

Report of: Head of Employment and Skills

Report to: South (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 15th October 2012

Subject: White Rose Learning Centre Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Point, is a new service offer located at the White Rose Shopping Centre. It will offer a range of services designed to connect young people and adults to learning and employment opportunities in the retail sector in White Rose and beyond.
2. Partnership work with Land Securities, Leeds City College, Jobcentre Plus and the Council has enabled the refurbishment and re-launch of the former study support centre at White Rose to provide local people with access to employment and skills support to connect to opportunities in retail, a key sector in local economy.

Recommendations

3. The Area Committee notes the content of this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the employment and skills development opportunities for young people and adults at the White Rose facility .
- 1.2 To provide an overview of proposed developments at the centre.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The White Rose facility was originally used as a Study Support Centre, offering Out of Hours Learning opportunities to pupils from local high schools. It was provided by the developer, Land Securities, as part of the S106 planning obligations on the original development. It had been operating successfully for a number of years but this opportunity ceased due to the loss of a number of DfE funding streams, previously drawn down by Children's Services. A number of staff deployed to deliver the service were released and the full Study Support offer ceased in August 2011.
- 2.2 It was agreed to establish a new partnership to restore the facility and broaden the focus of learning activity taking place. The partnership includes the Council, LCC, (Employment and Skills and Children's Services) Leeds City College, LCCol, Jobcentre Plus, JCP and Land Securities, LS. It reflects the intention to join up a coherent, bespoke learning offer for 16+ young people and adults with employment opportunities within the White Rose Centre and beyond. In line with a refreshed focus is a new name – The Point – to be officially launched in October 2012.
- 2.3 The Point Steering Group comprises:
 - Councillor Kim Groves, Chair, Leeds City Council
 - Alison Niven, Retail Operations Director, North, Scotland and London, Land Securities
 - Jane Hopkins, Head of Employment and Skills, Leeds City Council
 - Gary Milner, Lead – Skills for Life, Leeds City Council
 - Ann Marie Spry, Vice Principal - Adult, Community & Higher Education, Leeds City College
 - Tracey Greig, Employment Leeds, Leeds City Council
 - Alison France, Employer and Partnership Manager, Jobcentre Plus

The Steering Group is supported by an Operational Group which mirrors its organisational representation, with the addition of the National Careers Service.

3 Main issues

3.1 Skills Training and Support

- 3.1.1 The facility comprises a 15 place learning 'suite' with ICT resources and group space and an informal reception area. There is also a small office space for break out or confidential work. In summary, there are two strands to the skills training and support offer:

- **A post 16 offer including retail and complementary learning** offering opportunities to those young people who choose a vocational route after leaving school and adults seeking further skills development, delivered by LCCol.
- **Information, advice and guidance (IAG), signposting and jobsearch support**
Delivered by LCC Employment and Skills Service, JCP and the National Careers Service, NCS. This will be fully operational at the end of October when the centre had Wi Fi installed, enabling a full service offer by all partners

The post 16 skills offer is wide ranging and will include a learning package for young people from Entry Level 3 through to Level 3. Offering a broad range is critical as it is acknowledged that there is something of a challenge in marketing this learning area to young people in particular. It is one of the less popular vocational subjects, with accreditation commonly being perceived as unnecessary in terms of gaining employment in this field.

3.1.2 For those aged 16-18, the offer for learning and work preparation can include:

- An Apprenticeship route for those with the potential to achieve a Level 2 qualification. With a preparatory route, ahead of a full Apprenticeship, it offers a range of starting points and can include Apprenticeships up to Level 3.
- A vocational qualification route for those seeking a more diverse learning opportunity or those who may not have the potential to achieve a full Apprenticeship framework, eg Diploma opportunities.
- For those in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), often due to vulnerable status, work experience can be available for 2-8 weeks, extended to 12 where there is an offer of progression onto an Apprenticeship.

3.1.3 For those 18 and over, the offer is equally diverse but the pathways available to an individual are dependent on their status and eligibility. Those in receipt of an active benefit namely JSA or Employment Support Allowance, (ESA Work Support Group), will be expected to participate in one of the Get Britain Working Measures or if they remain workless they will receive a mandatory referral to the Work Programme.

- LCCol's '*Routeway to Work*' course is available prior to or as part of the DWP Work Programme. It offers 12 weeks of part time classroom based preparation for employment in a range of customer service occupations including Security, Hospitality, Retail and Call Centres at Level 1.
- For those closer to the labour market and not currently engaged in the Work Programme, a Sector Based Work Academy, SBWA could also be available. Lasting for 2-6 weeks a SBWA includes:
 - Pre employment training – vocational and/or generic employability skills
 - Work experience
 - A guaranteed interview

- 3.1.4 The IAG, individualised jobsearch support and signposting will offer personalised, complementary support to those engaged on learning provision within The Point but also provide drop in and by appointment support for those who require short term or specific one to one delivery. The joint expertise of JCP advisors, the National Careers Service and Employment and Skills staff will provide a comprehensive and quality service offer.
- 3.1.5 The key recruitment mechanism to date has been through Jobcentre Plus referral of customers 18 years plus to the Routeway and SBWA opportunities. These learning packages have been developed in response to identified needs, with particular input from South Leeds and Morley Jobcentres. The recruitment of young people is most manageable and effective through Leeds City College's established processes. The Point provides a local venue to those young people applying for mainstream vocational opportunities. It is anticipated that as the The Point becomes established it will develop gain recognition and improve its profile and the opportunities for referral and access for adults will open up further.
- 3.1.6 Since the facility became available on a full time basis at the end of July 2012 the first 12 week opportunity, Routeway to Security, has concluded. It recruited and retained 15 learners aged 18-55. 6 learners were from LS11, 5 from LS 27 and the remainder from LS 8, 15 and 12. All learners were referred by JCP and tracking employment outcomes for these learners is underway.
- 3.1.7 A Routeways to Retail opportunity and part of LCCol's Diploma in Retail commenced in late September. SBWA's are planned for two White Rose employers, Argos and Next with The Point being used as an interview facility for both.

3.2 Employer Engagement

- 3.2.1 In developing the employer focus, there has been considerable work undertaken along with Jobcentre Plus and Land Securities, to engage the White Rose employers.
- 3.2.2 Intelligence from Land Securities along with other stakeholders indicates that the successful engagement of employers will be a significant challenge. Aside from the general economic climate which has substantially impacted the volume and calibre of candidates for vacancies, White Rose vacancies hold an additional attraction in terms of accessibility, free parking and the compact, quality shopping experience from which employees can benefit. Employers experience no problem at all with recruitment. It is critical therefore, that in communicating the offer, the partnership focuses on:
- the local dimension,
 - potential improvements to staff retention due to the investment made by candidates prior to employment
 - employer influence of the learning offer and their opportunity to 'test out' employees
 - the fit with the national drive to realise a step change in the fortunes of out of work young people particularly, within our disadvantaged communities.

3.2.3 A number of employers have national accounts with JCP and so links are already established. The Point partnership and facilities are therefore able to enhance the recruitment support offer available to the employer, building on the success of established JCP 'products' such as SBWA's.

3.2.4 Additionally, there are Employment and Skills obligations attached to the current expansion of White Rose through the Section 106 agreement and the Employment Leeds team are working to ensure these are met. These obligations include jobs and work experience opportunities.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The Steering Group, involving a number of stakeholders, has led the work to develop The Point and the services to be offered from the centre. Work is ongoing through the Employment and Skills service and JCP to take forward the dialogue with the centre's employers and the Centre Manager to support current and ongoing recruitment and development needs. .

4.1.2 Over 300 potential users of the centre were consulted during the summer linked to activity to promote the facility. Both young people and adults were asked what they would like to see offered at the centre.

4.1.3 The Executive Member for Leisure and Skills and Councillors Groves, Murray, Finnigan and Dawson were consulted on the proposed activity.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The programme of activities at The Point is designed to re-engage young people and adults, many that are far from the labour market and disconnected from mainstream provision and support. The Point will increase the activities available to these groups and enable a broader range of provision with intensive support to attract marginalised young people.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 Increasing employment and raising skill levels amongst young people and adults is a key priority for the Council and its partners. The service offer at The Point contributes to the achievement of targets in both the Sustainable Economy & Culture and Children & Young People's City Priority Plans by increasing skills levels and the number of young people and adults in work and/or learning.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The centre is leased to the Council by Land Securities for learning uses on a peppercorn rent under the S106 planning obligation on the original development. Other costs are covered by partners through in-kind staffing support or a financial contribution. Leeds City Council's Employment and Skills and Children's Services are meeting costs relating to marketing, ICT upgrades, refurbishment and utilities,

maintenance, in the current financial year through existing approved budgets. Plans for sustainable financial arrangements beyond this are in development.

- 4.4.2 The learning offer delivered by Leeds City College is funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agencies as part of their dedicated budgets for the delivery of this provision.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 The decisions to establish The Point and align services have been administrative and therefore not subject to call in.
- 4.5.2 A Data Sharing Agreement has been developed and signed by all parties to enable the sharing of data to support joint working, referrals and signposting of customers and tracking outcomes to monitor the effectiveness of the provision.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 An options appraisal was undertaken as a basis for consultation with key stakeholders including senior officers from Children's Services, Leeds City College and Jobcentre Plus. The risks associated with each option were carefully considered and have informed the delivery model.
- 4.6.2 Council officers have worked closely with partners to shape provision. The identification of barriers to participation and other risks associated with delivery and organisational performance have been part of the planning process. The Steering and Operational Groups considered how these risks will be addressed and managed along with the implementation of preventative and remedial actions where necessary.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Point will, in part, be a satellite delivery location for the city's developing retail offer, the Retail Academy. The centre will offer a focused rather than exclusive retail skills and employment route. Although in the initial phases the focus will be on the successful recruitment to programmes within the Point, servicing on site and local employers, overtime there is an aspiration to extend the offer to other locations within the area for example the South Leeds Hub, in order to widen accessibility for other neighbourhoods. These locations would be used where employer recruitment needs and timescales require additional resources beyond the 15 learner capacity of The Point. .
- 5.2 Further development of the learning offer linked to employment opportunities is underway with plans to include an offer for pre 16 learners. Discussions are taking place with Education Business Partnerships to deliver their school and academy based programmes within The Point, maximizing the benefits of a 'real time' environment for learners. This will support work to demonstrate and promote the varied and exciting opportunities and progression routes available through a career retail.

5.3 The support of the Area Committee in promoting the opportunities outlined in the report and further identifying local community needs to further inform the development of activities at the centre. .

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Area Committee notes the content of this report.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 There are no background documents

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.