

Appendix 3

Supporting Statement from Response Organisation

Pathways Workshop

Response is a mental health housing and support charity that has been operating in Oxfordshire for the past 50 years. Response were approached by the Chair of the Pathway Workshop in Sept 2015 to see if there was any way that Response and Pathway could work together so that the Pathway Workshop could continue to fulfil its aims and obligations.

The Pathway Workshop was established more than 10 years ago, with the aim of providing paid employment for vulnerable adults. The business model was reliant on the grants for each person employed and the sales of products made from repurposed wood. Since the cessation of grants the charity has been struggling financially ever since and has only survived due to the generosity of some individuals and the dedication of board members who have been 'volunteering' in the workshop.

The project currently employs 9 adults most of whom have a mild to moderate learning disability.

Pathways have been in merger talks with other local and national charities but these talks have broken down due to perceived financial risks.

Response is convinced that it can make a success of the building and the Pathway Project, whilst also creating jobs and opportunities in Blackbird Leys

Creating Social Impact in the heart of Blackbird Leys

- The Pathway Workshop (TPW) offers a unique opportunity to power social impact in the heart of Blackbird Leys
- With the right vision, support and stability, TPW will become a focal point for change, opportunity and positive activity
- We need to harness and grow the opportunities offered by the premises, and its location, to combat deprivation and social exclusion
- TPW should be a place where some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities can find alternative and fulfilling daily activity
- Key groups include:
 - People in recovery from addiction

- Ex-offenders
- People with mental health and complex needs
- Learning and physical disabilities
- Young people/NEETS
- Key outcomes should include:
 - Positive daily activity through volunteering
 - Work experience
 - Opportunity to make new social connections
 - Peer led growth
 - Potential for skills/employment training
 - A sense of personal achievement, no matter how small

In addition Response will be relocating its Homecare service to the Office Space located above the Pathway Workshop. Currently one sixth of Responses total workforce lives in Blackbird leys (30 people). Response Homecare will provide additional employment opportunities in this area.

Response also supports Street Revolution activities in Blackbird Leys, by funding the facilities used for Social Drop in, cheap meals and foodbank provision and regular activities.

Outreach and engagement to date

- Since becoming involved with TPW, we have started reaching out to potential partner and community organisations with a view to engaging service users and partnership working.

These include:

- Lifeline (My OX4): Recovery/Addiction support
- Oasis: Recovery/Addiction
- SMART (Howard House Detox/Rehab)
- Restore (Mental Health/Employment Charity)
- Turning Point (Refresh Café + Recovery/Addiction)
- Ley Community (Recovery/Addiction)
- Hill End Centre (Education/families)
- OCC Parks Team (wood supply and potential community engagement)

We are welcoming our first two volunteers this week.

Q1 2016 will see us raising the profile of TPW and include contacting BBL focused organisations including TV Police, community groups etc.

Sustainability

a) Product Development

We are determined that TPW becomes financially sustainable through production of goods. In order to do this, we are focusing down on specific product lines. The production and sale of these items we will create opportunity for local people.

Early scoping includes:

- Products with high perceived value direct to consumer/independent retailers. EG Handmade oak chopping boards, limited edition benches
- White label – manufacturing product for branded designers, retailers/distributors (EG garden furniture/benches)
- Outdoor wooden structures (Garden offices/leisure rooms, ‘Hobbit Huts’, Tiny Houses)
- “Urban/Industrial Chic” range of desks/tables
- Office desks and meeting tables
- Production of kindling and fire logs

The products will credibly leverage our key USPs = (1) Social Impact built-in (2) Made in Oxford (3) Environmentally sound timber sources

b) Business Development

We have already been building profile, creating sales and exploring commercial opportunities/partnerships that will support TPW. Activity includes:

- Design, sale and manufacture of office furniture for Response Housing & Homecare teams
- Quoting on production of 1000 BBC ‘Spring Watch’ bird boxes.
- Second stage meeting with Tiny Houses UK (manufacturing partner/supplier opportunity)
- Agreement in principal to produce ‘Hill End’ branded range of garden furniture + bird boxes etc. Dedicated sales/display area at Hill End (25,000 visitors p/a)
- Meeting held with Westgate Shopping Centre (Land Securities). Potential for supply of benches in new centre PLUS direct intro Laing O’Rourke (lead contractor)
- Ongoing discussions with leading distributor of gift and garden products (holds relationships with key buyers at retailers such as John Lewis and Wyevale Garden Centres)
- Meeting pending with Sebastian Cox (who sells to Heals)
- Introductory meeting held with Arch Leisure (leading supplier to UK caravan parks, glamping sites, Alton Towers Leisure)
- Retail sales to Restore Café (chopping boards)
- Awaiting proposal from Arriva Training re: partnership/paid for accreditations

We are also in the process of helping the Pathway Project to renegotiate its contracts with a number of different customers. One of the main contributing factors to its current financial

position is the fact that they have been selling their products for less than the cost of production.