

## **Project Plan for the modernisation and sustainable future of the Rural Activities Garden Centre**

( Including the transition of management responsibility from Social Care Health and Housing to Adult and Community Learning)

### **Project Plan**

This project plan will set out the stages required to ensure a smooth transition of the management of the Rural Activity Garden Centre from the Day Services Team in the Social Care Health and Housing Directorate to the Adult and Community Learning Team within Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services directorate and the future direction and plans for the Centre

The plan has been produced by staff within both teams, all of whom have had involvement with the RAGC over a number of years from various perspectives. The priorities identified by users and stakeholders at an event on June 2010 have been taken into account and have been instrumental shaping a clear vision for the centre moving forward, which is:

*‘To provide a horticultural bridge, over which centre users may walk with appropriate support towards greater independence and supported employment’.*

### **Background Information**

The RAGC is a day services Centre for people with special needs, providing horticultural skills and opportunities to socialise and meet others. The centre currently operates as a garden centre, selling the plants and produce grown by the trainees and giving gardening advice. Poultry is reared on site and eggs are sold. The site is currently run by Social Care Health & Housing Directorate and some management and supervision is provided.

The National Development Team (NDT) was commissioned to undertake a thorough options appraisal “Developing the Rural Activities Garden Centre” (Feb 2009). As of this time there were around 26 clients making use of the centre. The majority of clients had been attending the centre for over 12 years and 7 had been there for at least 20 and 4 for more than 28 years. The remainder had been using the centre for between 1 and 3 years. 17 of the clients also attended other day centers or colleges. The clients also attend other venues including Brookfield, and day centers at Woodside Day Centre, Parkview and Grassy Meadows. There are strong current links between RAGC and the Adult Learning Service.

RAGC's facilities include:

- Several small out buildings, (mess room, shop, tool shed, toilets)
- A small plant sales area with wooden staging,
- A small formal garden,
- Car parking on site
- Growing areas at rear including a small orchard and vegetable plots.
- A small pond.
- Storage bays for mulch / compost delivered by a local tree surgeon.
- Two glass houses - suitable for raising plants. Heated by simple means.
- Three "poly tunnels" - in good condition and suitable for raising plants.
- Chicken coups.

## Proposal

The site offers many opportunities to provide a multi use facility that will serve the community and benefit residents. Prioritising opportunities for service users alongside activities which generate income for the Centre are essential for ensuring sustainability.

During an Event held on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010, facilitated by Officers and attended by Service Users, Parent Carers and stakeholders, 3 key priorities were identify

- ❖ **Priority 1** Master plan for the site. Phased improvements
- ❖ **Priority 2** Educational use for adult education, work experience, college, environmental studies (would need a classroom)
- ❖ **Priority 3** Outside Gardening Gangs Private/Contract work

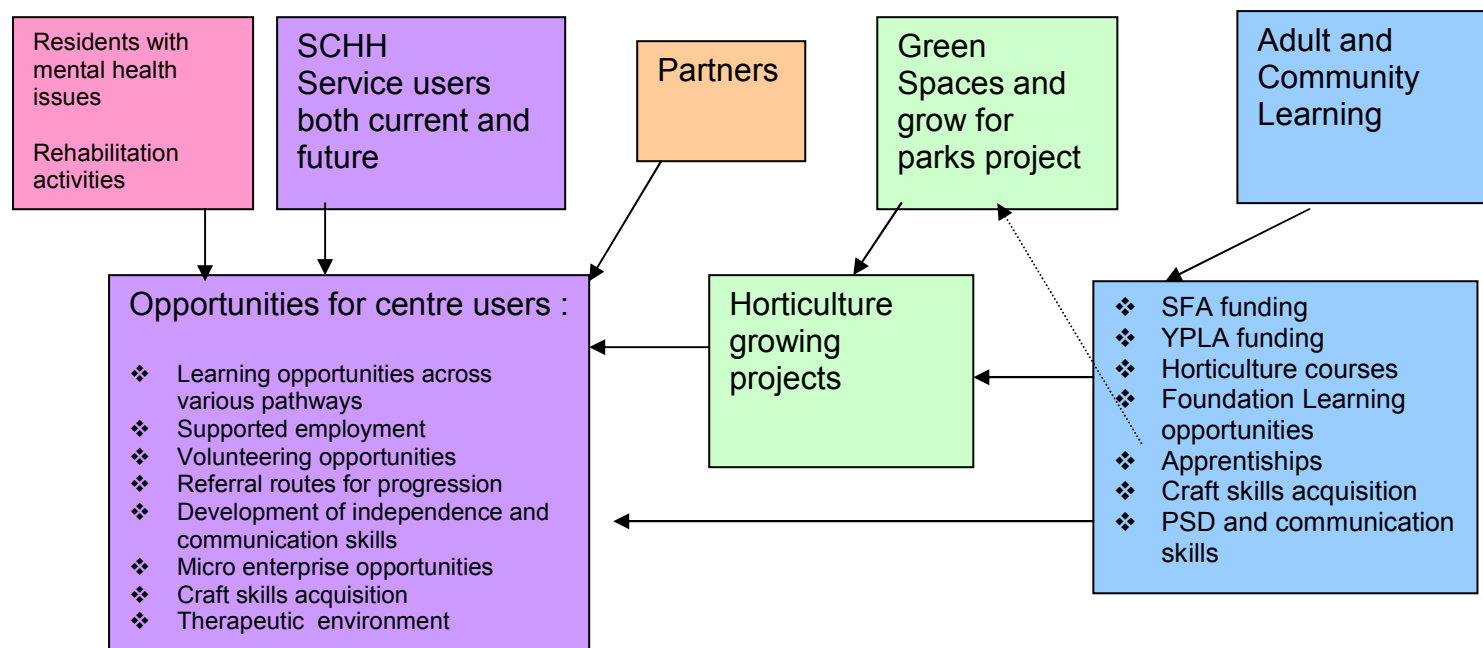
On further exploration it is clear that the site is capable of being developed to offer training for life and employment skills and to prepare some people for onward employment. It could provide opportunities for individuals to develop and gain a variety of skills on an individual basis or as part of a team, to build confidence, develop expertise and work tolerance and to then move on to other

opportunities. As part of an Adult and Community Learning offer these opportunities may be educational, in training, volunteer, or employment related within the community, whilst other users may be suited to a regular of pattern of work and interaction based solely at RAGC.

For residents with learning difficulties and disabilities the RAGC as a multidisciplinary Centre could provide:

- A full Foundation Learning Programme accredited by City and Guilds leading to supported employment across 4 pathways, horticulture, catering, Retail and Hospitality, linked with the successful programme at Brookfield
- “Workright” programmes which support LDD residents in supported employment
- Opportunities for LDD residents to engage in horticulture supported employment and volunteering, through partnership with Green spaces
- Supported employment opportunities in Retail or other work placements
- Progression and employment for hospitality learners who have completed their foundation course at Brookfield
- Extension of land based courses to include practical sessions for more advanced levels, providing volunteering opportunities alongside main stream learners.
- Growing and sale of cut flowers. These could be used by adult learners for training courses.
- Fully supported Micro Enterprises for users to develop their own businesses.
- Involvements with the RHS, National garden scheme ( yellow book) , Hillingdon in Bloom

## Key Elements



## Project Plan

The project will be divided into 2 Phases:

**Phase 1.** Transition of Service Management and Resource Identification for sustainability including Capital

**Phase 2** 3 Year Strategic Plan and Sustainability Strategy, with associated developments.

Strategic Objective	Action	Person(s) Responsible	Time Frame	Resource (approx)
Phase 1.				
Lift and shift to Adult and Community Learning	Transfer of the management of the Service from SSHH to PEECs and the adult and Community learning team	Jean Palmer Linda Sanders	July 2011	No Cost
Communication Strategy	With staff in relation to lift and shift	Tricia Collis and Sharon Townsend	Early July date TBC	Officer time - 2 days
	With service users in an appropriate format	Tricia Collis and Sharon Townsend	Early July date TBC	
	With Parent Carers groups	Tricia Collis and Sharon Townsend	Early July date TBC	
Cabinet Report	Endorsement by Cabinet of Project Plan	Cabinet ( Cabinet report by TC and ST)	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2011	Officer time - 2 days

Strategic Objective	Action	Person(s) Responsible	Time Frame	Resource (approx)
Accommodation Strategy confirmed	Plan for the upgrade of accommodation to ensure fit for purpose accommodation in place	Tricia Collis , Nigel Dicker and Mohammed Bhimani	September date	£240K maximum Current exploration of relocating of existing buildings for reuse which will reduce this cost is underway
	Exploration of any grants available and planning conditions	Tricia Collis , Nigel Dicker and Mohammed Bhimani	August 2011	Officer time – 5 days
Training budget secured	Funding through Skills funding agency and YPLA for training negotiated	Tricia Collis with Lisa dancer and Michelle Lindie	In place for 2011-12 academic year	SFA and YPLA Grant
	Additional funding secured for volunteer projects and apprenticeships	TC with Peter Sale and Kim Overy	January 2012	External funding - 2 days
Green Spaces 'growing for parks' initiative	Work with green spaces to project plan 'Growing for Parks' initiative, which will provide supported employment and volunteering opportunities.	Paul Richards with Tricia Collis		Green Spaces budget

Strategic Objective	Action	Person(s) Responsible	Time Frame	Resource (approx)
Phase 2				
Restructure of staffing	Restructure of staff to provide effective management and staffing to support all users	Tricia Collis	October 2011	Officer time- 5 days
Development of 3 year Strategic Plan	Through effective involvement of stakeholders a 3 year Plan with a one year business plan will be developed	Tricia Collis with Sharon Townsend , Staff , Parent Careers , Centre Users, Volunteers, partners	Completion December 2011	Officer time- 10 days
Develop Partnership with charitable bodies	Develop effective partnerships with charitable bodies such as Ground Work Trust , Thrive	Tricia Collis with Centre Manager	Commencing July 2011	Officer time – 5 days
Develop a criteria with Social Services 'for reviewing current centre users and their on going needs' and for new social services clients to be referred to the centre	Ensure residents with LDD needs can have continue access to the Centre including a fit for purpose review to ensure appropriate support.	Sharon Townsend and Sharon Taylor with Tricia Collis	September 2011	Officer time- 3 days

Strategic Objective	Action	Person(s) Responsible	Time Frame	Resource (approx)
Develop effective referral routes for residents	Work with perfect start , reed , Job centre Plus to enable effective referrals for residents	Tricia Collis with partners	December 2011	Officer time – 3 days
Extend funding opportunities	Explore external grants such as Big Lottery for revenue funding	Tricia Collis , Nigel Dicker , economic Regeneration Team	December 2011 and ongoing	Officer time - 10-20 days
Extend revenue opportunities and Micro Enterprises	Develop opportunities for learning opportunities with revenue benefits i.e. wood &craft products	Tricia Collis with Lisa Dancer and Michelle Lindie Economic regeneration team	October 2011 and ongoing	SFA funded and possible grants
Develop SLA agreements with schools and community groups to use the centre	Diverse community groups accessing the centre to enrich all aspects of the work and environment	Tricia Collis with Centre manager	March 2012	Officer time – 5 days
Develop a Volunteers Strategy	Engage with community groups to develop the recruitment of volunteers and Provide appropriate training and support for their role within the centre	Tricia Collis with Lisa Dancer	November 2012	Officer time- 5 days and SFA funding for training

