

# Cabinet

28 March 2023

## Swanage capital asset transfer

### For Decision

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):** Cllr G Suttle, Cllr B Trite

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

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**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

This report provides an overview of the Family Hubs project in Children's Services and proposal for the opening of a third hub in Swanage in partnership with Swanage Development Partnership Trust (SDPT).

The vision is for an integrated service delivery model operated and delivered by the Swanage and Purbeck Community Development Trust supported by the Swanage Town Council. This will enable services for the community of all ages in Swanage to be delivered differently and to enable wider usage of the underoccupied Chapel Lane site for community benefit. This will be through an intergenerational Family Hub, which will offer an enhanced range of services provided by a range of different organisations.

This delivery model will be facilitated by a community asset transfer of buildings on the Chapel Lane site from the council to the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust. Information about the Trust and their ability to deliver the Family Hub vision is provided in support of this proposal.

## **Recommendation:**

The Cabinet is asked:

- i. To note and support the opening of a national exemplar for Family Hubs in Swanage, Dorset.
- ii. To delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place to transfer the Chapel Lane site to the Swanage Development Partnership Trust (SDPT) through a community asset transfer process to enable the Family Hub to occupy the Chapel Lane site on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director, Place in consultation with Executive Director for People – Children and Executive Director People – Adults and Housing, including inter-alia:
  - Due diligence of SDPT (associated with transfer of asset).
  - Ensuring best value in terms of disposal of the asset, taking into account all other matters such as subsidy control.
  - Tenure and specific terms and conditions in relation to ongoing liabilities of the asset.
- iii. To delegate authority to the Executive Director People - Children to enter into a commissioning service level agreement with the SDPT for the provision of services in Swanage, funded by the DfE Family Hubs external grant.
- iv. That the People and Health Scrutiny Committee should be asked to receive and comment upon an annual review of the outcomes delivered by the Swanage Development Partnership Trust each year in March, the first annual review in March 2024.

## **Reason for Recommendation:**

This proposal supports the strategic objectives of the council to create strong, healthy communities. Dorset Council recognises the devolution of assets to local communities, particularly to town and parish councils and voluntary and community-based organisations can make a significant contribution to enabling them to be stronger, more resilient and to support services within their local areas. This proposal will enable the development of an intergenerational approach to service delivery in Swanage through the creation of a Family Hub that better meets the needs of the local community and supports the delivery of children's and adult's services commissioning strategies.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The development of Family Hubs is a local commitment in the Dorset Council Delivery Plan, the Dorset Children, Young People and Families Plan and is a national policy commitment. Following a competitive bidding process, Dorset Council is one of 12 local authorities nationally for our work to develop Family Hubs. We have been awarded £875,450 over 2 years from the Department of Education to put alongside the council's transformation investment of £342,415 to develop a network of Family Hubs across the county by March 2024.
- 1.2 Family Hubs use a whole family approach to provide a single access point for support services for a wide range of issues in welcoming places and spaces offering help from a variety of services and support groups. The aim of these hubs is to meet local needs and join up services for families with children of all ages and must be accessible and support strong relationships between families, professionals, and communities.
- 1.3 The rural nature of Dorset presents several challenges for implementing a Family Hub model that meets the needs of all families. In Dorset we propose to put on emphasis on developing a Family Hub network, aligned to our locality services, and tailored to an ongoing needs assessment of local communities. We will deliver the network through four models:
  - i. **Family Hub:** buildings operated by Dorset Council offering a comprehensive range of services and where employees from a wide range of organisations can work together. Partners will be offered opportunities to use the space to deliver services and support.
  - ii. **Family Hub Partnerships:** operated by partner organisations already offering services and support to communities that can be enhanced by working more closely with the council and health partners to meet the Family Hub goals. This is the preferred option for Swanage.
  - iii. **Family Hub Community:** this will be an outreach or 'pop-up' programme, delivering sessions from village halls, rural community spaces, and schools/early year settings. They will be flexible in

addressing local needs and offer targeted support for families as part of the family hub network.

- iv. **Virtual Family Hub:** this online family offer will offer a wide range of support directly online at times that suit them and include opportunities to book and attend services online.



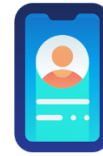
**Family hub**  
Operated by Dorset Council  
Children's Services  
Offering a full range of joined-up support for Dorset families



**Family hub: partnership**  
Operated by a partner organisation  
Offering a range of joined-up support for Dorset families as part of the family hub network



**Family hub: community**  
Pop-up hub in rural areas, schools and early years settings  
Offering targeted support for Dorset families as part of the family hub network



**Our digital family offer**  
Personalised online experience  
Offering a full range of joined-up support for Dorset families, 24-7

- 1.4 We have already begun opening and testing this Family Hub model in East Dorset in Trickett's Cross, Ferndown and Leigh Park, Wimborne and subject to approval of this paper will move next to Swanage. Plans for the developing Family Hubs in the rest of the county will follow.

## 2. The proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is for an integrated service delivery model operated and delivered by the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust (SPDT) supported by the Swanage Town Council from the Chapel Lane site in Swanage. This will enable services for the community of all ages in Swanage to be delivered differently and to enable wider usage of the underoccupied Chapel Lane site for community benefit. This will be through an intergenerational Family Hub, which will offer an enhanced range of services provided by a range of different organisations.
- 2.2 The SPDT will manage the buildings on the site in their entirety, offer an accommodation booking service and will invest in the premises for community benefit. They will be commissioned by Dorset Council Children's Services to deliver Family Hub services.
- 2.3 This will form a national Family Hub exemplar and a community asset transfer will facilitate the delivery of this model.

## 3. The Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust

- 3.1 The SPDT is a registered charity formed in July 2015 for the benefit of the public, particularly for the community of Swanage and surrounding areas.

The Trustees were appointed based on their recognised skills and commitment to supporting and delivering the Trust's objectives. These Trustees possess skills in Property, Legal, Financial, Secretary, Project Management, Business Management, and Community Liaison. The Trust has a strong leadership approach, prioritising long-term solutions over quick fixes, to encourage others to consider efficiency and sustainability in new projects.

- 3.2 The Trust has grown steadily since its formation, currently managing several local projects directly and collaborating with 20 organisations sharing similar objectives. The Trust advises smaller organisations on achieving their objectives by collaborating and sharing information and experiences. The Trust recognises the need to build resources and plan for the future through its Business Plan and Vision, which it regularly updates to build resilience, succession planning, and recruitment of volunteers.
- 3.3 SPDT owns and manages two property assets on behalf of the local community and continues to develop new initiatives. One such asset is The Centre, a Wraparound Childcare facility managed by Explorers Childcare, which works in partnership with the Trust. The Centre also serves as a high-quality performance venue, with surplus income used for subsidising a weekly Youth Club and building reserves for other local community causes. Another asset is the Herston Village Hall, which the Trust transferred and refurbished for wide variety of community-based functions. Reserves of £45,000 have been built up from income generation, with a plan to redevelop the site with a new, larger Village Hall and an affordable, 2 bedrooms, rented flat on the first floor.
- 3.4 The Youth Centre, previously owned by Dorset County Council, was transferred to SPDT in 2017 with community use restrictions. The Trust has since renovated and refurbished the building, which now operates as a wraparound Childcare facility for children aged 0-11 years, employing 26 people. The Centre is also a well-known performance venue and generates surplus income that is used to underpin community services and reinvestment in the building.
- 3.5 The Trust has a wider health and wellbeing initiative, called Wellbeing Swanage based on the effective Compassionate Communities model, aimed at building a vibrant, sustainable, and resilient community that enhances and enriches the wellbeing of residents in Swanage.

#### **4. Community Asset Transfer (CAT)**

- 4.1 The Chapel Lane site comprises of three distinct properties that are managed separately: the Adult Day Centre and Children's Centre, both owned by the Dorset Council, and the Youth Centre, owned by the SPDT and renamed as The Centre.
- i) Property No. 1, the Day Centre, is a substantially large building with 35 rooms, currently serving as a facility for older people with physical disabilities, covering a total area of 336.91 square metres. An occupational agreement is in place with Care Dorset Holdings Ltd for occupying the Day Centre.
  - ii) Property No. 2, the Children Centre, is utilised by Dorset Council Children's Services and is a significant asset with multiple rooms and a total floor area of 137.57 square metres.
- 4.2 Dorset Council Children's Services, Adult Services and Swanage Town Council have engaged in detailed discussions with the SPDT to explore the benefits of establishing a centralised hub at Chapel Lane in Swanage. The aim is to provide an integrated hub that offers health and wellbeing services to the local community, including statutory, voluntary sector, and other relevant services, all managed by SPDT.
- 4.3 Extensive engagement with partner organisations, stakeholders, and residents, particularly families, has been conducted by SPDT and Children's Services to understand their needs and desires for a community hub. Swanage families have told us that they often feel underserved, as they frequently must travel to Wareham to access some help and support. There is significant support from the local community for more joined up local services and support. Partner organisations recognise the need to provide services in Swanage but can struggle to do this due to funding constraints or lack of available space. There is an eagerness to participate in an integrated approach that can better meet the needs of families and offer a more efficient service delivery model.

#### **5. Community Asset Transfer Business Case**

- 5.1 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is the transfer of management and/or ownership (leasehold or freehold) of public land and buildings from its owner (usually a local authority) to a community organisation for "less than best consideration" – less than the value obtainable in the market. This

discount is based upon a presumption of long-term social, economic or environmental benefit.

5.2 A circular issued in 2003 gives authorities consent to a disposal (freehold or leasehold) of land at undervalue provided that (assuming the best value is not in excess of £2m):

- i. the promotion or improvement of economic well-being
- ii. the promotion or improvement of social well-being
- iii. the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being

5.3 The business case:

#### 5.3.1 **Benefits to the Council**

- i. Dorset Council will work with SPDT's Wellbeing Swanage initiative and their community connectors network to ensure families receive the right help at the right time. This empowers the community of Swanage to meet the needs of families with proportionate support from specialist services. This will result in a reduction of need for statutory services creating financial benefits. The vision to provide a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to local services, will result in a better-informed and resilient community that can easily access the services it needs when it needs them from a range of community providers.
- ii. The SPDT will carry out the necessary works to integrate the buildings on site, manage the Hub, and offer an accommodation booking service for health and wellbeing service providers, including the voluntary and community sector. Therefore, the council will be able to focus its resources on service delivery rather than the costs associated with managing buildings.

#### 5.3.2 **Social benefits for the community**

- i) The project will provide a "Wellbeing" social hub, including a daily community café and user-friendly waiting areas for multi-generational age groups.
- ii) The project aims to fulfil unmet service needs in the community. Services available locally will be better coordinated and promoted through an informed, full-time, "signposting" reception facility that can be easily accessed by the local community via telephone,

online, and face-to-face contact. This will make it easier for the community to access the help it needs locally.

- iii) This proposal builds on the already successful model managed by SPDT increasing the flexibility and availability of community space for service delivery and this property model will enable a cost-effective approach to the occupation of community assets on an integrated site and alongside other assets managed by the Trust.
- iv) The project will generate employment opportunities through the introduction of new services, comprehensive space and premises management, signposting reception, and community café, combined with learning, vocational, and employable skills training.
- v) The project will encourage and expand intergenerational activities for the community bringing together existing and new service delivery, including Dementia Friendly, Link Visiting (befriending people in isolation), Swanage Stroke Club, and MS Purbeck.
- vi) Integrating the site at Chapel Lane will enable SPDT to deliver the desired outcomes of a Swanage Health & Wellbeing hub. The business plan is built on the premise of a managed welcome area and community café – which in effect is the foundation for creating a safe and non-stigmatising space for the community. The building provides access from the main street and space to provide the range of managed spaces required by partner organisations.
- vii) SPDT are already delivering services to vulnerable adults in the town. As part the hub, they will work with Adult Services commissioners and delivery partners to secure meaningful activities for adults in the local community.

### **5.3.3 What improvements and investment will be made**

- i) With funding from the Department for Education, Children's Services will commission service delivery through a service level agreement. This will support the business case in the first 3 years, and this would cease at the end of that period.
- ii) Securing suitable space to deliver services in an integrated and non-stigmatising way is fundamental to this approach. The benefits of an intergenerational model, working together with Adult Services



and the community is truly exemplar and was a contributing factor to attracting Government funding.

- iii) Swanage Town Council are working closely with SPDT and Dorset Council to support the development of the health and wellbeing hub. In December 2022, the town council committed funding of £21,000 for the period 2023/24 towards underwriting the trust's business model.

#### **5.3.4 How those are measured and managed and for how long**

- i) Monitoring of the service level agreement will be undertaken, with an annual report which will be shared with People and Health Scrutiny Committee each year in March. The first annual review in March 2024 and the frequency will be reviewed after 3 years.
- ii) As part of the DfE government funding a programme of independent evaluation is in place to measure the impact of Family Hubs. This is using baseline data and is measured against a developed Theory of Change.

#### **5.3.5 Evidence and commitment of the organisation to manage the asset**

- i) Dorset County Council have previously granted a freehold asset transfer of part of the Chapel Lane site in 2016/17 (former youth service building) which they have successfully refurbished, maintained, and optimised usage for the local community.
- ii) SPDT have a track record in taking on and managing property assets using a sustainable property model. It has been successful in managing the freeholds of both the former Youth Centre, and Herston Village Hall. Both have been refurbished, are income producing to cover costs, with an accumulation of healthy reserves. Both are now well used Community Centres, held as Community Assets for the long term, as described in section 3.
- iii) Following an asset transfer, SPDT have committed to invest in an initial refurbishment and alteration works that will integrate the site and buildings. In the longer term, it will seek to secure additional investment to carry out further extension and integration works to accommodate improvement and growth in community services.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 CAT terms will be considered ensuring best value in terms of disposal of the asset, taking into account all other matters such as subsidy control. Funding is in place from the DfE external grant to commission services from the Trust.

## **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 As part of the terms of the CAT environmental enhancements to the buildings (i.e., solar, insulation etc.) will be explored.
- 7.2 Once the Family Hub is operational, the community will be able to access the help it needs locally, and as result there will be a reduction in the number of people needing to travel to access support.

## **8. Well-being and Health Implications**

- 8.1 Safeguarding Children and Adults – the proposal will lead to the retention of safe public spaces for all sections of the community.

## **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1 The successful implementation of Family Hubs is predicated on the council working with system partners in the Police, Health Services including Public Health and the community and voluntary sector.
- 9.2 Where the Council is transferring the freehold interest in a property to a community group, it will insert an asset lock into the transfer. This will prevent the party that receives the asset from disposing of it other than to a community interest company, registered charity or parish council. The terms will contain an overage provision so that if the receiving party does dispose of the property to another party, the Council will realise 100% of any sale proceeds. Where the Council is granting a lease to a community group, it will be on a long leasehold basis with a mutual break clause, in the Council's case in the event that it wishes to redevelop retained land. Covenants will be inserted in the lease to give a similar effect as an asset lock and the use will be restricted to community use or benefit.

## **10. Risk Assessment**

- 10.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

**11. Equalities Impact Assessment**

11.1 An EqIA has been completed for the Family Hubs project in November 2022.

**12. Appendices**

None

**13. Background Papers**

- Report to People and Health Overview Committee – 3 May 2022 – Family Hubs
- Report to People and Health Overview Committee – 31 January 2023 – Family Hubs