

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

18 MARCH 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

HOUSING FOYER PROJECT

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For members to note and approve the Housing Foyer Business Case attached as Appendix A.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the progress made to date on the Housing Foyer Project.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Local Issues

In the Borough at present, figures show that we have a large number of young people aged 16 – 25 years, who are currently either homeless, living in temporary accommodation or staying with various friends (sofa surfing). Currently Melton Borough Council is experiencing more young people than normal requesting housing assistance.

When young people approach us they not only have a housing need but many also have other issues such as unemployment, poor health, drugs and alcohol issues. Housing is the key area to begin with in order to improve on the other issues these young people have. Additionally single, young people do not gain as much assistance on housing registers as families or single parents therefore they are more likely to have to fend for themselves.

Melton Borough Council tries to support young people in such situations as best we can, but not having specific accommodation that is targeted at this level of need, in the Borough, often means that the failure rate of young people's tenancies is far higher than those of families/individuals who receive support.

Melton does have some accommodation for housing single, young people in the form of the Melton Young Singles Trust (MYST) on Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, which is run by East Midlands Housing Association. This scheme provides us with valuable accommodation, but the much needed support and life skills programmes, that would assist many young people maintain tenancies and work through their physical or emotional barriers are currently not provided at this facility.

In order to achieve the full potential of both MYST and the Foyer scheme it is proposed that as part of the overall strategic development of the Foyer project, work also takes place to ensure these two facilities complement each other into the future, by providing a two-tier support and accommodation service to young people in the borough.

Currently we do not offer full tenancies to 16-18 year olds and accommodation for this age group is hard to come by. This causes problems with homelessness and often extends the continuation of these young people not being in employment, education and training.

The current position in relation to Care Leavers is that we often find it hard to find suitable accommodation that is suitable and that they can sustain. The Foyer would offer a number of spaces (up to 8 at any one time) to care leavers and also aim to help reduce the cost of looking after care leavers to Leicestershire County Council.

3.2 Foyer Housing Schemes

Foyer housing schemes are designed to provide supported living for disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 year olds to achieve the transition from dependence to independence. A Foyer scheme provides accommodation, training, guidance, personal development and job searching facilities.

The housing foyer model offers a maximum support time of two years from entering the project; however average stay in these projects tends to be six months, the business case highlights the positive outcomes a housing Foyer can bring, both for the individuals and the community.

3.3 Foyer Housing Task Group

The Housing Foyer Task Group that was formed in September 2011 and more recently a new task group (since October 2013) have been investigating the need and viability of a housing foyer in the Borough. The two groups have undertaken a number of visits to different sites and have met with organisations that currently manage and deliver services from housing foyers.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that this project is progressed Melton Borough Council will need to release one of its sites for its development. This will also act as part of the capital contribution to the project. Following detailed consideration at the Community & Social Affairs Committee on 22 January 2014 members approved:

Members consider the information contained in Appendix A and approve that in light of these factors The Thorpe End Car Park is approved as the preferred site for the Housing Foyer.

- 4.2 The introduction of a Housing Foyer in the Borough will mean that we will have to make adjustments to our housing allocations policy, as this facility will give us more proactive options in helping young people through housing, learning, education and employment.
- 4.3 The Council will need to nominate officers to sit on a key allocation panel that will assess all applications for housing at the Foyer. This panel will be a multi-agency panel. Decisions on the preferred housing partner and site location are contained in the exempt report presented to members.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Officers have carried out some market testing with a number of housing associations to gauge if there is interest in partnering with Melton Borough Council on this project. Through this process we have one housing association that is willing to build the facility and finance the majority of the build costs. More detailed financial information is contained in the exempt report for members to consider.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications from this report, the exempt report deals with the formal agreements with Axiom and identifies the relevant legal implications.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no direct links in this report however if a Foyer scheme is progressed this will have a positive impact on Community Safety.

8.0 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 A full initial equalities impact assessment has been completed and is available to view by the public and members of the Council.

9.0 RISKS

- 9.1 The risks are considered in the table below:

Probability
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Very High A				
High B				
Significant C			7	
Low D		6,8	3,4,5	
Very Low E		1	2	
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	There is no or little demand for a Foyer in Melton.
2	The project is unviable due to a lack of funding.
3	No partner agency can be found
4	Planning permission is refused
5	Capacity of Staff to support development and mobilisation of project
6	Capacity of building to meet demand
7	On-going Revenue Funding Available to sustain foyer.
8	Impact on MYST Lodge following opening of foyer and demand for MYST services.

- 9.2 We currently are aware of the poor support packages available to young people living in Melton, and the negative impact this has on tenancies. Data suggests that with better support packages available to them young people can turnaround their lives to make a positive contribution to society. The Housing Foyer will also mean that tenancy sustainability of young people renting social or private housing will improve.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report. However introducing such a scheme may encourage more people to use public transport. Any new build scheme will meet the highest energy efficiency levels possible, within financial viability.

11.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 At this stage consultation has taken place with the Locality Based Partnership, Tenants' Forum Executive Committee and Melton Community Partnership.
- 11.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of C&SA, Deputy Leader and Ward Councillors of Craven Ward have been involved in visits and research over the past two years.

11.3 The Housing Foyer Task Group has also been involved and consulted throughout the last six months.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officers: Ronan Browne, Harry Rai

Date: 06 March 2014

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Housing Needs Assessment, Housing Strategy