportunities to achieve the objective of supporting people eligible for Adult Social Care services
- Does not have a specific focus on progression into open employment
- Does not enhance integration and engagement with the wider community
- Does not represent best value for money and deliver improved outcomes at reduced cost

### **6.3 Option 3 - Cease all provision of employment support for disabled people**

This option would see the closure of both the Work Opportunities service and the Work Choice programme provided at Speedwell. It would involve redundancy of all support staff and workshop operatives. Service users currently accessing the Work Opportunities schemes as part of their assessed needs would require alternative provision to be made. This could

be funded through Personal Budgets though it would mean some assessed needs would not be met.

This option is not recommended as it:

- Reduces opportunities to achieve the objective of supporting people eligible for Adult Social Care services
- Would remove services from existing users
- Would reduce integration and engagement with the wider community

#### 6.4 **Option 4 - Transfer Supported Employment contract to another provider**

This option would involve the transfer of the current contract between Slough Borough Council and Shaw Trust to provide the Work Choice supported employment programme to another organisation.

This option is not recommended as it:

- Is not permissible under the terms of the contract as set out in national Work Choice policy

#### 6.5 **Option 5 – Remodel employment services building on the benefits of the Work Opportunities service**

This option would build on the Work Opportunities model to provide a more robust and comprehensive service with a greater focus on increasing throughput of the service and increasing the numbers benefiting from employment support. It would involve termination of the Work Choice contract and closure of the workshop. It would result in redundancy for 14 workshop operatives and some of the support staff

The Work Opportunities scheme would be remodelled from the current service relating only to service users with Learning Disabilities to cover other client groups such as Mental Health and Physical Disabilities. The service would be accessed following assessment of needs and be provided as part of an individual's support plan to provide support for adult social care service users to access employment, work experience, training, skills development or volunteering.

The service could be provided either directly by the Council or tendered out to another provider.

This option is recommended as it:

- Increases and maximises opportunities to achieve the objective of supporting people eligible for Adult Social Care services
- Has a focus on supporting people into open employment
- Enhances integration and engagement with the wider community
- Represents good value for money and improves outcomes for service users at reduced cost

## **7. The proposed new service model**

- 7.1. A preferred future service model has been identified. This could be developed in line with option 5 as summarised above.
- 7.2 This option ensures the most effective delivery of the objective to increase the number of disabled people eligible for Adult Social Care services supported into mainstream employment, training, work experience volunteering, and skills development opportunities. It is also the most cost effective of the options considered.
- 7.3 The model is broadly based on the current Work Opportunities service but it is expanded to provide support to all disabled people of working age who are eligible for adult social care services.
- 7.4 The desired outcome for the service and the individual service users is to provide support to seek, secure and maintain mainstream employment where possible. For others, the service will support access to education, training, skills development, work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- 7.5 The support will be tailored to individual needs and aspirations and will have agreed outcomes. As work, training or educational placements are arranged, the level and nature of on-going support required may change over time. The flexibility afforded by Personal Budgets will allow for individually tailored support to be put in place. This will also facilitate progression through the service thus freeing up opportunities for other service users to access the service and thus increasing the numbers of people accessing employment opportunities.
- 7.6 Access to the service would be through a referral from social care teams for adults of working age. These include the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health services
- 7.7 The service would need to develop partnerships to help to develop the work market and create in-roads and opportunities for people with disabilities to access mainstream employment and or voluntary work.
- 7.8 This will include the establishment of a disability work forum made up of local businesses and mainstream employers as well as other agencies involved in skills development and employment preparation such as Job Centre Plus and adult education services. Such a forum would facilitate greater co-ordination across agencies and a range of employment initiatives and would streamline access to employment opportunities. It would also foster greater understanding of disability in the workplace thus going some way to overcoming barriers that can exist in some areas, as well as highlighting some of the unique talent and commitment that people with disabilities can bring to the workplace.
- 7.9 The service would need to include provision of or access to a training work assessment space that would give individuals the experience of what it might be like to work in mainstream employment. The skills and of service users would be assessed for a short, time-limited period in a range of relevant work experience activities which would support the identification of

the individual's aptitudes and strengths and planning of further skills development where required. Employment, education, training or volunteering placements would be arranged following this assessment period.

- 7.10 The service could be delivered in a variety of ways, but would need to include support including confidence building, travel training, workplace etiquette and skills testing and training. The service would also need to identify employers willing to take referrals and offer work placements and jobs.
- 7.11 Accommodation requirements for the service include Office Space, Interview Room/s and a Training Room / Work Assessment Space. The facility would need to be fully accessible, including toilets with disability access.
- 7.12 This model is designed to provide support to a wide range of disabled people to enable them to access the most appropriate employment, work experience, volunteering or skills development opportunities. The support will be flexible and tailored to individual needs to deliver clearly identified outcomes. It will also ensure that resources are effectively targeted to support the longer term aspirations of service users rather than funding disability specific facilities.
- 7.13 Such a model will enable more disabled people eligible for Adult Social Care services to benefit from support to access employment and other opportunities than are supported by the current service model with this being achieved at reduced costs

## **8 Options for the delivery of the new service:**

- 8.1 There a range of possible options for the delivery of the proposed new service. These include:
1. Provided directly by the Local Authority
  2. Provided by an external partner as a discreet employment support service
  3. Provided by an external partner as part of a wider service model offering a range of day opportunities for people with disabilities
- 8.2 The long term intention is to deliver the new expanded Work Opportunities model through an external provider. Whilst this service will have a specific focus on supporting disabled people into employment, work experience, volunteering and skills development, there will be synergies with other day opportunity support provided to Adult Social Care service users. Further work and market testing will need to be undertaken to identify the most appropriate and cost effective model for the longer term provision of day opportunities including employment support for disabled people. Formal procurement and tender processes will also need to be followed after the initial market testing.
- 8.3 It is therefore proposed that a staged process be adopted to implement the new service model during the coming months. This would involve:

- a Cabinet decision in October 2011 to approve the future service model and to commence market testing of the delivery options for the future service model. This exercise is to be undertaken alongside similar market testing and tendering for day care provision following consultation.
- b Cabinet decision in October 2011 to withdraw from the Work Choice contract and close the workshop as part of the future option model.
- c Formal 30 day consultation with affected staff and their trade union representatives from the end of October to the end of November 2011. To assist with the understanding of the proposals staff briefing sessions will be arranged as close as possible to the launch of the formal consultation document. Each of these sessions will be followed by a question and answer session through which managers will aim to improve the understanding of the process, clarify the aims of the proposals and to allay any fears and uncertainty regarding the redeployment and further support that will be available.
- d Support to all staff at risk to identify redeployment opportunities, and for workshop operatives specialist support to find alternative employment, work placements and training opportunities or implementing other support as required, including formal care packages. This will continue throughout the period of the consultation and up to the date of implementation of the proposals.
- e Identify and secure an alternative venue from which to provide the current Work Opportunities service and relocate staff and resources required by the end of March 2012. This will not involve additional revenue or capital costs as staff can be relocated to existing council facilities such as Day Centres or other office bases from which support can be provided and where service users can be seen.
- f Close workshop and cease all service provision on the Wexham Nursery site by the end of March 2012
- g Commence market testing of expanded Work Opportunities service in February 2012
- h Tender for new enhanced work opportunities model in April 2012
- i Implement new service October 2012

## **9. Transition Arrangements: Supporting Staff with disabilities:**

9.1 As part of the review process the needs of all workshop operatives have been assessed to identify their eligibility for adult social care services and any care needs they have. The assessments have also considered the work skills and employment aspirations of operatives.

9.2 The assessments have shown that

- The operatives on short-term contracts are generally younger than those on long-term contracts and they have aspirations to work in mainstream employment rather than in the supported workshop
- The operatives will need substantial support to enable them to access alternative employment options
- The social aspect of working in the workshop at Speedwell is important for the operatives, especially for those on long term contracts

- A number of operatives may need some on-going support, especially during the initial period, to enable them to settle into and maintain alternative employment
- Most operatives have access to support from family or external agencies to assist with correspondence and financial issues to replace the support currently provided by staff at Speedwell
- The operatives have a range of skills and abilities, and with appropriate support and advice, they would be able to access mainstream employment, work experience or volunteering opportunities

9.3 If the recommendation to close the workshop is resolved, then substantial support will be provided to the support staff and workshop operatives to find alternative employment or other meaningful activity.

9.4 As part of the consultation process with staff, redeployment options will be considered for all affected staff in line with the Council's policies. Staff will also be invited to submit Expressions of Interest for voluntary redundancy or early retirement.

9.5 In addition, specific support to find other employment will be provided to workshop operatives both by Council staff and specialist workers from the Shaw Trust and Job Centre Plus. This will take place from the end of the consultation period until the end of March 2012.

9.6 Meetings with Shaw Trust and Job Centre Plus have indicated a commitment to co-ordinate additional capacity and specialist expertise to work closely with individual workshop operatives to support them in securing alternative employment.

9.7 Following formal consultation with all affected workshop operatives concerted work will be undertaken during the coming months to identify alternative employment opportunities as the most desired outcome. The individual needs reviews and skills assessments undertaken for each operative have provided useful background information and evidence to support this work.

9.8 In cases where alternative employment cannot be found, other arrangements for work experience placement, volunteering or training and skills development will be provided.

9.9 Options will also be explored for facilitating and maintaining contact between workshop operatives to sustain the valuable social contact that is valued by staff.

## **10 Consultation:**

10.1 Throughout the review there has been extensive consultation with staff including workshop operatives, Trade Unions, family members/carers and other key stakeholders.

10.2 At the start of the review, briefing sessions were held with support staff in January 2011 and with support staff, workshop operatives and family members in February.

- 10.3 Regular meetings have been held with support staff and workshop operatives during the review period which have been attended by Senior Council officers involved in the review project group. These meetings have provided regular updates on options under consideration and have been used to seek the views of staff and operatives.
- 10.4 A workshop for staff, workshop operatives, other service users, family members/carers and wider stakeholders engaged in work to support disabled people into employment and promote skills development was held on 13<sup>th</sup> May. Over fifty people attended the workshop which provided an update on the review and sought the views of participants in terms of a vision for the future, identifying the type of support needed and preferred options for the future.
- 10.5 Meetings were held with Trade Unions in March, May and August 2011 to brief them on the review, and there was Trade Union representation at the workshop in May.
- 10.6 The review has also been a regular item for discussion at the Disability Forum.
- 10.7. Throughout the consultation a range of views and issues have been highlighted. These include:
- There is a need to better co-ordinate employment support and skills development work
  - Support is needed in terms of preparation of CVs and job applications and interview training
  - There is a need to provide work placement and training, as well as access to volunteering, skills development and mainstream employment opportunities
  - Work needs to be undertaken with employers to raise their awareness of disability issues
  - Support is needed for people in work placements
  - The work opportunities scheme should be available to all Adult Social Care client groups to enable and support a wider range of people with disabilities to access employment, work placements, volunteering and skills development
- 10.8 In terms of the Work Choice scheme which provides supported employment within the workshop, the strong view of support staff, workshop operatives and their family members is that this service should continue in its present form and ideally in its current location. This is the preferred option of these groups, with a second preference being relocation of the existing service to another site.
- 10.9 The consultation with support staff, workshop operatives and their family members has shown that they value the sense of purpose that their employment in the workshop brings to their lives, and that there is a strong feeling of community amongst the workforce.

- 10.10 They have also expressed their concerns about losing their jobs should the preferred option be one which does not include continuation of the Work Choice scheme and the workshop.
- 10.11 Consultation on the emerging options and proposals for the future has also taken place with support staff, workshop operatives their families and other service users with disabilities. This took place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011. A verbal report on issues raised will be given at the panel meeting.
- 10.12 It is recognised and acknowledged that the proposed service model does not reflect the preferred option of the staff and operatives currently employed within the workshop at Speedwell.
- 10.13 However, any change to the current arrangements would not meet their expressed preferences other than relocation of the existing service.
- 10.14 The review project group has taken account of the views expressed through the consultation exercises, has given them careful consideration and taken them into account in reaching a decision on the preferred model to be considered by Cabinet.
- 10.15 The project group fully respects and recognises the views expressed by the staff and workshop operatives. However, when identifying a preferred model the delivery against policy objectives to promote wider access employment, training, volunteering and skills development for disabled people as well as financial issues and the views of other stakeholders indicate that change is required.

## **11.0 Conclusion**

- 11.1 The review of employment support services for disabled people has considered a number of possible options for the future delivery of such services to facilitate and support access to mainstream employment, work experience, volunteering, training and skills development for disabled people, particularly those eligible for Adult Social Care support.
- 11.2 The review has taken account of national and local policy developments, as well as considering the impacts on service users, staff and other stakeholders. Due consideration has also been given to financial issues to ensure the most effective use of available resources.
- 11.3 Throughout the review there has been considerable engagement and communication with service users, staff, their families and union representatives.
- 11.4 Health Scrutiny Panel is asked to note and consider the review findings and the options and recommendations for the future.
- 11.5 The Panel is also asked to consider and comment on the following recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October
- 11.6 That the panel note and consider the review findings and the options and recommendations for the future

- 11.7 Consider and comment on the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October
- a That the Council implement a new model for the provision of employment support for disabled people and determine the current supported business on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012
  - b That the Council facilitate the termination of the Work Choice contract with Shaw Trust to provide supported employment, with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012
  - c That formal 30 day consultation with affected support staff and workshop operatives and their trade union representatives be undertaken from the end of October to the end of November
  - d That comprehensive support be offered to displaced workshop operatives to assist them in finding alternative employment where possible or other suitable day time activities
  - e That support staff and other council employees affected will follow existing procedures and processes concerning redeployment and redundancy
  - f That the current Work Opportunities scheme continue to be provided directly by the council beyond April 2012
  - g That an extended Work Opportunities service for all disabled people of working age eligible for Adult Social Care services be implemented during 2012
  - h That the new service model is commissioned in line with procurement guidelines and legislation alongside other day opportunities services following consultation and market testing.
  - i That the Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing in consultation with the lead Commissioner be delegated to agree the provider of the new service following the tender process

**12 Appendices Attached**

Appendix 1 – Detail of options considered  
Appendix 2 Summary of options – risks and benefits

**13 Background Papers**

None