



Usher.
Championing Ability.

BUSINESS PLAN 2022-23

Business Plan 2022-23

This draft Business Plan has been prepared for consideration and approval by the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary. Usel is working towards delivery of the programmes, objectives and targets specified in this Plan and within the limits of the financial and other resources allocated to Usel for the current financial year.

The purpose of the business plan is to clearly demonstrate the level of progress required in-year towards the achievement of the Usel's priority objectives. Progress towards the achievement of these targets and objectives will be monitored closely and reported on throughout the business year.

The Chief Executive will ensure appropriate monthly, quarterly and annual performance management processes are implemented as necessary.

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1. SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1. Ulster Supported Employment Limited (Usel) is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and operates under the direction of the Department for Communities (DfC) and in particular on a day-to-day basis Work and Wellbeing Division. The company is a private, not for profit Company, limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital, domiciled in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2. The Company is a registered charity under Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 with effect from 20 March 1996.
- 1.3. The Company was established in 1962 to fulfil an act of Parliament to provide supported paid employment for disabled people and in 1980 the Company expanded through the acquisition of the Workshops for the Blind (The Belfast Association for the Employment of the Industrious Blind) to become the largest employer of disabled people within Northern Ireland. At the time of the merger the Workshops for the Blind had been providing employment only for people with vision impairment as it had always done since it was established in 1871.
- 1.4. By special resolution the Company changed its original incorporation name of Ulster Sheltered Employment Limited to USEL on 25 September 1998. There have been no changes in the company's activities during the year and none are anticipated in the foreseeable future.

2. SECTION 2 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT - CORPORATE PLAN 2022- 2027

- 2.1. A new Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 is under development and will be submitted for approval. The plan defines four key strategic themes.
- 2.2. The plan also outlines a range of outcomes to be delivered by Usel within the term of the plan.
- 2.3. The overall delivery of the Corporate Plan is underpinned through a structured methodology, with a clear linkage to outcomes. The focus on delivery of agreed outcomes is contained within a Balanced Scorecard methodology, with business and team performance managed via a range of key performance indicators tracked and reported at a strategic, operational and team level.
- 2.4. Usel's **Vision** is to be the leading provider in helping people with disabilities gain employment.
- 2.5. Usel's **Value** is to strive to be a sustainable, people centred organisation that adds value through respect for others and commitment to excellence.
- 2.6. Usel's **Purpose** is as a social enterprise born to assist people with disabilities or health related conditions into employment.

Our Strategic Themes

2.7. Four key strategic themes were identified in the Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027:

- Agility and innovation
- Champion inclusion
- Sustainable growth
- People focused

Our Contribution to the Supporting People, Work and Health, DfC's Operational Strategy 2020-25

- 2.8. As an Arm's Length Body (ALB) of DfC, Usel is committed to supporting the achievement of the draft Programme for Government (PfG) stated objective of '*improving wellbeing for all - by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth*'.
- 2.9. Our Business Plan for 2022-23 is aligned to the PfG Outcomes Delivery plan and the DfC Operational Strategic Priorities 2020-25.

Draft Programme for Government, Outcomes Delivery Plan

- 2.10. Usel, as an ALB of DfC contributes to the following:
 - Outcome 3 '*We have a more Equal Society*'
 - Outcome 6 '*We have more people working in better jobs*'
 - Outcome 8 '*We care for others and help others in need*'

- Outcome 8 *'We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity.'*
- DfC Strategic Priority *'Lower levels of economic inactivity and unemployment.'*

DfC's Operational Strategy 2020-25

2.11. DfC's Operational Strategy 2020-25 aims to achieve the following:

- Strive to improve the quality and efficiency of key services by adopting a strong, agile organisational structure which is supported by good governance;
- Seek to expand the scope of services to better meet the needs of people in NI, and where possible retain and secure additional work with existing and new business partners such as Department for Work and Pensions;
- Strive to be innovative in how services are delivered using the most accessible ways possible; use proven processes and systems to enhance automation by ensuring that technology architecture is future proofed and sufficiently agile to meet needs; and
- Further invest in learning and development which supports people's talent, building capability and providing career opportunities at every stage of career cycles. This will enable DfC to continue to deliver excellent support and services which are aligned with its culture and values.

3. SECTION 3 – USEL - WHAT WE DO

Corporate Services Division

3.1. The Corporate Services Division (including admin staff) will comprise of 29 staff at 1 April 2022 and delivers a range of support functions:

- Finance
- HR
- ICT & Compliance

Manufacturing and Recycling Division

3.2. This division will comprise of 67 staff at 1st April 2022 who deliver in range of manufacturing and recycling operations. This division operates a supported employment model and is currently supported with a grant in aid element from our sponsor department. This model is currently under review with a move to unsupported employment to be developed in the next 12 to 24 months. This shift in the operating model will require an element of multi skilling and retraining to be completed by a range of personnel currently operating within manufacturing. The proposed approach will be focused on improving efficiency within these operating units and may result in a further reduction in head count with some staff be redeployed to other areas within the wider Usel business.

3.3. The Manufacturing Branch of the division will comprise of 35 staff at 1st April in 2 key areas of activity within manufacturing focus on:

- Mattress and Bed production
- Industrial Sewing

3.4. The Circular Economy Branch of the Division will comprise of 32 staff at 1st April The Circular Economy division delivers in three key areas:

- Mattress recycling
- Carpet recycling
- Confidential paper shredding

Employment Services Division

3.5. This division will comprise of 54 staff at 1st April who deliver across a range of pre-employment, employment support and vocational training programmes and hospitality.

3.6. The Employment Support branch will comprise of 38 staff at 1st April delivering the following programmes:

- Employment Support Scheme
- Workable NI

- Support and Training to Realise Individual Development and Employment (STRIDE)
- Training for Success & Apprenticeships NI (Specialist Disability Support)
- Training for Success (TfS)

3.7. The total number of individuals with a disability or health condition support per year is more than 1,200.

3.8. The hospitality branch will comprise of 19 staff at 1st April 2022 operating an “Ability” coffee shop / café in the following venues:

- The Foundry, Shankill Road, Belfast;
- The Stables, Lady Dixon Park;
- Belfast Zoo; and
- Café at Ballycopeland Windmill.

4. SECTION 4 – GRANT IN AID SUPPORT

- 4.1. In order to deliver the 2022-23 business objectives outlined below, Usel have built a detailed operational budget outlining income and expenditure forecasts (see **Annex A**) and defining a range of assumptions and risks to underpin the overall approach.
- 4.2. From 1 April 2016, the government introduced a new mandatory national living wage (NLW), for workers aged 25 and above. Each year, the NLW has increased on 1 April by, on average, 4.5% and a further increase will take effect from April 2022, the proposed increase will add an additional cost burden to Usel of approximately £100,000 in 2022 - 23.
- 4.3. Almost all of Usel's manufacturing and recycling staff are eligible for the NLW. Therefore, the impact of the introduction of additional NLW will be significant on Usel in 2022-23.
- 4.4. The combination of increasing payroll costs, energy cost and the loss of the Disability Employment Support contract, will place Usel under financial pressure in 2022-23 resulting in a short fall in budget position of approximately £100,000.
- 4.5. It is proposed the additional cost increase as a result of NLW is recovered via additional grant in aid as previous increases have been met by Usel however due to a loss of revenue this will not be possible in 2022-23.
- 4.6. A full operational budget and a forecast drawdown profile for grant in aid and employment support funding can be referenced in **Annex A**.
- 4.7. Usel receives a proportion of its revenue from the Department for Communities, which contributes, in part, to the wages of the staff which are supported in the Manufacturing & Recycling Division – see Table 1 below:

Table 1

| | Actual + Forecast for 2021/22 | Budget 2022/23 | Headcount | Employees (who declared) with disabilities |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| | £ | £ | 1st April 2022 | 1st April 2022 |
| Bedding Manufacturing | (206,805) | - | 12.25 | 11 |
| Industrial Sewing | (259,165) | (338,975) | 16.5 | 10 |
| Recycling | (161,930) | (222,513) | 12 | 10 |
| Confidential Shedding | (233,450) | (252,236) | 12.75 | 11 |
| Fulfilment | (20,826) | (30,811) | 2.5 | 2 |
| GiA Income (actual/requested) | 724,000 | 724,000 | | |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | (158,176) | (120,535) | | |
| Total | | | 56 | 44 |

4.8. In 2021-22, the Department's grand-in-aid contribution was £724,000 (2019-20: £724,000).

4.9. In relation to capital, see attached capital plan covering 2022 - 2025 to support proposed Strategic Plan.

5. SECTION 5 – WHAT WE WILL DELIVER 2022 – 23

5.1. This Business Plan links directly to the Corporate Plan for 2022-27 which is currently under review and pending approval.

5.2. The proposed plan highlights several in year deliverables including

- Formal consultation regarding the redesign of Usel final salary pension scheme
- Consolidation of Usel manufacturing division
- Continued growth of Usel Ability Café brand.
- Complete the scoping of the Cambria Street development Plan
- Further development of Usel business to business service provision
- Formal measurement of annual social value impact
- Develop a people plan
- Develop a communication and engagement plan

5.3 A list of the goods which Usel manufacture is set out at **Annex B** and a list of the business lines is included at **Annex C**. Our strategic partners are identified in **Annex D**.

ANNEX A

See Excel Spreadsheet



Budget build
2022-23 Jan 22 V7 10

ANNEX B

List of Manufactured Goods

- Mattresses – new retail range introduced in 2019-20
- Divan Bases - new retail range introduced in 2019-20
- Head boards - new retail range introduced in 2019-20
- Laptop Bags
- Backpacks
- Sports Bags
- Specialist Carrier bags/soft holdalls for Ambulance, Police, Fire Brigade and Health Service
- Specialist carrier bag/Soft Holdalls for Private companies, Kelman, Camlin, Aksen
- Helmet Covers
- Blue foam boxes for Kelman
- Face coverings
- Face shields

List of Items Currently Recycled:

- Mattresses
- Carpet
- Carpet tiles (from 2019-20)
- Cardboard (from 2019-20)
- Confidential paper shredding (from 2019-20)

ANNEX C

List of business lines - manufacturing:

- Manufacturing of mattresses and divan bases
- Manufacturing of bespoke bags/backpacks for various emergency services

List of business lines – recycling:

- Recycle items listed in Annex B for a range of Councils, private sector organisations and third sector organisations
- Confidential paper shredding - DfC

List of business lines – employment services:

- Delivery of programmes, as listed at para. 3.7

List of business lines – operational outlets:

- Ability café, which is a training coffee shop for adults with learning disabilities

Order fulfilment

- Pick and pack of covid response kits
- Assemble of face shields
- Delivery and collection of IT assets

ANNEX D

List of Strategic Partners

Usel has developed a number of strategic partners to complement its various functions, including the following:

- Belfast City Council
- Mid & East Antrim Council
- Derry & Strabane Council
- Lisburn & Castlereagh Council
- Department of Justice
- NIHE
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- IKEA
- Harvey Normans
- Dreams
- Belfast Trust
- IFA (from 2019-20)
- Sport NI
- Trust Ford