

**Options Appraisal**

**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.

**1a Achieving outcomes and objectives:**

The current model of service only partially meets the objective of maximising employment opportunities for disabled people. The work opportunities scheme delivers against this objective for people with Learning Disabilities. The Work Choice scheme achieves the objective in part for all disabled groups, though it is only able to provide to a limited capacity with little turnover. There is limited access to mainstream work opportunities as half of the placements are long-term employees for whom there are no progression plans.

**1b Staffing issues:**

There are no staffing implications arising out of this option

**1c Financial issues:**

Total gross costs for the service of £555,000 would increase with additional rental costs of £25,000 which have previously been in part subsidised through property services

There would be additional one-off capital costs of £20,000 for relocation of utilities and other services previously provided through the Wexham nursery services

No savings would be delivered and costs would increase

**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.

**2a Achieving outcomes and objectives:**  
As option 1 above. The current model of service only partially meets the objective of maximising employment opportunities for disabled people. The work opportunities scheme delivers against this objective for people with Learning Disabilities. The Work Choice scheme achieves the objective in part for all disabled groups, though it is only able to provide to a limited capacity with little turnover. There is limited access to mainstream work opportunities as half of the placements are long-term employees for whom there are no progression plans.

**2b Staffing issues:**  
Staff would need to be consulted about relocating to a new site and offered any support that may be required through the relocation process. However, there would be no staffing implications arising out of this option.

**2c Financial issues:**  
Total gross costs for the service of £555,000 would increase with a requirement for additional premises costs. Rental and other costs of an equivalent facility including workshop space are estimated at £81,500 per annum. Additional capital costs may be required to provide appropriate facilities to support a disabled workforce costing approximately £30,000.

If a suitable council owned building can be identified for the relocated service, one-off capital costs of £75,000 would be needed for fit out and disability access works.

There would also be one-off costs of approximately £10,000 associated with moving of factory machinery and other equipment

No savings would be delivered and costs would increase

**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.

**3a Achieving outcomes and objectives:**

The ending of all employment support services for disabled people would have negative impacts on the objective of maximising opportunities to access mainstream employment. Disabled people, including those eligible for Adult Social Care support would be reliant on services provided through Job Centre plus and agencies such as the Shaw Trust. The Council would have no control over the operation and effectiveness of these services and therefore limited ability to influence delivery and achievement of objectives.

**3b Staffing implications:**

All support staff and workshop operatives would be made redundant through this option. Alternative support arrangements would need to be implemented for workshop operatives. Some may be eligible for adult social care services, others are not. All displaced staff would be considered for redeployment in line with council policies and the workshop operatives would also be offered support and assistance to identify alternative employment options.

**3c Financial implications:**

There would be redundancy costs of up to £207,000 due to the loss of all support staff and workshop operatives.

Alternative support for those currently using the work opportunities service would also need to be found, which may incur additional costs though this is not yet quantified

There would be on-going savings of £341,000 per year (current net budget)

**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.

Discussions have been held with Shaw Trust to explore the viability of this option. However, under the terms of the contract as set out in national Work Choice policy such a transfer is not allowed.

**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.

**5a Achieving outcomes and objectives:**

This option will support the delivery of the policy to maximise access to mainstream employment for people with disabilities assessed as eligible for Adult Social Care services.

Expansion of the Work Opportunities model to cover other groups in addition to Learning Disabilities will broaden the range and increase the numbers of people who can benefit from the service. The service model also supports increased levels of throughput and turnover enabling more people to access support.

**5b Staffing implications:**

The workshop operatives and associated support staff would be made redundant through this option.

Two support staff and part-time administrative support would be retained to run the existing work opportunities service.

Additional staffing comprising of two support workers would be required for the expanded work opportunities model if directly provided.

Alternative support arrangements will need to be implemented for workshop operatives.

All displaced support staff would be considered for redeployment in line with council policies.

Workshop operatives will also be provided with individualised, comprehensive support and assistance to identify alternative employment options.

Positive and constructive discussions have been held with representatives of Shaw Trust and Job Centre Plus which have shown a commitment to provide intensive and co-ordinated support to operatives to find alternative employment.

#### 5c **Financial Issues**

Retaining the existing work opportunities service as a directly provided service supporting Learning Disability service users only would incur redundancy costs of approximately £170,000 due to the loss of most support staff and workshop operatives.

Expansion of the work opportunities service as a directly provided service supporting additional groups would require additional staffing which would add to revenue costs but may reduce redundancy costs.

Income from the Shaw Trust contract and from contracted work undertaken in the workshop would be lost

An alternative base for the provision of the work opportunities service would be needed. This is likely to be possible from within the council's existing property portfolio as only limited office space is required for the work opportunities service. There would be minimal revenue cost.

On-going annual savings of £257,000 would be achieved if the existing work opportunities model is retained. Savings would reduce to approximately £100,000 to £120,000 if the expanded work opportunities model is provided.