



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 22nd November 2007

Title: Carlisle Foyer for Young People

Report of: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Report reference: DS 107/07

Summary:

This report presents Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny committee with the report that went to Executive on 22/10/07 to update them on progress on the proposed YMCA Foyer in Carlisle.

Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

Input from this committee surrounds the progress made to date in taking the project forward.

Recommendations:

That the attached report that went to the Executive on the 22/10/07 be considered and comments forwarded to the Executive.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Date of Meeting: 22 October 2007

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework Yes

Title: HOUSING STRATEGY – PROJECTS AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Report of: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Report reference: DS.97/07

Summary:

This report updates Members on progress on the proposed YMCA Foyer in Carlisle and seeks approval for the release of the capital funds allocated for 2008/9 within the Housing Strategy programme and agreed in principle, subject to further detailed reports, by the Executive at its meeting on 2 July 2007.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (i) The Executive note progress in advancing the development of a Foyer in Carlisle by the YMCA in partnership with the City Council and other agencies.
- (ii) The £300,000 allocated for the delivery of the Foyer project, subject to a further detailed report to the Executive, now be confirmed and the money - from the 2006/7 Regional Housing Board within the Housing Capital programme - allocated, subject to an acceptable, sustainable Foyer being delivered by the YMCA.
- (iii) Further progress reports are received by the Executive relating to this Homelessness project as the working model develops.

Catherine Elliot

Director of Development Services

Contact Officer: Rob Stephenson

Ext: 7217

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None
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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The development of the Carlisle Foyer by the refurbishment and conversion of the existing YMCA building on Fisher Street is a key homelessness project which will assist the City Council in meeting its housing obligations, meeting targets for stopping the use of B and B for 16 -17 year olds and reducing the use of temporary accommodation for all homeless households by 50% by 2010.
- 1.2 The project will be developed through a partnership involving the following key agencies:
- YMCA
 - Carlisle City Council
 - Children's Services
 - Connexions
 - Supporting People
 - Youth Offending Service
 - Agencies in Carlisle already providing fixed and floating housing support to young people
 - Other voluntary agencies involved with young people
 - Young people themselves.
- 1.3 The Foyer is a supported housing project for the provision of 17 units of accommodation for homeless young people. The accommodation is within one building with linked support provision, education, social and training opportunities. It will provide emergency accommodation, advice and guidance on housing and other important areas of young people's lives and social facilities and opportunities for young people.

2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

2.1 Since last considered by the Executive in July, substantial progress has been made towards the Foyer development.

- **Supporting People (SP) funding** – a significant part of the funding for the Foyer would come from SP to provide staffing for support. Due to the restricted funding available for new services in Cumbria in future years the SP commissioning body has approved the investigation of the option of making better use of existing SP resources for young people in Carlisle. This would primarily involve the City Council, Impact Housing Association and CASS looking at ways of combining and integrating the support from existing staff each of them employs. It is possible in so doing that a better set of linked services for young people will result, whether they live in the Foyer or other supported accommodation. We are now engaged in discussions with these other agencies and SP about how such service integration might work.
- **Youth homelessness strategy** – young people are a priority in our housing strategy. In developing a new homelessness strategy for July 2008 as required by the CLG we need to develop a more integrated approach especially with Children's Services, to address the needs of 16-17 year olds. We envisage that the Foyer will be at the centre of our youth homelessness strategy. It will create a resource and facility within which integrated services can be delivered - essentially a one-stop shop for young people with housing and vulnerability issues. . We are already, and will be further, working with the key agencies to implement such an approach over the coming months.
- **Project manager** - in order to ensure that this important facility, central to our future approach to youth housing is developed at a pace and in a way that fits both the Council's plans and the YMCAs ambitions, the YMCA have appointed, initially on a part time basis, a Project Manager. He is currently the Chief Executive of an established YMCA and will focus on working alongside council officers to ensure not only that the Foyer building project is delivered but also that the Foyer fits within the Councils strategic priorities.
- **Building design and facilities** – the design, layout and facilities to be provided have been finalised and the YMCA's architects are in the process of submitting a planning application to the City Council.

- **Capital funding** – the YMCA have submitted a bid for capital funding to the Housing Corporation for the development programme for 2008 –2010. The outcome of this is anticipated early in the New Year. The potential capital funding sources are, in addition to Housing Corporation Grant, any funding from the City Council's Housing Capital programme and other grant, charitable sources and the YMCA 's own funding input.
- **New approach to youth homelessness** – part of the government's approach to dealing with youth homelessness is to encourage councils to work collaboratively with those voluntary sector organisations which have skills and experience in dealing with the range of problems faced by young people who happen to be homeless. This is very much the approach we have started to develop through existing partnerships around young people. Our view is that we should take this further and develop a new approach to how we deal with homeless young people. This would involve basing one or more of our existing staff in the Foyer alongside workers from other agencies and administrative support. Young people - under 25 – would not be seen through the traditional homelessness route but instead would get housing advice, assistance and help to address their accommodation and related problems at the Foyer. We believe this approach will be more helpful for young people by looking at all their options in trying to resolve their problems, rather than going through the traditional statutory homelessness application and assessment route at the Housing Department. It would include the securing of emergency accommodation either at the Foyer or any other available accommodation in the City. We will explore this option in greater detail, discussing it with our own staff and their representatives and with the other agencies who might also be part of such a “virtual team”.
- **Fit with strategies and plans** – the provision of the Foyer will contribute to the delivery of:
 - the City Council's – and Cumbria's - housing strategy.
 - the requirements of our existing action plan
 - meet the targets of the Children and Young Persons Plan and Local Area Agreement
 - Carlisle Renaissance, and
 - the Carlisle Community Plan.

3.0 CONSULTATION**3.1 Consultation to date**

Consultation to date has included previous reports to Executive, discussions with the Portfolio Holder, the Housing Capital Board, finance and senior management.

3.2 Consultation Planned

Following the Executive meeting, this report will be presented to Community Overview and Scrutiny on 22 November 2007. Any comments made will be reported to the Executive on 10 December 2007.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**4.1 It is recommended that:**

- (i) The Executive note progress in advancing the development of a Foyer in Carlisle by the YMCA in partnership with the City Council and other agencies.
- (ii) The £300,000 allocated for the delivery of the Foyer project, subject to a further detailed report to the Executive, now be confirmed and the money - from the 2006/7 Regional Housing Board within the Housing Capital programme - allocated, subject to an acceptable, sustainable Foyer being delivered by the YMCA.
- (iii) Further progress reports are received by the Executive relating to this Homelessness project as the working model develops.

5.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To enable the Foyer project identified within the report under the Housing Strategy to be taken forward and the Housing capital programme for 2008/9 to be delivered.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – there are potential implications for the delivery of services and utilisation of existing resources as the project is advanced

- Financial – As stated in the Housing Strategy report submitted to the Executive on 2 July 2007 (DS55/07), £400,000 was allocated to the Foyer project from the Regional Housing Pot grant relating to 2006/07. This has been profiled as follows: £80,000 for planning and preparation costs for the Foyer and £20,000 for other related project work (both in 2007/08) and £300,000 in 2008/09 for a contribution to the cost of building work on the Foyer; the latter subject to further reports to the Executive. It is envisaged that there will be no further capital input from the Council. Revenue costs for running the Foyer will be met from existing revenue budgets.
- Legal – The authority has statutory obligations to homeless people including young people and contractual obligations to Supporting People.
- Corporate – The Housing Strategy is a key corporate document as is the delivery of the updated Action Plan.
- Risk Management – There are risks associated with the delivery of this project under the Housing Strategy if the finance is not in place, released or allocated.
- Equality Issues – There are equality issues regarding the provision of service to homeless and vulnerable young people which the Foyer will help address.
- Environmental – The Foyer refurbishment works will be within recognised planning and environmental standards.
- Crime and Disorder – Provision of specialised supported accommodation for homeless young people will have a beneficial effect on young peoples prospects and behaviours and a positive impact on crime and disorder reduction by developing positive opportunities and meaningful activities for young people in Carlisle.
- Impact on Customers – The impact on customers of delivery of this project will be significant and entirely beneficial.

Catherine Elliot

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