

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee
DATE: 6th November 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health & Community
SUBJECT: Norton Priory Catering Contract
WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek approval from the Executive Sub-Committee to transfer up to three staff to the Council's establishment to facilitate the development of the Norton Priory catering project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- i) The Strategic Director, Health & Community in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder (Health & Social Care) be authorised to enter into contractual arrangements with Norton Priory Trust to provide catering and related services at Norton Priory;**
- ii) The addition of up to three members of staff to the Council's establishment as a result of duties under the Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment Regulations 2006 (TUPE) be approved in relation to the current catering services provider to the Trust, FGF; and**
- iii) The Strategic Director, Health & Community be authorised to take such other actions as may be necessary to give effect to the above recommendations.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The council like many other councils across the UK, has found it difficult to meet the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate objectives of finding people known to Social care, particularly those with Learning Disabilities, suitable employment opportunities.

3.2 Recent negotiations with Norton Priory has led to the offer from Norton Priory to Learning Disability Day Services of the contract (SLA) to provide all the catering at Norton Priory. This will include special, local and corporate events as well as the cafe.

3.3 The commercial aspect of this contract will provide the department with the opportunity to set up a 'social enterprise' scheme with the capacity

to provide jobs for people with disabilities in the short to mid term.

3.4 Day services has existing experience at providing community based catering projects in the Murdishaw Café and Country Garden Kitchens and have planned to subsume the contract into its current operations without any increase to establishment

3.5 The contract and its supporting services will include:

- The opening of Vine Street Kitchen as the central commercial production kitchen
- The continuation of the Murdishaw Café with the option to extend the model to Ditton Community Centre
- The continuation of Country Gardens but production transferred to Vine Street. The old Moorfield kitchen remaining as a training kitchen
- The switching of the Coach House and Hough Green from horticulture to market garden with the purpose of providing as much as the fresh produce as possible for the catering arms. Additional plots have been identified to assist this
- The opening of the ILC kitchen to target PSD service users from Bridgewater and involve them as part of the food production centre for the Norton Priory contract.

3.6 In all it is anticipated that the proposals will increase capacity by at least one third to 238 'spaces' for service users to learn and gain meaningful experience and potentially employment. Vacancies within the system will be filled via Bridge Builders after the initial launch through Day Services.

4.0 BUSINESS CASE

4.1 The proposal to deliver the catering at Norton Priory is a genuine opportunity to provide a commercial service in a commercial environment.

4.2 There is an immense sense of goodwill surrounding the project; from the trustees at Norton Priory, from Day Services staff, councillors, senior management, carers, service users and from our professional caterers at Halton Stadium. The result is it stands every chance of success. The project will allow the authority the opportunity to achieve its local and national targets in respect of employment for disabled people.

4.3 With this success will come opportunities to diversify into other commercial areas; the making and selling of arts and crafts, catering for weddings, specialist cakes for example. Additionally the close working with Halton Stadium can in itself provide other avenues of employment., for example the possibility of individuals working on the stiles at games or as ground staff. The TUPE transfers will only proceed once due

process has been completed and Environment are satisfied that they are not subject to an unsustainable liability.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal supports the national guidance “Valuing People 2001” and the 2008 Valuing People Now, which requires agencies to provide a holistic service and job opportunities to people with learning disabilities.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As the staff supporting the project are already remunerated by the council any revenues will not be subject to the demands of wages thus providing a successful trading opportunity and one that will not leave the council with a loss. Given the experiences with Country Garden Kitchens and Murdishaw Café the operation should, at the very least, break even
- 6.2 Transfer of FGF staff will be subject to TUPE protection in the case of employees. These staff will not be transferred to Health and Community but to Environment, Halton Stadium under the Head of Service where there is a constant need for catering staff. No significant costs should be incurred as a result of the transfer/s.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The current contractor FGF has been given notification to terminate their contract at Norton Priory on 3rd September 2008. The notice period is for 3 months and the contract is due to finish on 3rd December 08.
- 7.2 As the incoming contractor under TUPE the authority will also need to begin the process of consultation firstly with FGF and then the transferring staff. In order that the authority complies with TUPE the personnel department will need to begin the process in tandem with the Norton Priory Trust.
- 7.3 Some staff currently employed by FGF may seek employment elsewhere and not move into Council employment, thus reducing TUPE obligations. Of the three staff involved one is casual, one likely to remain with the existing contractor leaving only one full time staff to be transferred. This remains to be confirmed.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 This proposal will enhance the opportunities of people with disabilities to gain employment.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Valuing People 2001	Runcorn Town Hall 2 nd Floor	Audrey Williamson Operational Director Adults of Working Age
Valuing People Now 2008	Runcorn Town Hall 2 nd Floor	Audrey Williamson Operational Director Adults of Working Age