

Update on the creation of a Day Centre and related accommodation at 80 South Street, Yeovil

Executive Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ric Pallister, Strategy and Policy
Ward Member(s) Councillors John Chainey, Peter Gubbins & Andy Kendall
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Economy
Service Manager: Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Lead Officer: Colin McDonald Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Contact Details: Colin.mcdonald@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462331

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update members of the progress of the creation of a Day Centre and Related Accommodation at 80 South Street, Yeovil following resolution to proceed with the project at the District Executive meeting on 3rd April 2014.

2. Public Interest

This report outlines the progress of the agreed scheme to convert the upper floors of the property at 80 South Street, Yeovil into accommodation and create a day centre facility on the ground floor for use by vulnerable clients of various supported housing projects. It will be of interest to any member of the public concerned about the facilities available to support members of vulnerable groups otherwise at risk of becoming homeless or sleeping rough and those members of the public wishing to see a structured programme to help such individuals (as opposed, for example, to some of the individuals concerned having nowhere in particular to go and nothing constructive to do when not occupying the accommodation that has been provided for them). It will also be of some interest to those members of the public wishing to see historic buildings generally preserved and brought back into use.

3. Recommendations

The District Executive are asked to note the progress made thus far in delivering a Day Centre and Related Accommodation at 80 South Street, Yeovil.

4. Background

The council has owned the freehold of 80 South Street since 1971. The property is a grade 2 listed-property and was originally residential, but more recently it has had various uses including as an Art Gallery with associated café and as office accommodation. The growing costs of maintaining a listed property resulted in the Council marketing the property for a commercial tenant in 2012 and in May 2013 the District Executive authorised freehold disposal. However, none of the commercial offers, either for leasing or purchasing the building, came to fruition.

Over a number of years a range of housing related support projects for various vulnerable groups has developed, often with input of capital grant from the District Council. More recently the County Council consolidated the majority of these various support services into two major „pathway“ contracts, known as "P2i" (Pathway to Independence, for young adults) and "P4A" (Pathway for Adults). Both contracts commenced in May 2013 and include

services towards homeless people, whether statutory homeless (within the meaning of the Act) or those who are homeless within the plain English meaning of the word.

However, much of the support under either contract, based around certain properties, is designated and time limited. One common missing factor in trying to help many (but not all) vulnerable people regain confidence and appropriate skills to engage in society, at least to the extent where potential repeat homelessness can be avoided, is the operation of a day centre facility providing a structured approach.

The Government has targeted rough sleeping, and the prevention of rough sleeping, setting aside a specific grant fund and dividing this nationally among several groups of local authorities. Since May 2011 a total of £559,000 has been allocated to a group of eight housing authorities (being the five in Somerset, North Somerset, Bristol and Bath & North East Somerset) and placed in the stewardship of Mendip District Council. A cross authority steering group (including voluntary sector representation) commissioned a thorough gap analysis which identified the lack of a day centre facility in South Somerset as the highest priority.

The District Executive, meeting on 3rd April this year, agreed a plan to lease 80 South Street to Bournemouth Churches Housing Association with the intention of creating the required day centre facility on the ground floor and also agreed the award of £100,000 grant to subsidise the costs of converting the upper floors to create related accommodation. The District Executive asked for a progress report to be submitted.

5. Progress report - what has been achieved so far?

- Officers have secured £70,000 from the Avon & Somerset Rough Sleepers Group toward the refurbishment of the Day Centre provision
- Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) have confirmed the setting aside of £30,000 of their reserves (derived from the merger with Barnabas) to bridge the overall capital funding gap.
- Full planning permission has been granted as has listed building consent (a complicated process due to the proposal being for a listed building in our ownership).
- An SSDC Officer has met the Fire Officer at the property and his recommendations have been received.
- BCHA has instructed Welling Partnership to undertake a full condition survey prior to signing of the lease.
- SSDC is investigating the known damp problems at the property, with a view of this being remedied, prior to a lease being signed.
- A building control application has been submitted.
- Regular progress meetings have been arranged between SSDC Officers and BCHA.
- Heads of Terms for the full lease are currently being discussed
- SSDC is a partner in a new county-wide bid which has recently been submitted to Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

“To commission a Transitional Planning Team comprising a Transition Planning Co-ordinator and two frontline Transitions Workers so that relevant services for single homeless people are better co-ordinated reducing the risk of chronic homelessness and rough sleeping.”

The value of the bid is £147,577 and will cover the period December 2014 to March 2016. If successful these posts will play a pivotal role within the Day Centre.

6. Progress report - the next steps

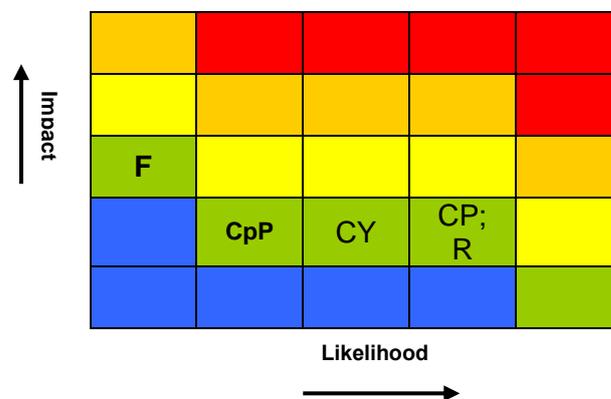
- The damp issues at the property to be resolved.
- The terms of the full lease to be finalised.
- Regular meetings between SSDC and BCHA to continue.
- BCHA to draw up the final specification for the works and undertake a tendering process, with support from SSDC where required.
- Both SSDC and BCHA to source avenues of revenue funding.
- BCHA to draw up the 'business plan' for the operation of the day centre.
- A steering group for the Day Centre element of the project, involving other agencies, to be formalised.

7. Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications arising from this report. The Executive should note that there are potential financial implications from some building related issues, such as resolving the damp and ensuring radon remediation. However these arise from the Councils ownership of the building rather than arising from the intended uses that result from the agreed scheme.

8. Risk Matrix

This matrix only identifies the risk associated with taking the decision as set out in the report as the recommendation(s). Should there be any proposal to amend the recommendation(s) by either members or officers at the meeting then the impact on the matrix and the risks it identifies must be considered prior to the vote on the recommendation(s) taking place.



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

9. Council Plan Implications

The proposed conversion works clearly assists with a major plank in addressing “Focus Three – Homes” and in particular meets the stated aims:

“With partners, enable additional new homes to meet the needs of the district, including mixed housing schemes to buy or rent that are affordable” and

“Continue to work to bring empty houses back into use”.

and the major statement in the Plan:

“We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income”

The proposal also contributes towards “Focus Four – Health & Communities”, in particular meeting the stated aim:

“Ensure that the strategic priorities of the Somerset Health and Well-Being Board reflect local needs and align council resources to deliver projects to address those needs.”

10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

The proposed conversion works, whilst sensitive to the needs of a listed building, will marginally enhance the energy performance of the building and thus contribute towards an overall reduction in carbon emissions.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

The proposal meets an identified gap in the provision of services for vulnerable clients, in particular those at risk of repeat homelessness. In addition the provision of an accessible access on the ground floor is intended to achieve DDA compliance.

12. Privacy Impact Assessment

This report does not directly impact on any data held of a personal nature. The future operation of a day centre facility will in all probability involve some storage of personal data, the responsibility for that will fall on BCHA and, potentially, other agencies providing services at the centre. SSDC will not have any responsibility for this but, as part of the steering group, will add to the scrutiny and oversight of the overall scheme and this may include opportunities to review data handling if appropriate.

13. Background Papers

Creation of a Day Centre and related accommodation at 80 South Street, Yeovil
District Executive, 3rd April 2014
