



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Scrutiny Board: Environment and Neighbourhoods

Date: 14th September 2009

Subject: Roseville Door Factory Closure

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update Environment & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board on the progress of the redeployment of the 36 staff from the Roseville Door Factory into mainstream jobs and placements across the Council.

2.0. BACKGROUND INFORMATION¹

2.1. Roseville Door Factory is a supported business which employs 36 people, 27 of whom are disabled.

2.2. A decision was made in February 2009 to close the factory as the Council recognised that it no longer provided the employment model to achieve the outcomes required for the inclusive employment of disabled staff. A 3 year strategy for the employment of disabled people was launched by the Council in 2007. The strategy recognises the need for disabled people to be fully integrated into the workforce. A 'Toolkit for Reasonable Adjustment' was launched in March 2009 as part of the range of measures being put in place to improve the Council's capacity to employ and support disabled people across mainstream services.

2.3. The Council decided that alternative employment options should be found in mainstream services across the Council and a Project Team was established in March 2009 tasked with securing the alternative employment opportunities for all the disabled staff with a deadline of 30th September 2009.

2.4. Recognising the unique nature of the Roseville environment the Council decided not to apply the Managing Workforce Change policy to the 27 disabled staff. This was considered to be a reasonable adjustment under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

¹ For additional background information see CLT Report 5th May 2009

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Strategy for Disabled staff

3.1.1 All 27 disabled staff have their skills profiles directed to the weekly Redeployment Board. Since April, 1 member of staff has been matched successfully through the Board and is now a full time member of staff at Occupation Health. One other member of staff has also taken up a 3 month trial into a vacant post. This post was identified prior to submission to the Redeployment Board.

3.1.2 In conjunction with Environmental Streetscene Services, the Project Team are developing a Streetscene pilot scheme which will meet both an identified business need and enable 11 of the disabled staff to work together in 2/3 teams providing them with a range of new skills and experience. All 11 of the staff have the potential to be fully mainstreamed in the future but require a phased approach due to the fact that their disabilities and the range of suitable meaningful work options available is currently limited. It is envisaged that the scheme will run for 12 months, with a review at the end of this period. The scheme will target streetscene issues within the boundaries of the ALMO / BITMO estates. The full definition of the new teams including the job responsibilities will be defined within the next 4 weeks and the teams should be operational in late September 2009.

3.1.3 Four members of staff who are most significantly affected by their learning disability have had placements agreed from 27th April 2009 within the Linen and Laundry unit which offers the optimum solution for these individuals at this time. A request has been made to ASC to consider the transfer of a further 4 members of staff to the Linen and Laundry Unit as a result of a comparative assessment of the employment pathway opportunities on offer and the individuals complex and high level support needs. This figure may increase to 5 if one employee decides not to take up the option of Voluntary Early Retirement.

3.1.4 Individual employment pathways are either in place or development for the remaining 8 members of staff.

3.1.5 Table 1 below shows the posts, placements, pilot scheme and current stage of development.

Role	Post / placement /pilot scheme	No	Service Area	In place	Development stage	Request to Service Area stage
Administrative Asst	Vacant Post on structure	1	Resources – Occupational Health	1 - In post		
Support Officer	Vacant post on structure	1	Environment & Neighbourhoods – Housing Services	1- 3 month trial		
Domestic/ kitchen Asst	Vacant post on structure	1	Adult Social Care – Support & Enablement		1 – CRB pending	
Vehicle Valet	Placement	1	Resources – Commercial Services	1 placed		
Streetscene Operative / Driver & CH	Pilot Scheme	11	Environment & Neighbourhoods – Streetscene		11	
Laundry Operative	Placement	8	Adult Social Care – Support & Enablement	4 placed	4 to be agreed with ASC	
Revenue Recovery Officer	Placement	1	Resources - Revenue			1
Operative	Placement	1	City Dev - Parks & Countryside		1	
Operative	Placement	1	Resources /Facilities Mgt		1	
VER	VER	1	VER		1	
	Total	27		7	19	1

3.2 Strategy for Non-Disabled Factory Staff

3.2.1 The non-disabled staff at the factory will be treated in accordance with accepted employment practices and procedures staff and will formally enter Managing Workforce Change from 1st October 2009. However, in order to be able to deliver the Environmental Streetscene pilot there will be a requirement for the 2/3 teams to be intensely supervised, particularly at the start of the scheme. 3 non-disabled members of staff have been identified as having the necessary skills and experience to be able to provide the required level of supervision.

3.2.2 It is proposed that the 3 supervisors are taken out of Managing Workforce Change for the duration of the pilot scheme and given up to a maximum 12 month secondment. The 3 staff will continue to have their skills profiles sent to the redeployment board to ensure they are afforded the fullest opportunity to secure future employment.

3.3 Challenges:

3.3.1 Some of the disabled staff have very specialist support needs which will remain challenging to provide for within a mainstream working environment. As a consequence they may require permanent intensive managerial support in a mainstream setting.

3.3.2 Some of the disabled staff will struggle to bridge the transition from supported to mainstream employment. Many of them have only ever worked in the sheltered environment of Roseville or have had a negative experience of mainstream employment.

3.3.3 Some services do not have the skills or experience required to manage disabled staff who have specialist support needs.

3.3.4 A review is being undertaken with the DWP covering the operation of the Workstep contract that LCC operate through LEODIS, which is contract managed through Adult Social Care. With the contract due to end in October 2010, the Council is reviewing the numbers of staff who still need to be supported by Workstep. 22 of the 27 disabled staff at the Door Factory are on the Workstep programme. Discussions are on-going with various other providers who operate Workstep contracts in the city and would be able to offer this support. When the LCC contract expires any Workstep supported employees who still require support will be transferred to the new providers.

3.3.5 The Project Team are liaising with both Mencap Pathways and Connect in the North, both organisations provide intensive support in terms of job training and job coaching to clients with learning disabilities. Mencap Pathways has agreed to provide support to one member of staff and Connect in the North are assessing their capacity to assist with 2 members of staff.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

4.1 The Council has an overall set of strategies to improve it's performance in relation to the employment of disabled people. However, there are some areas where the ability to deliver on these strategies will be further tested – specifically in relation to mainstreaming staff with high levels of disability as the experience with Roseville Door Factory has demonstrated.

4.2 There is a need to fill the transition into mainstream employment for this group of disabled staff. In doing this the Council has a responsibility to deliver better opportunities in employment and to think more strategically about pathways into

mainstream employment as part of its overall Disability Employment Strategy.

5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The projected trading deficit as at the 30th September, the date for the closure of the factory, is projected to be £210k, and this variation is largely due to the lost contribution associated with a projected reduction from the number of door sales assumed in the budget. This variation will have to be managed within the overall approved budget for the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate.
- 5.2** A request was made to Corporate Leadership Team on the 18th August that from 30th September, the costs associated with employing the 27 disabled staff be accounted for corporately. It is projected that the additional cost, over and above the level of budgetary provision available for the period October to March, is £127k and this relates entirely to non-disabled staff. Sufficient budgetary provision, to be transferred, is available to fund disabled staff for the period October 2009 to March 2010. The request was accepted.
- 5.3** For 2010/11 the costs associated with continuing to employ 27 disabled staff for the full year is £430k and appropriate budgetary provision to resource this will be transferred. There is insufficient budgetary provision to resource the 9 non-disabled staff, and a projected shortfall of £254k that would be a pressure to Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate. This projection assumes that 4 members of staff would continue to support the disabled staff whilst the other 5 would have gone through managing work force change.
- 5.4** In addition, it is anticipated that there will be a reasonable adjustment requirement to successfully mainstream the 27 disabled staff. Based on the current Workstep grant of £4.8k per FTE, this could potentially require the identification of additional resources of £121k per annum to resource this. However, where a disabled member of staff is placed in a genuine vacancy, then the appropriate budget for these posts could be used to offset any reasonable adjustment costs including the costs associated with the 4 able bodied staff.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** The closure of the Roseville Door Factory presents an opportunity for the Council to demonstrate how it is improving its capacity to employ disabled people in mainstream services rather than by the traditional route of segregated supported services.
- 6.2** Mainstreaming the disabled staff with high support needs raises challenges and risks that must be strategically managed.
- 6.3** A 'One Council' approach to the development of an Employment Pathway for the 27 disabled people will require a simplification of current processes. In particular, a single simplified route of access to specialist support resources will increase the speed, quality and take up of the support that is available.
- 6.4** A distinct cost centre will provide the Council with the opportunity to easily identify the actual cost and display tangible progress in providing mainstream employment, reasonable adjustments and additional levels of support for the staff.
- 6.5** The financial pressures incurred through trading losses at the door factory and for the 9 non-disabled staff will be managed by Environment and Neighbourhoods.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Board note the contents of the report and make any appropriate comment.

Background Papers

Corporate Leadership Team Report dated 5th May 2009
'Toolkit for Reasonable Adjustment'. March 2009.