

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Health Committee – 4 November 2015

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WESTBANK – FIRST YEAR REVIEW AND COMMENTARY UPON EMPLOYABILITY FUNCTION

Joint Report by Director (Environment) and Director (Housing and Community Care)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report builds upon a report presented to the Environment Committee in March of this year, detailing the progress made in establishing a Social Enterprise at the Westbank site, Perth, as a partnership exercise between Perth and Kinross Council and the Shaw Trust. The report also reviews the achievements made in the first year of the Enterprise's operation and outlines future plans for activities at the site.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The creation of a Social Enterprise at Westbank Depot, Perth was a proposal originating from the Housing and Community Care Transformation Project on Employability. The project was developed in parallel with approved savings in the Environment Service budget in relation to withdrawing from direct plant nursery provision at Westbank. The project has been developed jointly between the Environment Service, Housing and Community Care and Education and Children's Services.
- 1.2 As part of Perth and Kinross Council's Transformation Programme agreed by Council in June 2010, Housing and Community Care undertook to review and transform its approach to providing employability services for those people furthest away from the labour market. Following a feasibility study in 2011, the Council concluded that a social enterprise would be an effective model to take forward, with the emphasis on commercial viability, and continuous throughput of people learning employability skills.
- 1.3 The Council subsequently undertook a partner development exercise to identify a host organisation for such a social enterprise, based around horticulture and traditional building skills, to be located at Westbank. The intention was to provide employment and training opportunities for vulnerable people currently supported by the Council, including individuals supported by Youth and Criminal Justice Services, those recovering from mental ill-health, and adults with learning difficulties.
- 1.4 The national charity, Shaw Trust, was selected as the preferred partner, and drafted a business plan in 2012, for the launch of the Social Enterprise and its early development. Supported by Council investment in the form of funding, approval was given in 2013, for a lease of the Westbank Nursery, and access

to meet existing Council service requirements (e.g. plant provision) (Report numbers 13/122 and 13/225 refer). The new venture called “Westbank Enterprises” was given a “soft launch” on 14 February 2014, with a formal launch by John Swinney MSP on 23 May 2014.

- 1.5 This exciting initiative is already beginning to make a positive difference to people’s lives, as well as contributing to Perth and Kinross’s reputation for award winning floral displays and high environmental standards.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

Governance

- 2.1 Both the Council and the Shaw Trust have worked together to develop arrangements which secure the governance and organisational management for the Partnership. This includes:
- (a) An overall Partnership Agreement between the Shaw Trust and the Council. This was signed by Councillor Alan Grant, Depute Leader of the Council, and Richard Clifton on behalf of Shaw Trust on 14 February 2014 at the “soft” launch.
 - (b) A Service Level Agreement (SLA) for plant nursery services was agreed for the calendar year 2014. This gave flexibility to amend the specification for the year 2 SLA. A new SLA has been agreed for 2015.
 - (c) An SLA was also agreed for the provision of employability services, between the Shaw Trust and HCC.
 - (d) Heads of terms have been agreed. A lease is in the process of being agreed for the site at Westbank for the period 1 November 2013 to 30 October 2033 with break points at 2, 4, 6, 10 and 15 years. These break points require a 6 month period of notice.
 - (e) Two former Council staff have transferred under TUPE to the Shaw Trust, and are making a substantial contribution to the success of the venture. A long standing member of Nursery staff with over 40 years’ Service with Perth and Kinross Council also continues to work at Westbank.
- 2.2 The Partnership is managed by a Strategic Board, jointly chaired by senior management of the Council and Shaw Trust; and an Operational Group, which is chaired by the Shaw Trust Enterprise Manager. These groups meet on a monthly basis. The day to day management on site is undertaken by the Enterprise Manager, seconded on a part time basis from Perth and Kinross Council, who reports to the Shaw Trust National Manager for Scotland.

- 2.3 Shaw Trust procedures and processes ensure accurate recording for all Enterprise activities including the financial records, staff training; health and safety and employment records.

Promotion of the Enterprise

- 2.4 Considerable work has been undertaken to raise awareness and promote the new Social Enterprise. The soft launch and main launch events in 2014 included elected members, parliamentarians, local businesses, and voluntary groups.
- 2.5 The Enterprise Manager and Employment and Training Adviser have actively networked and promoted the Enterprise to a wide and diverse range of potential external stakeholders including NHS; PKAVS; Castle Huntly Prison and cross service Council teams such as Learning Disability, Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol, and Criminal Justice services. Another Social Enterprise and a registered charity have both expressed interest in relocating to the Westbank site. The Enterprise is also a member of the wider Employability Network in Perth and Kinross, and as such is working in partnership with 32 other partners to progress employability for those furthest from the job market.
- 2.6 The Enterprise staff play an active role in the Perth and Kinross Employability Network and the Enterprise is a member of Perthshire Chamber of Commerce.
- 2.7 The Enterprise benchmarks with other Shaw Trust horticultural Social Enterprises, and has recently been visited by the CEO of Wise Employment, Australia, which supports 36,000 job seekers annually to reach their employment goals.
- 2.8 Westbank Enterprises has a brand logo "People who Grow". This branding is used in the Enterprise's communications, staff clothing, vehicles and all promotional materials.

Employability

- 2.9 The employability SLA has seen 69 referrals into the Enterprise, with two of these referrals going on to supported business placements.

Six people with disabilities have moved into full time employment; 3 are in placements; 2 progressed to volunteering; 4 progressed to Work Choice; 2 into training; 1 completed qualifications; 4 volunteer mentors working in the Nursery.

WE has also trained 4 Council Modern Apprentices and provided employment for 2.

The teams on the Westbank site collectively manage a multifaceted site of 3 teams, with 17 employees and 300 - 400 unpaid work clients.

- 2.10 The Enterprise contributes resources and staff training to the modern apprenticeship programme. A small team of volunteer mentors, who work with the Enterprise Assistants during their day to day activities, have been signed up to the Enterprise volunteering programme. Shaw Trust has recently appointed an experienced Volunteer Co-ordinator for Scotland to support the volunteers with training, encourage new recruits and ensure that their valuable contribution is rewarding.
- 2.11. More recently, Westbank Enterprises (WE) has started working with the Council's Parking Services team to enhance car parks across Perth and Kinross in partnership with the local communities, and with assistance from the Unpaid Work Team. Enterprise Assistants working in the project get an opportunity to engage with the public, building their confidence and employability skills, whilst the improvements to the car parks enhance the image of Perth and Kinross amongst travellers as they arrive at their destination.

Employability – Housing and Community Care Service Users

- 2.12 In the initial year of the Social Enterprise's existence, a total of 38 referrals were received from staff in various activity areas within the Housing and Community Care service. . In practice, however, a small proportion of those referred to the Enterprise chose to pursue the Employability opportunity.

After analysis of the underlying reasons, managers from both the Shaw Trust and from the Council have concluded there were three key reasons for the low conversion of referrals, during the Enterprise's first year, into employability placements, as follows:

- The activity in which Community Care service users were engaged prior to referral to Westbank may have been consistent with the goal of employability, but the actual tasks in which they were engaged generally had little connection to horticulture
- The lack of 'pre-employability' opportunities for work at Westbank further complicated the challenge of building a relationship between prospective referrals and the staff at the Enterprise
- The existence of a gap between the skill set of service users referred and the competencies required by the Social Enterprise

In response to these challenges, managers from Community Care have now established 'on-site' work teams at Westbank whose members will contribute to the general work effort on site and, thereby, gain a better understanding of the expectations of them, should they subsequently be offered an Employability work placement there. These Work Teams will seek to support and expand the work of the Enterprise and, where possible, to link it to the work of other community groups. In the current year, the number of direct referrals from Community Care has dropped significantly, but the proportion subsequently sustained in employability work has risen.

Plants provision and horticultural quality

- 2.13 The plants provided by WE generally met the requirements specified from the Council, local communities and businesses with the majority of customers satisfied with the quality of the plants provided. WE also recognised there was a limited amount of negative feedback about the quality of some plants during 2014. This will be addressed with the social enterprise introducing a quality assurance procedure in 2015. Westbank Enterprises have met the terms of the SLA for plant provision during this first year. It was also remarkable that the WE team also successfully fulfilled the additional demands placed on them by the extraordinary challenges of 2014.
- 2.14 2014 was a unique year for Perth and Kinross, with the Royal visit by the Duke and Duchess of Strathearn, the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay, the 2014 Ryder Cup and Junior Ryder Cup attracting unprecedented attention on the area. Westbank Enterprises were at the centre of providing floral displays for all these events, along with the associated community celebrations. Other activities supported by the Enterprise's floral displays included Scottish National Badminton Championships and the Referendum count in Perth.
- 2.15 It was also a special year for Perth and Kinross communities, with Perth City and Pitlochry both winning the highest level of award – Gold Medals in the 2014 Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom Awards competition; Coupar Angus winning the top award of "Champion of Champions" in the Beautiful Scotland competition and both Muthill and Coupar Angus nominated to represent Scotland in the 2015 RHS Britain in Bloom Awards. All those communities were supplied with plants produced by Westbank Enterprises.
- 2.16 Other notable achievements during 2014 for Westbank Enterprises included winning a Gold Medal and Trophy for the Best New Floral Exhibitor at the Gardening Scotland 2014 exhibition in June last year. The winning floral display was produced by a partnership led by the Enterprise, with input from the Community Safety Unpaid Work Team and volunteers from Beautiful Perth. The 3 day show attracted 40,000 visitors and the display – "Perthshire Welcomes the Ryder Cup" was featured on BBC's Beechgrove Garden. As well as promoting the area, the Gold Medal sets a recognised quality standard for future Westbank customers.
- 2.17 The Enterprise was also successful in reaching the finals in the Perthshire Chamber of Commerce Star Awards in the Category "Commitment to the Community" sponsored by RBS. After only 11 months trading as an Enterprise, it was a considerable achievement for all involved.

Financial Position

- 2.18 The current trading position is that the Enterprise is operating within budget for the year.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Westbank Social Enterprise continues to grow and proposals for developing into the next stage of the Enterprise are now in place. Consultation with potential additional external partners, including NHS; Scottish Prison Service; TRELLIS; Police and Fire Service are due to start shortly. As a precursor, however, consultation with certain Community Groups, the Shaw Trust and Managers from Housing and Community Care is shortly to take place around further development of the Westbank site involving Housing and Community service users and linking to a Healthy Eating Promotion Initiative within our communities.
- 3.2 Only part of the Westbank site is currently used by WE. A workshop took place on 17 February 2015 to develop creative and innovative ideas about the future direction for Westbank, WE and the extended partnership based around developing this community asset as a centre for manufacturing, retail, education and care, with the aim of:
- Reducing inequality
 - Increasing wellbeing
 - Improving opportunities for employability
- 3.3 A further report will be submitted to the relevant Committee(s) with recommendations arising from this work.
- 3.4 The original Public Social Partnership Agreement (PSP) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) were for the period of two calendar years, 2014 and 2015. Following this period, it was proposed that the Council would procure plant provision services to potential employability services from 1 January 2016.
- 3.5 As 2014 was such an exceptional year, in terms of local events, the Westbank Enterprise has not experienced a normal trading year so far in 2015. For this reason, until the remaining Service Level Agreement between the Environment Service and the Shaw Trust is reviewed towards the end of 2015, it is difficult for colleagues in TES to assess their tender specification and procurement approach.
- 3.6 As a result, it is proposed that the PSP be extended for a further calendar year (to the 31 December 2016) in order to review WE's performance over the original 2 year term and prepare the required tender documentation and procurement process.
- 3.7 The extension of the PSP to 31 December 2016 would allow the tender to be released early in 2016, with the evaluation process undertaken during the summer with the contract award made by October 201.
- 3.8 It is also proposed to develop part of the Westbank site, previously used for allotments, as a community garden area with direct links to health promotion and improving diet within certain local communities. This initiative will be

linked to those creative and innovative ideas regarding future direction for Westbank noted at 3.2 above.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The transition to the Westbank Enterprises social enterprise is a ground-breaking project for the Council.
- 4.2 The first year has proven to be successful in terms of the partnership between the Shaw Trust and the Council, and this has been reflected in the achievements detailed in section 3 above.
- 4.3 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) Note the progress made in year 1, both in the establishment and subsequent delivery of the Westbank Enterprises' social enterprise.
 - (ii) Agree to the future actions proposed in Section 3 of this report.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	No
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	No

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 At this stage there are no asset management implications. Options are being considered in relation to Phase 2 of the development, which may impact on Council owned land, but any proposals will be developed for approval in a subsequent report.

3. Assessments

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation:
- The opportunities arising from this Social Enterprise should support employability and life chances for a range of people who are currently furthest from the jobs market.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. No further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.3 There are no issues in relation to sustainability.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The governance for the Enterprise is detailed in section 2 of the report.

Risk

- 3.5 The risks are dealt with by the Strategic Board, and Operational Group, as part of the management arrangements for the Enterprise.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Service Director (Education and Children's Services), the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Democratic Services have been consulted on the preparation of this report.

External

- 4.2 The Shaw Trust has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Communication issues have been dealt with in the main report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (a) Report to Housing and Community Care on 13 March 2013, entitled "Social Enterprise Transformation Project (Report No 13/122)
- (b) Report to the Property Sub Committee on 15 May 2013, entitled "Westbank Depot, Perth – Lease of Part (Report No 13/225)

3. APPENDICES

There are no appendices in this report