



Area South Committee

Wednesday 10th August 2022

7.00 pm

**The Gateway, Addlewell Lane,
Yeovil, BA20 1QN**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



The following members are requested to attend this meeting:

Barbara Appleby
John Clark
Nicola Clark
Karl Gill
David Gubbins
Peter Gubbins
Kaysar Hussain

Andy Kendall
Mike Lock
Pauline Lock
Tony Lock
Graham Oakes
Wes Read
David Recardo

Gina Seaton
Peter Seib
Jeny Snell
Andy Soughton
Rob Stickland

Any members of the public wishing to address the meeting at Public Question Time or regarding a planning application are asked to email democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk by 9.00am on Tuesday 9th August 2022.

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

This meeting will be live streamed and viewable on YouTube by selecting the committee meetings at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF_soA

This Agenda was issued on Monday 1 August 2022.

Jane Portman, *Chief Executive Officer*



**This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk and via the mod.gov app**

Information for the Public

The council has a well-established area committee system and through four area committees seeks to strengthen links between the Council and its local communities, allowing planning and other local issues to be decided at a local level (planning recommendations outside council policy are referred to the district wide Regulation Committee).

Decisions made by area committees, which include financial or policy implications are generally classed as executive decisions. Where these financial or policy decisions have a significant impact on council budgets or the local community, agendas will record these decisions as “key decisions”. The council’s Executive Forward Plan can be viewed online for details of executive/key decisions which are scheduled to be taken in the coming months. Non-executive decisions taken by area committees include planning, and other quasi-judicial decisions.

At area committee meetings members of the public are able to:

- attend and make verbal or written representations, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- at the area committee chairman’s discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to up to three minutes on agenda items; and
- see agenda reports

Meetings of the Area South Committee are held monthly, usually at 2.00pm, on the first Wednesday of the month at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil (unless specified otherwise).

Agendas and minutes of meetings are published on the council’s website

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Public participation at committees

Public question time

The period allowed for participation in this session shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

Planning applications

Consideration of planning applications at this meeting will commence no earlier than the time stated at the front of the agenda and on the planning applications schedule. The public and representatives of parish/town councils will be invited to speak on the individual planning applications at the time they are considered.

Comments should be confined to additional information or issues, which have not been fully covered in the officer’s report. Members of the public are asked to submit any additional documents to the planning officer at least 72 hours in advance and not to present them to the Committee on the day of the meeting. This will give the planning officer the opportunity to respond appropriately. Information from the public should not be tabled at the meeting. It should

also be noted that, in the interests of fairness, the use of presentational aids (e.g. PowerPoint) by the applicant/agent or those making representations will not be permitted. However, the applicant/agent or those making representations are able to ask the planning officer to include photographs/images within the officer's presentation subject to them being received by the officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. No more than 5 photographs/images either supporting or against the application to be submitted. The planning officer will also need to be satisfied that the photographs are appropriate in terms of planning grounds.

At the committee chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to three minutes each and where there are a number of persons wishing to speak they should be encouraged to choose one spokesperson to speak either for the applicant or on behalf of any supporters or objectors to the application. The total period allowed for such participation on each application shall not normally exceed 15 minutes.

The order of speaking on planning items will be:

- Town or Parish Council Spokesperson
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicant and/or Agent
- District Council Ward Member

If a member of the public wishes to speak they should contact Democratic Services (democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am on the day prior to the meeting and provide their name and whether they have supporting comments or objections, or who they are representing. If this is not possible and a member of the public wishes to speak, they must inform the committee administrator before the meeting begins of their name and whether they have supporting comments or objections and who they are representing - this must be done by completing one of the public participation slips available at the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee shall have discretion to vary the procedure set out to ensure fairness to all sides.

Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

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Area South Committee

Wednesday 10 August 2022

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes of previous meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Area South (Informal) Committee held on 6th April 2022. The draft minutes can be viewed at:

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. Apologies for absence

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. Where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council.

Planning Applications Referred to the District Council's Regulation Committee

The following members of this Committee are also members of the Council's Regulation Committee:

Councillors Peter Gubbins, Tony Lock, Peter Seib and Andy Soughton.

Where planning applications are referred by this Committee to the Regulation Committee for determination, Members of the Regulation Committee can participate and vote on these items at the Area Committee and at Regulation Committee. In these cases the Council's decision-making process is not complete until the application is determined by the Regulation Committee. Members of the Regulation Committee retain an open mind and will not finalise their position until the Regulation Committee. They will also consider the matter at Regulation Committee as Members of that Committee and not as representatives of the Area Committee.

4. Public question time

5. Chairman's announcements

6. Reports from representatives on outside organisations

This is an opportunity for Members who represent the Council on outside organisations to report items of interest to the Committee.

Items for discussion

7. **Planning Application 21/02466/COU - Acacia Lodge, Hendford Hill, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2RG** (Pages 6 - 28)
8. **Dorcas Charitable Trust - Annual Report and Statement** (Pages 29 - 35)
9. **Area South Committee Working Groups and Outside organisations - Appointment of members 2022/23 (Executive Decision)** (Pages 36 - 38)
10. **Development control Scheme of Delegation - Nomination of Substitutes for Area South Chairman and Vice Chairman 2022/23 (Executive Decision)** (Pages 39 - 40)
11. **Area South Forward Plan** (Pages 41 - 42)

Please note that the decisions taken by Area Committees may be called in for scrutiny by the Council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation.

This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.

Agenda Item 7

Officer Report On Planning Application: 21/02466/COU

Proposal :	Proposed change of use from care home to accommodation for people experiencing homelessness (sui generis).
Site Address:	Acacia Lodge, 166 Hendford Hill, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2RG
Parish:	Yeovil
YEOVIL WESTLAND Ward (SSDC Members)	Cllr K Gill. Cllr D Gubbins , Cllr A Soughton
Contact details	Email: planning@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	8th November 2021
Applicant :	Bournemouth Churches Housing Association
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mrs Helen Lazenby, Clive Miller Planning Limited, Sanderley Studio, Kennel Lane Langport TA10 9SB
Application Type :	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The referral to the committee is due to the high level of public interest in the proposals and the potential to impact upon the amenity of residents within the area together with the historic role of the District Council in seeking solutions to the provision of accommodation for homeless people.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The site comprises approximately 0.25 hectares and is located off the southwestern end of Hendford Hill adjacent to 166 Hendford Hill (Hendford House), which is an unlisted vacant building (considered to be a building at risk) with which the application site shares an access. Beyond that is the Quicksilver Mail Public House, a Grade II listed building. To the north east of the site is 162 Hendford Hill a stone, two storey dwelling with private garden to the rear. By reason of topography, the site and building comprising the current application are elevated above No. 162.I

The application site is a modern four storey purpose built former care home which comprises the following accommodation: -

- 39 bedrooms
- Day Rooms
- Snug/Lounge
- Kitchen
- Manager's and nurse's office
- Hair Salon
- Stores, training room and staff room.

As stated above, access to the site is off Hendford Hill. To the rear of the former care home is a car park comprising 9 car parking spaces and 3 accessible parking spaces together with sufficient space for manoeuvring and turning of vehicles.

The building closed as a care home in 2018 and has been vacant since that time (temporarily being used by the NHS for mental health care). The property has been marketed since January 2019 with no interest received in its re-occupancy as a care home. No other acceptable offers to purchase the site were received. It is understood that the applicant's have agreed to purchase the site, together with Hendford House (166 Hendford

Hill).

The site lies within a mainly residential area within the built-up area of Yeovil with residential properties to the north east, north west, south and south west. The site lies within the Hendford Hill Conservation Area and trees at the front and rear of the site are covered by a TPO. There is also an Article 4 Directive in Hendford Hill which restricts the change of use of family dwellings to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) without the grant of planning permission. There are registered HMOs at Nos. 65, 69, 83, 122, 128, 144, 152 and 158. There is also a Children's Nursery (Five Steps) at 168 Hendford Hill.

Finally, the building is also identified as an Asset of Community Value (ACV73) on the Council's list of Assets of Community Value. It has been on the list since 11/12/2021.

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the former Hendford Care Home (now vacant) from a residential care home which accommodated 39 residents to a sui generis use for providing accommodation for people experiencing homelessness (39 residents).

The applicants have a contract (awarded in 2020) with South Somerset District Council to provide accommodation in Yeovil to homeless single people. The applicant runs and manages 14-18 Newton Road (Pathways) which provides accommodation for 31 homeless people. That accommodation provides poor quality accommodation in terms of its overall layout, together with the lack of communal, private and outdoor space. It has been declared 'unfit for purpose'. In considering options, the Council has agreed to contribute some £390,000 towards the purchase of the application site.

The application does not propose any internal or external alterations to the building. The following accommodation is proposed within the property: -

- 39 single occupancy ensuite rooms (all single occupancy)
- Storage and servicing rooms
- Reception/office
- Day Rooms/Communal areas
- Meeting rooms
- Kitchen
- Staff, stakeholder or agency worker rooms
- Medical room
- Plant room

The use would have staff on site 24/7 with a minimum of two staff on shift at any time. Shifts would be as follows: -

Morning Shift Monday-Friday 8am-4pm

Evening Shift Monday – Friday 4pm-10pm Night Shift Monday-Friday 10pm-8am

At the weekends, the night shift is from 8pm-8am and the support and housing team finish at 8pm.

The site is not intended to act as a night shelter for the homeless, rather a person's home for the applicant's customers who would stay for between 3 months to 2 years until permanent options were available.

The property would provide residents with single room accommodation with sufficient space to undertake activities and personal development along with 24-hour support to

ensure that everyone living there gets the best possible opportunity to move forward with their lives and prevent a return to homelessness. Support would be focused on building on their existing skills and developing an interest to go back to volunteering and work opportunities and longer-term stable housing. A range of activities would be available to assist residents.

The accommodation would provide residents with private and communal space, together with outdoor space which would create an environment for residents which is safe and supportive with a 24/7 staffing team.

Limited external alterations are proposed which include, CCTV, new perimeter fencing along boundaries where none exist at present, and cycle and bin storage as shown on Plan No. 427405D.01D. Drainage is via the main sewage system. No trees or hedges are to be removed/felled.

PLANNING HISTORY

07/04534/FUL - Demolition of offices, erection of nursing home and 20 retirement flats and the conversion of premises into 4 care flats. Approved 10/01/2008 with conditions.

08/03324/FUL - Demolition of offices, erection of nursing home and 20 retirement flats and the conversion of premises into 4 care flats. Approved 07/11/2008 with conditions.

10/05092/FUL - Alterations to Hendford House to provide ancillary accommodation to nursing home and the erection of a dementia care home facility - Approved 03/03/2011 with conditions.

13/01813/TPO - Application to carry out tree surgery works to a Chestnut tree known as T8 in the Yeovil District Council Tree Preservation Order 1972. Application withdrawn.

17/02206/FUL - The use of land for additional car parking. Approved 13/07/2017 with conditions.

18/01989/FUL - Construction of a 40 bedroom Nursing Home (Use Class C2) and associated parking. Approved 18/12/2018 with conditions.

18/02339/FUL - Partial demolition, proposed change of use, conversion and extension to form 7 no. residential apartments with associated parking and amenities. Approved 19/12/2018 with conditions.

The care home was constructed under the 07/04534/FUL planning permission and application No. 08/03324/FUL provided a number of minor amendments to the originally approved scheme. The remainder of the planning permission to construct 20 retirement flats at the rear of Hendford House remains extant.

POLICY

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 together will govern how the Council makes decisions on planning applications. To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise. For the purposes of this case the development plan comprises the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006/2028.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended) requires that a Local Planning Authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires that "In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires that "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012) and Standing Advice (June 2013) are relevant to the interpretation of Policy TA6 above.

For the purposes of determining current applications the adopted development plan comprises the policies of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 (adopted March 2015).

The policies of most relevance to the proposal are: -

Policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

- Policy SD1 Sustainable Development Policy SS1 Settlement Strategy
- Policy HG6 Care Homes & Specialist Accommodation
- Policy TA5 Transport Impact of New Development Policy TA6 Parking Standards
- Policy EQ1 Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset Policy EQ2 General Development
- Policy EQ3 Historic Environment
- Policy EQ4 Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) Chapter 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport Chapter 12 Achieving well designed places

- Chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Other Material Considerations

- Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (SPS) (September 2013)
- Somerset County Council Highways Development Control - Standing Advice (June 2017)

CONSULTATIONS

The application was advertised by Site Notice citing the Conservation Area location and the Grade II Listed setting of the Quicksilver Mail Public House and neighbouring

properties were notified.

Yeovil Town Council

Object to the proposed change of use as it would: -

- a) have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenities and the Conservation Area; and
- b) result in fear of crime in the community.

SSDC Conservation Officer

The proposed scheme does not appear to incorporate any major physical changes to either the building or the setting, other than replacement of the plot's rear and side perimeter fencing with new high close boarded fencing and two small stores within the rear carpark.

The scheme is predominantly the change of use from care home to hostel.

Therefore, the scheme cannot be considered to contribute any change to the special architectural character or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

However, it was noted from the submission that No166, a key undesignated heritage asset within the Conservation Area, appears to be within the same ownership and on site was noted to be in need of external conservation, and may well be considered a Building at Risk.

- The Amended Proposed Site Plan does not appear to incorporate this building within the scheme and it is questioned what the intentions are for this building and its future use and repair, given that the proposed hostel is within the setting of the undesignated heritage asset and the live scheme may constrain these options.

Summary

As a result, the proposal does not contribute any direct less- than- substantial harm from a heritage point of view and no objection is raised.

However, it is considered that there may be an element of indirect harm to the undesignated heritage asset and it is important that any opportunity should be taken, where made available through the planning system to safeguard the significance and future of No 166.

Avon & Somerset Police

Awaiting a response.

Housing Department

SSDC has a contract with Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) to manage a hostel and associated support service in South Somerset. This is currently located at Newton Road, Yeovil, known as Pathways. The building is owned by BCHA.

The contract was awarded to BCHA in April 2020 to support 40 units (30 hostel and 10 assessment beds), from 2020-2025. Until March 2020, the assessment beds were dormitory style in communal spaces, however this is no longer possible since Covid, so only used for emergency cold weather provision (SWEP).

Background

- South Somerset District Council has a statutory duty under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 to provide people with emergency accommodation if they are homeless.
- In recent years, the Housing team has met this duty by providing a number of different types of temporary and emergency accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and successfully largely avoided placing people in Bed & Breakfast. This includes Council-owned properties as well as a range of other options provided and managed by our partners.
- SSDC works closely with partners to minimise the numbers of rough sleepers in South Somerset and has managed this successfully through the provision of emergency accommodation and outreach support.
- It is widely agreed the current property at and location of Pathways are no longer suitable for emergency accommodation, and BCHA have been looking for alternative premises more suited to customers, support staff, local support agencies and the wider community. The Covid pandemic has accelerated the recognition of the need to identify alternative provision.

Homelessness in South Somerset

- Following the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation has risen as the Council has new duties to assist more people presenting to us as homeless and assess their wider support needs. The increase is not unique to South Somerset and it has been growing across the country.
- Provision of hostel accommodation and associated support forms a key part of SSDC's responsibilities in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, supporting vulnerable people in our community and delivering our requirements under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- If an individual or family is homeless, we have a duty to offer and place them in emergency or temporary accommodation for up to 56 days while their circumstances are being assessed and, if appropriate, help them find suitable accommodation.
- In addition, we have a responsibility to support people who are rough sleeping, at risk of rough sleeping or are not eligible for temporary accommodation under our statutory duties. This group of people have very few options, are often unable to access private or social housing. This leaves them very vulnerable and their only option may be sofa surfing, staying in dangerous or precarious accommodation or sleeping on the streets. This in turn can create additional vulnerabilities, enable exploitation and creates a negative public perception.
- In general, we have historically managed to keep rough sleeping to a minimum in South Somerset through the proactive work of our team and working in partnership with local agencies through outreach, engagement and the provision of our hostel facility at Newton Road.
- In all circumstances, we work with local partners to deliver support to customers to help them move on from emergency/temporary accommodation and find suitable, more permanent homes and to meet their longer term needs. This 1-1, specialist

tailored support is essential to helping people escape from the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping and address the wider issues that have led them to homelessness and help them rebuild their lives. Our multi-agency approach provides a range of options for people both through accommodation and support. This is acknowledged by Government as successful and our good reputation has stood us in good stead throughout the Covid lockdowns in 2020 when we were able to respond to the Government's 'Everyone In' directive by providing emergency hotel accommodation, in partnership with BCHA and others, with the intensive support attached.

- The Government published its rough sleeping strategy in 2018 which sets out the government's vision for halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. In 2019, SSDC adopted the Somerset Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023, which commits us to support clients to access suitable and affordable accommodation where appropriate, and we agreed a target with MHCLG to reduce rough sleeping to zero.
- However, since the closure of the assessment beds and the deterioration of the facilities at Newton Road, we have seen a significant increase in rough sleeping particularly in Yeovil town centre, ranging from between 10-17 people sleeping rough over the course of each month. This figure is high for South Somerset where we have traditionally only had 2-3 rough sleepers. Ongoing concerns are being raised by a number of agencies, businesses and members of the public, as well as the individuals themselves, about the lack of accessible accommodation.
- Investing in and securing new premises will help us deal with the immediate situation, but will also secure a more positive and effective facility that will contribute to reduced homelessness and rough sleeping in the district, particularly in Yeovil town centre.
- Pathways hostel is normally fully occupied (with limited void periods and an ongoing waiting list being managed). The service forms a key part of our/partners role in helping people move on from rough sleeping, through our accommodation pathway and into independent living.
- Our experience of working with many customers in emergency accommodation shows that the provision of on-site services greatly increases their engagement with the support services they need. Somerset Drug & Alcohol service, Second Step (Mental Health) services, the Police, community nurses/dentists amongst others all say it is very difficult currently to engage with this group at Pathways without adequate or suitable spaces to meet with customers on site.
- Our experience during the Covid pandemic was, and continues to be, that we can engage much better with customers safely if services are provided on site. One recent example was the caution initially expressed by our customers in receiving the Covid vaccine in a community setting. However, when the local clinical team ran a 1 day vaccination session at Pathways, 27 residents got vaccinated on that day and the rest then followed their lead through attending the local drop-in sessions at the Gateway.
- Our retained counsellor has also noted a significant increase in engagement if visits can be carried out on-site, and attendance at appointments for the HAP (Home Achievement Programme) and drug/alcohol appointments are much higher if customers can attend appointments at Pathways rather than in a community setting.

- Feedback from the Police about the proposed new site has been very positive. BCHA have submitted a detailed Management Plan to ensure the new site is well managed, and this is monitored closely by SSDC through our contract with BCHA. There is also a real opportunity to work closely with BCHA as part of the Yeovil Refresh to redevelop Newton Road in a completely different way contributing to the regeneration of a vital area in the town centre.

The table below sets out the occupancy rate, the number of referrals to the service and the average length of stay at Pathways.

Pathways data April 2021 - March 22

Number of referrals received	117
Number accepted	54
Average occupancy of hostel at month end	29
Number moving on from the service	61
Average length of voids (days per month)	4.7
Average length of stay at Pathways (days)	102

The Issues

It is widely agreed the current property and location are no longer suitable for homeless and emergency accommodation, and BCHA/SSDC have identified a need for alternative premises more suited to customers, staff, local support agencies and the wider community. The Covid pandemic accelerated the recognition of the need to identify alternative provision.

The contract with BCHA was awarded on the condition that the poor standard of accommodation was urgently addressed, as the building was seen as being no longer suitable for this service. In May 2021, a building and topographic survey was carried out and a Moribund Statement was prepared for Homes England stating that the building was unfit for purpose and should be demolished. A Fire Risk Assessment completed in September 2021 identified significant risks associated with the current building, currently being managed through a series of short term mitigation measures; however, this is not sustainable in the longer term.

Proposed new site, Acacia Lodge, Hendford Hill, Yeovil

During 2021, SSDC/BCHA looked at a number of alternatives and identified a suitable building, which was for sale - Acacia Lodge. In August 2021, BCHA submitted a planning application for a change of use (from care home to hostel accommodation). BCHA have had an offer accepted; if planning is granted, they will purchase the building outright.

The proposed new site offers a wide range of benefits:

- A large, purpose-built (but largely empty) contemporary care-based facility more suitable for our customers and staff.
- Enables a rapid achievement of a Covid-safe standards with 39 en-suite rooms, some communal kitchens and an opportunity to install more self-contained kitchenettes.

- Allows for a more attractive and psychologically informed environment including large, bright and spacious communal rooms for group-work, proactive support, therapeutic rehabilitation work, medical treatment and opportunities for agencies to visit the hostel and provide more on-site support.
- A better location out of the town centre which will assist in breaking the cycle of exploitation and ASB associated with the current area of Yeovil.
- Outdoor space with opportunities for working more proactively with customers on health & wellbeing, gardening, exercise etc.
- Potential for further development on site of additional move-on and supported accommodation units which are not only much-needed in South Somerset but could also potentially provide income for BCHA to further enhance the range of services they can provide for vulnerable people.

SSDC has committed £390k capital costs towards the scheme (agreed at District Executive in June 2021).

SW Heritage Trust (Archaeologist)

No objection to the proposals which have limited or no archaeological implications.

SSDC Environmental Health

No objection.

SSDC Tree Officer

No objection subject to imposition of a condition regarding trees and landscaping works.

SSDC Strategic Planning

No comment to make as the proposals are not applicable for S106 funding for youth and leisure facilities as there is no net change in accommodation.

Natural England

Made comments originally on 26/08/2022 and 24/09/2021. No objection to the proposals or the subsequent amendment that were submitted.

Highways

I am in agreement with the statement made under the highway impact section of the report. I am of the opinion that the level of traffic likely to be generated by the proposed scheme and the need for on site parking would be very similar to that of the retirement use of the building. I note the parking assessment set out in the Planning Statement and I concur with the existing/proposed levels of need to optimise and minimise levels set out in the Somerset Parking Strategy, if necessary, the parking provision (for all modes) and the electric vehicle charging point can be secured by condition. I recall the means of access being accepted by the Highway Authority a number of years ago when the care home was first established on site. Accordingly, no highway objection is raised.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor

Satisfied with the amendments made to the proposals relating to landscaping and CCTV provision that would be secured by conditions. No objections overall to the proposals.

REPRESENTATIONS

109 neighbouring and other properties have been notified, a site notice has been displayed and an advertisement placed in the local newspaper. 713 representations have been received to date to the proposals, including a petition with 185 signatures from The Quicksilver Mail, stating that: -

"Please find enclosed a further 185 signatures all of who use The Quicksilver Mail. All said that they would be concerned for their safety should the Pathways Hostel be located next door to the Quicksilver Mail. Not one person who I asked refused to sign this petition and not one person who I spoke with thought that it was a good idea that the Pathways facility should be moved from Newton Road to 166 Hendford Hill. I ask you to please take this into consideration when making your decision."

Turning to the various objections lodged, these can be summarised as follows:

- Opposition has grown to the proposals since the last meeting. Over 700 objections have been submitted all raising genuine and real fears for the community. Businesses and the local MP have also raised objections, and all promote the use of small residential units to house homeless people, rather than Acacia Lodge which initially would house 39 residents.
- There has been a failure of key Government agencies to look at the issues raised by the application and assess the impact on the wider area. They all fail to provide a genuine assessment of the potential impact on the community and appear to have pre-determined the application.
- The Hands Off Hendford Hill action group has been formed in demand from the objectors to the proposal, and they have worked to investigate the facts.
- They have had discussions with experts and homeless charities all of which agree that a "warehouse full of troubled individuals in a building purpose built for 39 infirm people" is not the answer.
- People who suffer alcohol and drug abuse need targeted and professional medical help which can best be provided in small residential units.
- The proposal does not meet the needs of the community and does not help the homeless either.
- The original Management Plan has been amended but still does not address the concerns raised.
- The agents for the application states that the issues experienced at Pathways in Newton Road will not be transferred to Hendford Hill, but without any reassurances of how they would prevent this from happening.
- There has been no attempt by BCHA to engage with the community to discuss and address their fears, and they have failed to clarify information.
- BCHA dismiss the issues arising in Newton Road as unfounded, but no evidence has been provided to counter this. It is known that there have been arrests on the residents of Pathways, and only last week the police and riot vans were present in Newton Road. If BCHA cannot control the problems at Pathways, how will they control them at Acacia Lodge?
- The proposed Management Plan focusses on what happens inside the building, and

not outside. The ABC (acceptable behaviour contract) added to the Plan is only voluntary and will therefore carry little weight and will not be enough of a deterrent to deter residents from engaging in anti-social behaviour.

- BCHA is not a fit organisation to manage Acacia Lodge.
- Fear of crime is a key planning matter. There are two key planning considerations contained in local and national planning guidelines: the local plan refers to creating safe environments and addressing crime prevention and community safety; and the National Planning Policy Framework states that developments should provide safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, should not undermine quality of life.
- The elderly and vulnerable might be the most affected by the fear of crime, and it is already being felt across the community.
- The high level of crime in Newton Road is widely documented using all forms of media, but BCHA claim that the crime is not being caused by Pathway residents. The published police crime figures for postcode areas show that 13 crimes per month were consistently recorded in the Pathways postcode with anti social behaviour, public disorder, violent and sexual offences commonly recorded.
- A Freedom of Information request made in September 2021 to the police listed the number of calls received requesting the police to attend Pathways in Newton Road: 169 in 2018, 206 in 2019, 224 in 2020 and 171 between January and August 2021. A total of 770 calls in the last 3.5 years.
- The action group had carried out a survey of residents and businesses around Pathways. Everyone was in no doubt that Pathways is where the problems originate, and all are sick of having to pay for extra security measures, escorting female staff to their cars, and experiencing the rude and outrageous behaviour they see all too often.
- Councillors are well aware of the issues at Newton Road as it has been discussed at numerous meetings, and the police have been invited and asked what they are doing about it. The police say they are doing all they can with the resources available. Moving the problem to another part of town is not the answer.
- Councillors not only have a duty of care to the homeless, but also the people living and working in the area around Acacia Lodge.
- The CEO and BCHA said at a public meeting that people cannot be stopped from meeting and drinking outside Acacia Lodge, and it was possible that some anti social behaviour might occur outside the jurisdiction of BCHA. BCHA is clearly unfit to manage the site in Newton Road, and Acacia Lodge would be much larger.
- The CEO of BCHA sited another of their developments in Plymouth, George House, as being effectively managed. George House accommodates 46 residents and is therefore a reasonable comparison to Acacia Lodge. The community wanted to know first hand what George House was like, and therefore a visit was arranged. However, the visit was cancelled, so some residents went there themselves and spoke with local businesses and residents. The situation was bleak, and provided a picture alarmingly similar to Newton Road, and the problems appeared to be getting worse. One resident could not get house insurance because they had been broken into too many times.
- The police figures for the George House area correlate to those of Newton Road, all of which has substantiated and added to the fear that the community is feeling. It is also evidence that the crimes of Newton Road will be simply transferred to the Acacia Lodge area.
- ABRI has not officially commented but accept that feelings are running high with their residents. They say they take issues such as anti social behaviour and crime very seriously as it undermines community cohesion. They take the opposition to the proposals very seriously, and indeed, have a development of their own at Windermere Close, very close by.
- Acacia Lodge was built in 2010 and closed in 2018 after a series of poor CQC management reports. It was not closed because of the lack of need or because of the

shortcomings of the facility.

- The proposal is to close the care home despite SSDC recognising in their Local Plan that the number of elderly will increase in the future. Indeed, new care homes are being planned and built within new developments, and an application in March 2018 for a 40 bed nursing home to the rear of Acacia Lodge, and the conversion of Hendford House to 7 apartments, was allowed. Unless Acacia Lodge remains a care home this will never be built.
- The Keyford development also has a large new 65 bed care home proposed.
- Believe Acacia Lodge has not been marketed properly for a reasonable price and time period. It has been overpriced at £2.6m as evidenced because the owners have now agreed a price of £2m. More time is needed (especially given the pandemic over the last 2 years) to market the property at the right price for a care home. The Local Plan requires 18 months. If SSDC had engaged with the care home providers and offered grants as they have done with BCHA, then the community is confident that the building would have been retained for its original use.
- Acacia Lodge is not empty. It has been used by Yeovil Hospital for extra bedspace in 2020 and is now being used since March 2021 as vital respite care for those with mental health problems.
- The sheer size of Acacia Lodge is contrary to SSDC's own Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan which clearly states the need for smaller units.
- Concerns are raised that Acacia Lodge aims to meet the District provision, rather than just the Town provision, and again, clearly contradicts the Strategy where it is recognised that people should be reconnected back to their home areas.
- The problems associated with Pathways are known to be hazard to traffic despite there being pavements on either side of the road and it not being a major route. In contrast, Acacia Lodge is close to the Quicksilver Roundabout where the A37 and A30 met, both busy feeder routes. Problems originating from Acacia Lodge will occur at the roadside on the single pavement which could cause major problems for traffic and pedestrians.
- The 800 new homes (generating some 1,500 new cars) at the Keyford development, together with service and delivery vehicles, will use Hendford Hill and result in further congestion and added disruption from issues arising from Acacia Lodge. This will have a detrimental impact on business and trade in the town.
- The residents of Acacia Lodge will inevitably loiter on the pavement outside which will be a source of danger and fear for all using the single pavement.
- Lovers Lane is proposed as a pedestrian and cyclist route, yet because it is secluded it is highly likely to be used by the residents of Acacia Lodge creating conflicts.
- Acacia Lodge is located in a Conservation Area, yet Hendford House is proposed to be boarded up and the vegetation kept low which will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Will the requirement to avoid concealment result in the loss of trees in, for example, Lovers Lane and Ninesprings? And if so, this will have a detrimental visual impact on the wider area.
- Also, the proposed high security fencing and lighting will impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The proposal does nothing to mitigate the risks to the Conservation Area and listed buildings arising from the proposal.
- There are 2 listed buildings (public houses) in the vicinity of Acacia Lodge which provide a service to the community by providing places to meet to hold social events, etc. It is likely that the disturbance from Pathways residents will have an impact on these businesses and their reputation, and their ability to operate.
- The Quicksilver landlord has already stated that many of his customers have raised concerns about the proposal, and therefore presents a risk to the viability of his business.
- The area around Acacia Lodge is largely residential. The Gryphon School bus stops outside the building, there are care homes and a nursery, and all raise safeguarding

- concerns as Hendford Hill is used by many children to access these facilities.
- BCHA seeks to encourage residents to stay in Acacia Lodge, but most will walk up and down Hendford Hill to the town centre.
 - In the last two years, similar proposals in Wakefield, Sheffield and Stourport-on-Severn have all been refused as they would have undermined quality of life and increase the fear of crime.
 - Acacia Lodge is now a registered community asset, and the National Planning Policy Framework advises against the loss of community facilities. This proposal would remove Acacia Lodge as a valued community asset from an ageing community.
 - The recreation ground at Arnewood Gardens nearby is to be upgraded, but if residents of Acacia Lodge start to congregate there the children and elderly people for which it is intended would not want to go there.
 - Rustywell Lane is a narrow, unmade and unlit lane connecting Hendford Hill and Rustywell Park where locals already experience a fear of crime. There is already a lot of vandalism in Rustywell Lane and Park, and there is trouble every time events take place at the showground. Anyone loitering in the lane in the dark would be very vulnerable.
 - It should be noted that the Police and Highways Authority do not object, but they do not approve of the proposal either.
 - The Councillors need to know the full effect of the proposals on the neighbours. It is already affecting their physical and mental health, and it is unfair that they have been put in this position. They are afraid of the outcome, especially as it appears their concerns are not being taken into consideration. And nothing in the updates to the application has allayed their concerns; in fact, they have multiplied. They now feel threatened, vulnerable and unsafe in their own homes.
 - The First Steps Nursey situated close to Acacia Lodge on Hendford Hill has been open for 30 years, and over 90 families use it. Children with complex needs, learning difficulties, from disadvantaged homes, etc go to the nursery. The manager has been inundated with concerns from parents wanting to know about security at the nursery. Some potential parents have cancelled visits, others that have booked places for September have said they will cancel if the proposal goes ahead. 20 people are employed and they are also concerned. The nursey is an 'outstanding' Ofsted inspected nursery, and they have an 'open door' policy. Parents are encouraged to walk their children to the nursery, and they use all the local facilities, eg. the library, Ninesprings, and visit the care home on West Coker Road. The staff use the PH car park, and they have events in the PH function room.

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11 and 12 of the NPPF state that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

When considering development proposals, the Council takes a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development and seeks to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions within the District. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan shall be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This reflects Local Plan Policy SD1 and the general thrust of policy guidance within the NPPF.

Policy SS1 of the Local Plan identifies Yeovil as a Strategically Significant Town and the prime focus for development in the District.

When considering the merits of the principle of the current application, the most relevant Local Plan policy is Policy EQ2: General Development. This Policy, as the title suggests, sets out policy criteria for development in general. Development needs to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the District. In addition, infrastructure, service availability and accessibility are material considerations to be taken into account, together with the protection of the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

The NPPF, NPPG and Policy HQ6 advises that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements should be addressed. This includes, amongst others, accommodation for the homeless.

The Council has a statutory duty under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 to provide people with emergency accommodation if they are homeless for whatever reason. The Government are requiring all Councils to end rough sleeping by 2027. A range of accommodation is provided to different customers based on their circumstances and needs. Part of the existing accommodation is provided at Pathways, Newton Road which is managed by the applicant (as a partner to the District Council) and provides accommodation for up to 31 residents. However, the Housing Department has advised that the building no longer provides suitable accommodation due to the substandard nature of the accommodation including lack of outdoor space.

The application site provides an opportunity to provide improved accommodation for homeless people in terms of:-

- A large, purpose-built and contemporary care based facility more suitable for customers and staff.
- Enables a rapid achievement of a covid safe standard with 39 ensuite rooms and an opportunity to install self contained kitchenettes, if required.
- Allows for a more attractive and psychologically informed environment including large, bright and spacious communal rooms for group work, proactive support, therapeutic rehabilitation work, medical treatment and opportunities for agencies to visit the property and provide more onsite support.
- A better location out of the town centre which will assist in breaking the cycle of exploitation and ASB associated with the current site.
- Outdoor space with opportunities for working more proactively with customers on health and wellbeing, gardening, exercise etc.
- Potential for further development on site of additional move on and supported accommodation units which are not only much needed in South Somerset but could also potentially provide income from BCHA to further enhance the range of services they can provide for vulnerable people.
- Opportunity to secure the majority of the capital costs from Homes England at a greatly reduced project cost from the original proposal and redevelop on the current site. There is clear policy support within the Local Plan and the NPPF for the principle of changing the use of the property from a care home to accommodation for the homeless. There is no requirement within policy to demonstrate need for the accommodation proposed. It is apparent from the consultation responses from the Housing Department together with evidence from the applicants that there is an identified need to provide additional accommodation in Yeovil for homeless people. Furthermore, the Council has a statutory duty to eradicate the issue by 2027 (i.e. less than 4 years). The proposal is considered to be acceptable and to accord with Policies SD1, SS1, EQ2 and HG6 of the Local Plan and the aims and provisions of the NPPF.

Nevertheless, detailed considerations relating to such matters as impacts on (i) the

character and appearance of the locality; (ii) landscape setting; (iii) the setting of designated heritage assets; (iv) the residential amenities of occupiers of nearby properties; (v) highway safety; (vi) drainage issues; (viii) ecology will be addressed elsewhere within this report.

Visual Amenity/Impact on Conservation Area

The building is of relatively modern construction and occupies a prominent position within the townscape and the Conservation Area. The Grade II listed Quicksilver Mail public house is hidden from view due to the position of Hendford House. It is therefore considered that in heritage terms, the building is not within the setting of that listed building. Accordingly, no harm would be caused to the setting of the listed building.

No external alterations or additions to the property are proposed. The property remains in use for residential accommodation purposes, albeit a different form of accommodation than that previously granted permission which falls within a different use class. There is no increase in number of residents from the previous use as a Care Home. As such, it is considered that the proposals would not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, nor would any harm be caused to the setting of the designated heritage asset, that would justify a refusal of permission. Indeed, your Conservation Officer has assessed the potential impact of the proposals and concluded that there would be no change to the architectural character or historic interest of the Conservation Area. However, the opportunity should be taken to enhance the setting of Hendford House, given that the proposals incorporate this building within the application. The extant permission for Hendford House has a large two storey extension which officers consider would now not be supported as it is overly dominant. The opportunity can be taken with this application to revoke that element of the permission and to ensure a more sympathetic development is achieved. The principle therefore accords with Policies EQ2 and EQ3 of the Local Plan and reflect the relevant national guidance within the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

The site is situated within a predominantly residential area with a number of HMOs, a children's nurse and public house in proximity of the site. The building is a large detached building set within its own grounds. No.162 Hendford Hill (a residential property) sits immediately adjacent to the site. To the rear of the application site is the existing car park and servicing areas and at the front is a grassed area. Within the building a number of bedroom windows on the eastern side of the building overlook the residential properties to the east. These windows could be obscured which would restrict any overlooking issue and this could be dealt with by means of a condition. The potential of overlooking from the building already exists with its lawful use, but the proposed conditions would improve the situation.

The building will not provide any more residents than the lawful use as a care home. The change is from one form of residential accommodation to another. A number of objections suggest that this is an inappropriate location for this type of facility due to its location away from the town centre. However, those comments could equally have been made with regard to the existing care home and indeed this type of accommodation accords with national and local plan policy for this type of use in this location.

Objectors are concerned at the potential from anti-social behaviour and have made reference to issues that have occurred at Pathways. However, this is a very different type of accommodation being provided to that at Pathways. Issues relating to potential crime and disorder at the property are dealt with elsewhere in this report.

The application site offers a better standard of accommodation with individual bedrooms, a number of communal areas and outside space. The property will have 24/7 staff in place and the property would be subject to a Service Management Plan which includes:

- Section 2 explains the daily handover meetings during which the progress of every resident is discussed;
- Section 7 sets out the licence agreement protocol, including how obligations and responsibilities are communicated to new and existing residents;
- Section 7 also explains how risk factors are continually reviewed and support plans amended accordingly to ensure that the service is responding to the needs of each resident. The service operates on the principles of Trauma Informed Care, which is intended to improve awareness of trauma and the impact it has had on its residents and to ensure that the services provided offer effective support and, above all, that they do not re-traumatise those accessing the service.
- Section 8 (and 23) sets out how Acceptable Behaviour Contracts are used to mitigate rule breaches in a proactive manner;
- Section 9 explains the partner agencies who are involved in the support and care given to residents on a routine basis;
- Section 10 refers to the Community Engagement Plan, and minimum quarterly community forum meetings and explains BCHA's participation in the Yeovil One Partnership which seeks to find solutions to anti-social behaviour and crime;
- Section 12 explains how residents are encouraged to be practically involved in the running and shaping of their own home and the service;
- Section 15 sets out the core foundations of the support work;
- Section 17 explains how welfare checks on every resident are carried out at least once every shift;
- Section 18 refers to the undertaking of weekly health, safety and wellbeing checks of rooms and communal areas. BCHA premises function as Psychologically Informed Environments where the day-to-day running has been designed with the residents needs at the forefront. The aim of a PIE is to improve the psychological and emotional wellbeing of people accessing the service. The intended outcomes for service users include improvements in emotional and mental wellbeing, improved relationships with others, and reduced maladaptive coping strategies.

The Service Management Agreement can be the subject of a Section 106 Agreement which would ensure that the property is managed in a way that would not provide any adverse impact on existing or future residential amenity.

As such, the development is in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan and the aims and provisions of the NPPF.

Highways

The County Highway Authority was consulted and raised no objections.

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The proposed development would not by itself generate any additional unacceptable traffic movements to and from the site. The level of traffic generation would be similar if not less than the lawful use of the building as a care home. Various comments were made regarding the proposed access but it already exists and was constructed to Highway Authority standards for the care home. Reference has been made by objectors regarding the fact

that there is only one pavement along Hendford Hill and the potential for conflict. The pavement along Hendford Hill is wide, and no problems have been encountered to date. The Highway Officer does not consider this to represent a problem.

As such, it is considered that the impact on highway safety is acceptable in accordance with Policies TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF. Conditions will be imposed relating to retention of onsite parking and provision of onsite bicycle parking and electric charging points.

Drainage/Flood Risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1. Drainage is connected to the mains system as existing. The proposed development involves no extensions or other physical alterations to the property, there are no objections on drainage and flood risk grounds. As such, the proposed development accords with Policy EQ1 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

Crime and Disorder

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires that planning authorities consider crime and disorder reduction whilst exercising their duties. This advice is reiterated in paragraph 92(b) of the NPPF which states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: -

"are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion - for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas..."

Numerous objections have been submitted, including those from Yeovil Town Council which express a concern regarding potential for increased crime and disorder in the area as well as a fear of crime from the proposed use, particularly given the predominantly residential uses in the area as well as the children's nursery etc. Numerous objections make reference to issues of crime and disorder at Pathways as evidence of the likely problems that will occur should these proposals be approved.

The Avon and Somerset Crime Prevention Officer has been consulted and subject to the implementation of a number of issues e.g. CCTV, fencing etc which can be subject to condition has raised no objections to the proposals. Furthermore, Avon & Somerset Police have also been consulted and have made no comments on the application at the time of preparing this report. There is no suggestion from agencies involved in crime prevention that this is a high crime area or that the proposals would lead to an increase in fear of crime. Furthermore, there is no suggestion from these agencies that the proposals are in the wrong location with regards to the proximity of residential properties and other uses such as the children's nursery and public house.

The lack of complaints from the Police and the Crime Prevention Officer to these proposals is a clear statement that they do not believe that these proposals would result in crime and disorder or that the fear of crime would undermine the quality of life or community cohesion or resilience in the area.

Furthermore, your officers are aware that objectors have consulted the Police including the Police and Crime Commissioner directly regarding their concerns about these proposals, but still no objections have been received. Whilst your officers understand local residents

concerns regarding these proposals, the lack of a Police objection is telling to these proposals.

As such the only conclusion your officers can reach is that the proposals would not result in any increase or fear of crime in the area. The proposals would therefore comply with Policy EQ2 and relevant guidance in the NPPF and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Biodiversity

Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that the impact of development on wildlife is fully considered during the determination of a planning application under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations 2017). Policy EQ4 of the Local Plan TDLP also require proposals to pay consideration to the impact of development on wildlife and to provide mitigation measures where appropriate.

The proposed development involves no extensions or other physical alterations to the property, there are no objections on biodiversity grounds. As such the proposed development accords with Policy EQ1 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

Other Material Considerations

There are a range of other issues previously raised by objectors which are dealt with below. Some of these issues are not planning issues.

- The applicants would not manage the premises properly.

The applicants are a strategic partner of the District Council (Housing). They are a charitable organisation based in Bournemouth who provide and manage a wide range of residential accommodation not just in Yeovil but elsewhere in the South West. There is no suggestion from the Housing Department or any other statutory body that they would not be capable of managing the property effectively or efficiently. Furthermore, your officers consider that the Service Management Plan proves an effective management regime for the property which can be secured within a Section 106 Agreement.

- The proposals are linked to the regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre to enable the removal of Pathways.

There is an acknowledged and identified problem of homelessness in Yeovil which the Council has a statutory duty to deal with. The level of homelessness exceeds the capacity of 'Pathways'. As already stated, 'Pathways' has been found to be not fit for purpose due to its poor layout and standard of accommodation. It is therefore necessary to provide better standard of accommodation for the homeless in Yeovil. These proposals have no relationship to the Town Centre regeneration proposals but seek to deal with a real issue of providing better quality accommodation for the homeless in Yeovil.

- The Council is conflicted in dealing with these proposals

These objections relate primarily to the fact that the Housing Department has agreed to contribute £390,000 towards the purchase of Acacia Lodge (the application site). That decision was made by the Housing Committee in June 2021. No objections were made to the Housing Department or Housing Committee at the time that decision was made. In any

event, the Planning Authority are removed from that process and have a statutory duty as set out elsewhere in this report to ensure that these proposals are determined against the relevant policies in the statutory development plan. Accordingly, your officers are firmly of the opinion that no conflict of interest arises in respect of this issue.

- The proposal has been the subject of limited consultation

Your officers encourage all applicants to undertake pre and post application consultation with the local community in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018). Such consultation is designed to inform local communities of proposals and to obtain feedback. The applicant has undertaken the following public engagement.

- Community consultation and information evening. Held on the 9th September 2021 at the Holy Trinity Church Community Centre in Yeovil from 3.30 - 7.30pm. This was a drop-in event with three sessions where BCHA and project team representatives were in attendance to explain the proposals, the operational management plan and also answer questions from members of the public. The event was advertised in local press, on social media and invitations were sent direct to those living/working in the immediate surroundings. Around 55 people attended.
- 22nd September 2021. Town Council planning committee. The applicants attended the meeting and the applicants planning consultant, Martin Hancock (CEO of BCHA) and Lance (a current resident of Pathways) all spoke in support of the proposals.
- 17th January 2021. Town Council meeting. The applicant's planning consultant attended and spoke in support of the application.
- Martin Hancock also attended a meeting with the HOHH group representatives in the Spring to discuss the proposals.

Furthermore, your officers have also undertaken their own consultation on this application with site's notices, neighbour notifications, and engagement with local residents and the HOHH.

In view of the above, your officers believe that sufficient public engagement has been undertaken. Indeed, the response of this application from local residents etc has been significant in that over 700 representations the received, together with a petition with 161 signatures. All of this demonstrates that the proposals have been sufficiently consulted upon and the local community have had an opportunity to make their various comments.

- Asset of Community Value

The building was placed on the Council's list of Assets of Community Value on 21 December 2021, at the request of HHOH. The moratoria meaning that the owners could not sell the building other than to the local community expired on 22nd June 2022. This was the deadline by which the nominator or other qualifying community group must have submitted a bid. No bid was received and so the moratoria is removed and the owner is free to dispose of the building as they wish. There is also nothing to stop the applicants submitting this application. The implication of the building being on the Council's list of Assets of Community Value is not an issue which prohibits the Planning Authority from accepting and determining this application.

Article 4 Direction

Various objectors have made reference to the existence of an Article 4 Direction in Hendford Hill. The District Council placed an Article 4 Direction on 5 specific areas in Yeovil on 19th May 2016, including Hendford Hill. The purpose of the Article 4 Direction is to restrict the change of use of single-family dwelling i.e., Class C3 to a use falling within Class C4 (house in multiple occupation) without the need to apply for planning permission. The application property is not a single dwelling house and has a permitted use for a care home for 39 residents. Your officers have assessed the implication of the proposed change of use in this report and concluded that it would be acceptable. Accordingly, the Article 4 Direction is of limited relevance to these current proposals.

CONCLUSION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that where regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The scheme would cause no demonstrable harm to (i) visual amenity; (ii) the setting, character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of any designated heritage asset; (iii) residential amenity; (iv) crime and disorder and, (v) highway safety. In addition, there would be no material exacerbation of flood risk as a consequence of this development and there is no evidence that any harm would be caused to interests of biodiversity. As such, the proposal accords with Policies SD1, SS1, EQ1, HQ6, EQ4, TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning permission be granted for the following reasons:

01. The application seeks planning permission to change the use of the property from a care home to accommodation for people experiencing homelessness (sui generis). The proposals would cause no demonstrable harm to (i) character of the surrounding area, (ii) visual amenity, (iii) the setting, character and appearance of the Conservation Area (iv) the setting of any listed building (v) residential amenity (vi) crime and disorder, (vii) highway safety. In addition, there would be no material exacerbation to flood risk as a consequence of the development and there is no evidence that any harm would be caused to interests of biodiversity. As such the proposals when assessed with policies SD1, SS1, EQ1, EQ2, EQ3 and EQ4, TA3, TA5, HQ6 of the South Somerset local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF and is recommended for approval.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. Subject to the following:

The completion of a Section 106 Agreement to include:

- The Service Management Plan
- The revocation of the extant permissions to provide additional

accommodation at this site.

And the following conditions:

02. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed below, and with those approved as required by the conditions attached to this permission:
- Site Location Plan - 21740 EX01 Aug 2021
 - Existing Site Plan - 21740 EX02 Aug 2021
 - Proposed Site Plan - 21740 SD01.D Aug 2021
 - Proposed Attic Floor Plan
 - Proposed Second Floor Plan
 - Proposed First Floor Plan
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 - Existing Attic Floor Plan
 - Existing Ground Floor Plan
 - Proposed First Floor Plan
 - Proposed Second Floor Plan
 - Proposed CCTV Plan (all floors)
 - Existing and Proposed Glazing to bedroom 7 - 21740 SD03

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to secure the scope and implementation of the development in accordance with local and national planning policy and guidance, as set out in the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028 and with guidance contained in the NPPF 2018.

03. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings nos.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

04. Within three months from the date of this permission or such longer period as the Local Planning Authority may previously agree in writing, provision shall be made for secure bicycle parking on-site in accordance with details previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the means and methods to be used to accommodate such secure bicycle parking and the extent of such parking. Once implemented, such approved parking shall be maintained and be available for use at all times hereafter.

Reason: To ensure provision of an adequate and satisfactory standard of bicycle parking on the site having regard to policy TA6 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

05. The nine carparking space and the turning area as indicated on the approved drawing no shall be maintained and retained for such purposes and shall only be used for their designated purposes for the parking and turning of vehicles used by persons residing, visiting or attending at the site, and shall be kept permanently free from any form of obstruction.

Reason: To ensure that safe and convenient on-site parking and turning areas are provided in a satisfactory manner and thereafter retained in the interests of public safety and convenience, having regard to Policies TA5, TA6 of the south Somerset Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

06. A scheme of obscure glazing for bedroom windows on the eastern elevation of the

building shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the building. The approved scheme shall remain in perpetuity during the use of the building.

Reason: To ensure an appropriate degree of residential amenity to neighbouring residents having regard to Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

07. No development works shall be undertaken until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping measures. The submitted scheme shall clearly confirm the details, materials, levels and dimensions of any intended tree or shrub planting, tree pit design, earth-moulding, boundary treatments (for example, hedgerows, fences and walls), seeding, turfing and the installation of hard-surfaces, pathways, driveways and parking spaces. All planning stock must be specified as UK-Grown, and details must be provided in relation to the planting locations, planting matrixes, numbers of individual species, sizes, forms, root-types, root-volumes and the intended timing of planting. Installation details to ensure successful establishment, specifically relating to ground-preparation, the use of bio-degradable geo-textiles and other weed-suppression and ground stabilising measure, surface-mulching, strimmer-guarding, staking, supporting and tying must also be included within the submitted scheme. All planting comprised in the approved scheme must be carried out within the dormant planting season (November to February inclusively) upon or prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved; and if any trees or shrubs which within a period of ten years from the completion of the development die, are removed or in the opinion of the Council, become seriously damaged or diseased, they must be replaced within the next planting season with trees/shrubs of the same approved specification, in the same location; unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent of any variation.

Reason: To ensure the planting of new trees and shrubs in accordance with the Council's statutory duties relating to The Town & Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended) (1) and to secure a quality scheme of landscaping measures in order to fulfil the following objectives of The South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028); EQ2 General Development, EQ4 Bio-Diversity and EQ5 Green Infrastructure.

Dorcas Charitable Trust – Annual Report & Statements

Strategic Director:	Kirsty Larkins, Director, Service Delivery	
Service Manager:	Tim Cook, Locality Team Manager	
Lead Officer:	Tim Cook, Locality Team Manager Emily Wilce, Finance Specialist	
Contact Details:	tim.cook@southsomerset.gov.uk emily.wilce@southsomerset.gov.uk	or

Purpose of the Report

To update members of the Area South Committee who collectively act as trustees for the Dorcas House Trust and to approve the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

Public Interest

Dorcas House Trust (otherwise known as Portreeves or Corporation Almshouses) is a registered Charity, No. 235337 and is regulated under Charity Commission Schemes dated 3rd September 1973 and 1st February 1978. The Area South Committee acts as Trustees of the trust.

Recommendations

- (1) To approve the Annual Accounts for the Dorcas House Trust
- (2) To note the update in the annual report

Background

Dorcas House Trust (otherwise known as Portreeves or Corporation Almshouses) is a registered Charity, No. 235337 and is regulated under Charity Commission Schemes dated 3rd September 1973 and 1st February 1978.

As a local authority SSDC is required to demonstrate compliance with the underlying principles of good governance and that a framework exists to demonstrate this. One of the principles is accountability and by preparing and publishing the annual Statement of Accounts the Council achieves this objective.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 came into force on 31 March 2011. The Dorcas House Statement of Accounts needs to be evidenced by the Chair of Area Committee South signing and dating the balance sheet and the annual report.

Dorcas House was located in Preston Grove, Yeovil. The land on which it sat was conveyed to the Borough of Yeovil by means of a Deed of Gift on 30th May 1910 as a



South Somerset District Council

site for an Almshouse. The trusteeship is vested in South Somerset District Council and delegated to the Area South Committee.

The Council was under obligation to erect an Almshouse. Once built, Dorcas House was only to be used for poor women inhabitants of the Parish of Yeovil. In more recent years SSDC applied to the Charities Commission to have the covenants changed to allow women and their children to reside in the property.

Concerns regarding the ongoing cost of maintaining and managing the building in future years, together with the unsuitability and inflexibility of the accommodation prompted the trustees to consider alternative options to meet the objectives of the trust.

Following advice from the Charities Commission that the Trustees were permitted to sell and re-provide without the need for formal permission, the property was sold in October 2013 producing a net capital receipt of £371,572 and in addition investments were realised for a sum of £52,032. Together with the cash balance there is now a capital fund of £452,937 for replacement properties.

Current Situation

The intention has always been to seek replacement properties for the charitable foundation as opportunities arise within the settlement of Yeovil –as part of the obligated affordable housing on a qualifying site or as an adjunct to traditional housing association homes on an infill site. Unfortunately none of the proposed schemes explored to date has come to fruition. Once alternative provision has been completed, the original terms of the Dorcas House trust will continue to apply to the new accommodation.

Governance

The governance arrangements will be reviewed and changes will be needed in light of Local Government Review.

Financial Implications

Dorcas House draft statement of accounts details the financial position of the charity as at 31st March 2022 and is submitted at Appendix A for approval by Area South Committee at this June 2022 meeting. Grant Thornton, the District Auditors, will not review separately the annual Statement of Accounts and supporting working papers as the turnover is below £25k.

Council Plan Implications

Include links to Council Plan 2020 – 2024 – which can be found on the staff portal at this link: [Council Plan | South Somerset District Council](#)

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications



South Somerset District Council

Re-investment of the proceeds of sale will be used for property that will be built to modern standards, which will be more energy efficient.

Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	No
<i>If an EIA was not required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	
The nature of the Charitable Trust dictates the client group whose needs are met by this provision. The purpose of the report is to agree the annual report and accounts to comply with Charity Commission rules. No changes which could negatively impact on those with protected characteristics are being proposed.	

Background Papers

None

Equality Impact Relevance Check Form



The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. This tool will identify the equalities relevance of a proposal, and establish whether a full Equality Impact Assessment will be required.

What is the proposal?	
Name of the proposal	Dorcas House Annual report
Type of proposal (new or changed Strategy, policy, project, service or budget):	Update
Brief description of the proposal:	To ask Area South Members to agree the annual report.
Name of lead officer:	Tim Cook/Emily Wilce

You should consider whether the proposal has the potential to negatively impact on citizens or staff in the following ways:

- Access to or participation in a service,
- Levels of representation in our workforce, or
- Reducing quality of life (i.e. health, education, standard of living)

A negative impact is any change that could be considered detrimental. If a negative impact is imposed on any citizens or staff with protected characteristics, the Council has a legal duty to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Could your proposal negatively impact citizens with protected characteristics? (This includes service users and the wider community)	NO
Could your proposal negatively impact staff with protected characteristics? (i.e. reduction in posts, changes to working hours or locations, changes in pay)	NO

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required?	NO
If Yes, Please provide a brief description of where there may be negative impacts, and for whom. Then complete a full Equality Impact assessment Form	
If No, Please set out your justification for why not.	
The funds held and purpose of the charity do have a direct impact on those with protected characteristics as they are to be used to provide accomodation specifically for 'poor women inhabitants of the Parish of Yeovil'. However, this report does not address the purpose of the charity and recommendations relate solely to the running of the charity and are required to comply with Charity Law.	
Service Director / Manager sign-off and date	Tim Cook - 17/03/22
Equalities Officer sign-off and date	Dave Crisfield 17 th March 2022

Dorcas House Trust

*(otherwise known as Portreeves or Corporation
Almshouses)*

**ANNUAL REPORT
and
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
2021/22**

Registered Charity Number: 235337

DORCAS HOUSE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended 31st March 2022

	2021/22 Income Fund		2020/21 Income Fund	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Incoming Resources</u>				
Rental Income		0.00		0.00
<u>Investment Income</u>				
Interest on Investment		(1,472.59)		2,889.73
Total Incoming Resources		(1,472.59)		2,889.73
<u>Resources Expended</u>				
Professional fees				
Debtor Provisions adjustments		(175.34)		0.00
Total Resources Expended		(175.34)		0.00
Net Resources		(1,297.25)		2,889.73
<u>Other Recognised Gains</u>				
Gain on revaluation of investments		0.00		0.00
Net Movement in Funds		(1,297.25)		2,889.73
<u>Reconciliation of Funds</u>				
Fund balances brought forward		454,410.12		451,520.39
		453,112.87		454,410.12

DORCAS HOUSE TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st March 2022

	2021/22		2020/21	
	£	£	£	£
Current Assets				
Investments	0.00		0.00	
Debtors	0.00		0.00	
Cash	453,112.87		454,410.12	
	453,112.87		454,410.12	
Net Current Assets		453,112.87		454,410.12
Represented by:				
Endowment Fund		0.00		0.00
Capital/Unrestricted Funds		453,112.87		454,410.12
Total Funds		453,112.87		454,410.12

These accounts were approved by the Trustees on _____ and signed on their behalf by:

Peter Gubbins
(Chairman of Joint Area Committee South)



Area South Committee Working Groups and Outside organisations – Appointment of members 2022/23 (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Nicola Hix, Strategy & Support Services
Specialist: Angela Cox, Specialist - Democratic Services
Lead Officer: Jo Boucher, Case Officer, Strategy & Commissioning
Contact Details: jo.boucher@southsomerset.gov.uk

Purpose of the Report

As the Council has entered a new municipal year, the Committee is asked to review its appointments to outside organisations and working groups within Area South, having regard to the policy on the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies, which was adopted by District Executive on 1st May 2014.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Review and appoint members to serve on the groups and panels for the municipal year 2022/23.
2. Review and appoint members to the outside organisations as set out in the report.

Area South Panels and Working Groups

The following table shows the internal working groups, and their memberships, appointed by this Committee for the municipal year 2021/2022. Committee is asked to decide whether to re-establish the groups for the new municipal year and agree the memberships of each of the groups.

Organisation	Representatives 2021/2022	Frequency of meetings
Birchfield Group	Yeovil Lyde and Yeovil Without Ward Members	Annual meeting (June)
Market Review Working Group	Karl Gill Wes Read Andy Soughton	Approximately every two months.

Outside Organisations

The organisations and groups to which representatives have been appointed by this Committee are set out below. Members will be aware that they reviewed this list of organisations in October 2013 and made several recommendations towards the final policy on the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies, which was adopted by District Executive on 1st May 2014.

Members are now asked to review and appoint members to the outside organisations for 2022/23, having regard to the adopted policy. Please be aware that those appointed should make verbal reports at the Area South Committee as appropriate and prepare a short annual report on request on the activities of the organisation to which they are appointed.

Organisation	Representation 2021/2022	Representation 2022/2023
John Nowes Exhibition Foundation	Peter Seib	Agreement with trustees that Peter Seib to continue until 2023
Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Joint Committee	Graham Oakes Rob Stickland Nicola Clark	
Yeovil in Bloom Gardeners Market Steering Group	Wes Read	
Yeovil One	Tony Lock	
Yeovil Sports Club Board of Management	Andy Kendall	
Westfield Community Association	John Clark	

Financial Implications

None for the Area South Committee as a direct result of this report.

Council Plan Implications

Council Plan 2020 – 2024 – Council Values:

Getting things done - Empowering dedicated and flexible employees and elected members focussed on delivery.

Working collaboratively - Working with partners to enhance outcomes for our communities.



Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Full consideration to equalities was given in producing the Policy on the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies.

Background Papers

Minute 184, District Executive, 1 May 2014

SSDC Policy on the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies.



Development control Scheme of Delegation – Nomination of Substitutes for Area South Chairman and Vice Chairman 2022/23 (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Kirsty Larkins, Service Delivery
Lead Officer: John Hammond, Lead Specialist, Built Environment
Contact Details: John Hammond, Lead Specialist, Built Environment

Purpose of the Report

As the Council has entered a new municipal year, the Committee is asked to review the appointment of two members to act as substitutes for the Chairman and Vice Chairman in the exercising of the Scheme of Delegation for planning and related applications. The current member substitutes are Councillors Tony Lock and Peter Seib.

Recommendations

That, in line with the Development Control Revised Scheme of Delegation, two members be nominated to act as substitutes for the Chairman and Vice Chairman to make decisions in the Chairman's and Vice Chairman's absence on whether an application should be considered by the Area Committee where a request has been received from the Ward Member(s).

Background

The Council's scheme of delegation for Development Control delegates the determination of all applications for planning permission, the approval of reserved matters, the display of advertisements, works to trees with Tree Preservation Orders, listed building and conservation area consents, to the Development Manager except in certain cases, one of which being the following:-

“A ward member makes a specific request for the application to be considered by the Area Committee and the request is agreed by the Area Chairman or, in their absence, the Vice-Chairman in consultation with the Development Manager. (This request must be in writing and deal with the planning issues to ensure that the audit trail for making that decision is clear and unambiguous). In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman there should be nominated substitutes to ensure that 2 other members would be available to make decisions. All assessments and decisions to be in writing.”

Financial Implications

None as a direct result of this report.



Council Plan Implications

None as a direct result of this report.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None as a direct result of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None as a direct result of this report.

Background Papers

Minute 36, Council meeting of 21st July 2005



Area South Forward Plan

Director: Nicola Hix, Strategy & Support Services
Lead Officer: Jo Boucher, Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)
Contact Details: Jo.boucher@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462011

Purpose of the Report

This report informs Members of the agreed Area South Forward Plan.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a. Comment upon and note the proposed Area South Forward Plan as attached;
- b. Identify priorities for further reports to be added to the Area South Forward Plan, developed by the SSDC lead officers.

Area South Committee Forward Plan

The forward plan sets out items and issues to be discussed by the Area Committee over the coming months.

The forward plan will be reviewed and updated each month, by the joint lead officers from SSDC, in consultation with the Area Committee Chairman. It is included each month with the Area Committee agenda, where members of the Area Committee may endorse or request amendments.

Members of the public, councillors, service managers, and partners may request an item is placed within the forward plan for a future meeting, by contacting the Agenda Coordinator.

Background Papers

None

Notes

- (1) Items marked in *italics* are not yet confirmed, due to the attendance of additional representatives.
- (2) For further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area South Committee, please contact the Case Officer – Strategy and Commissioning; Jo Boucher.

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Lead Officer
Monthly Ongoing -	Verbal Update – Yeovil Market Review Group	Cllr Karl Gill
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Yeovil Crematorium Update Report</i>	<i>Robert Orrett, Commercial Property, Land and Development Manager</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Community Funding Requests</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>