

Annex 2

Outline proposal for Oliver House

A number of voluntary sector organisations in York have expressed an interest in Oliver House and are keen to work in partnership with City of York Council to explore the suitability of this site to deliver a range of integrated services.

These services will contribute to the strategic aims of the local authority, particularly in relation to enabling older people and disabled residents to live full, inclusive and independent lives. Supporting employers to grow and develop within the city centre also forms an important component of the York Economic Strategy.

In order to develop this concept, the following organisations ask City of York Council's Cabinet to consider the future use of Oliver House as a Specialist Community Resource that will provide access to a range of health and social care services in a single central location.

Organisations supporting this proposal...

York Mind
York Independent Living Network
York Citizens Advice Bureau
York Council for Voluntary Service
York Carers Centre
York Blind & Partially Sighted Society
York LINK
York Carers Forum
Relate
Foundation
Age UK York
Independent Living Scheme
Wilf Ward Family Trust
York Older People's Assembly
United Response
North Yorkshire & York Credit Union
Family Mediation Service
The Healing Clinic
Lives Unlimited
York Childcare
York Women's Counselling Service

Alzheimer's Society - York & Selby
The Change Foundation
York Race Equality Network

Collectively, these organisations will seek to refurbish the building to provide a variety of facilities that are fit for purpose which could include;

- A comprehensive information service and practical health and social care resources for the public
- Office accommodation for a number of voluntary organisations and social enterprises, with shared back office functions to minimise operational costs and maximise efficiencies
- Interview rooms for one-to-one advice and counselling work
- A community cafe with supported employment placements
- Flexible spaces for community activities including an autism hub, providing services for both adults accessing services and for transition customers
- Assessment facilities for people requiring adaptation equipment
- affordable, accessible meeting space for the voluntary and statutory sectors

In return for local authority commitment to this project, the voluntary sector organisations will seek long term investment and hope to secure funding from a variety of sources to renew and enhance the property. The building will be refurbished to inclusive design standards and incorporate environmental technology to reduce energy costs and increase sustainability.

By bringing together groups with similar aims, it is anticipated that services will be integrated and streamlined, allowing organisations based in Oliver House to develop a model of best practice and to create exemplar facilities within the city.

Benefits for City of York Council

The creation of a Specialist Community Resource will simplify signposting to voluntary organisations for local authority staff, an essential component of the new HealthWatch contract and create a 'one-stop shop' for people to get good quality information about support options available to facilitate the personalisation agenda.

The central location, near the new West Offices Headquarters, will enable stronger working relationships to develop between the council

and specialist health and social care organisations to facilitate innovative service delivery. This will assist the City of York Council to address issues arising from an ageing population and increasing care needs at a time of ongoing reductions in state funding.

The creation of this new community facility reflects the Council's commitment to partnership working with local communities and would be an ideal flagship project for the Co-operative Council network, giving local people choice and control over the services they use. This would cement York's position as leading innovation in action nationally.

The creation of shared, flexible space will enable existing groups to develop new and creative ways of delivering support. In line with the Personalisation agenda, the facility will respond to existing market data, and undertake research, to ensure the hub provides the new services people demand, increasing individual's choice and control in accessing the support they want.

There are expectations that the voluntary and community sector will pick up support for people with low and moderate support needs as the council's eligibility criteria reduces from moderate to critical and substantial. Through supporting voluntary and community organisations with secure and sustainable facilities, this will free up the resources needed within the sector to focus on the challenges ahead. Enabling groups to work together and identify gaps in service will lead to increased preventative work. This is essential if a social care funding crisis is to be averted.

Along with the Priory Street Centre, the building will enable existing community and voluntary organisations in the area to pilot opportunities around the development of Community Contracts. Tapping into existing groups like the Micklegate Residents Action Group, the Bishophill Action Group, and the We Are Your Emporium collective, and developing learning from the current timebanking pilot in Westfield, the building provides a hub for ongoing community development activity.

The building will also provide the foundations for an Autism Hub, currently being developed by commissioners in Adults, Children and Education. As this service is likely to be commissioned from a voluntary or social enterprise provider, this will enable that provider to develop strong partnerships with the wider sector.

Benefits for Voluntary and Social Enterprise Organisations

Shared back office functions will reduce administration costs and enable a greater investment in frontline service delivery. Similarly, joint working will highlight any areas of duplication, creating greater efficiencies and an increased capacity to provide universal and preventative services.

The building's close proximity to Priory Street Centre and Clements Hall will create a greater sense of a 'Voluntary Quarter' in York, and enable these complimentary venues to work together to maximise sustainable income streams.

A number of voluntary organisations based at Holgate Villa, and at risk of losing their existing central premises, could be relocated. This development will secure their future, enabling them to continue to provide valued services within a central location. Organisations based at Holgate Villa include...

York Blind & Partially Sighted Society
York LINK
York Older People's Assembly
North Yorkshire & York Credit Union
Alzheimer's Society - York & Selby
Alzheimer's Society - Regional office
Family Mediation Service / Child Contact Centre
Action for Advocacy

Benefits for Individuals

A Specialist Community Resource will reduce confusion for individuals in times of need, and enable people to access a range of services in one place. People will have more awareness of the services available to them.

Other Benefits

Micklegate has recently seen a number of shop closures, and the area needs revitalising. Increased footfall through this area, either into town or to the station from people working in and accessing the resource, will provide a much-needed boost to local businesses.

Bishophill is a quiet residential area. Use of the building as a health and social care and community hub will bring minimum disruption to the local community, and provide a focal point for existing community activity.

Initial discussions with a number of local residents indicates they are supportive of this proposal.

Potential models for the development

The organisations looking to move this project forward will consider a variety of financial models, including a Community Asset Transfer, rent, leasehold or purchase arrangements. However, the viability of these options will need further consideration at the business planning stage. An initial approach will be made to Joseph Rowntree Foundation's small grants fund for funding to complete a full options appraisal. This will also raise awareness of the project within Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Options and financial models for Oliver House

Option 1 - Council retain and maintain the building, tenants pay rental income on the property.

Existing rented offices in the city attract a range of rental incomes per square metre, based on market rates, target audience and quality of accommodation. The table below uses existing rental charges in the city to show the potential rental income from Oliver House;

	Holgate Villa	15 Priory Street	17 Priory Street	West Offices
cost / sqm	£111 p/a	£120 p/a	£105.60 p/a	£160
service charge / sqm	included (repairing and insuring lease)	£65.60 p/a	£65.60 p/a	unknown
possible income based on existing footprint of OH - total area inc garages 0.56 acres	£251,526	£271,920	£239,289	£362,560

Option 2 - Council lease the building to a management group, who are responsible for running and maintaining the building.

The management group could be a consortium of existing voluntary organisations and social enterprises. There are also voluntary organisations who specialise in taking on and running community spaces, who may be interested in taking the building on.

Option 3 - Council sell the building to a management group who secure the asset for voluntary, community and social enterprise use. A suitable legal vehicle for doing this will be identified, possibly something like a Community Benefit Society, or BenCom.

This can be financed through a mixture of loan and grant finance, including a mortgage with a specialist voluntary sector lender, such as Unity Trust Bank or Charity Bank. The management group will develop a 20 year business plan to pay back all loans attached to the building. This improves the sustainability of the sector long term, enabling them to focus on meeting local needs. Currently Holgate Villa VCSE tenants pay in excess of £100,000 p/a in rent. A £500,000 repayment loan spread over 20 years at a 10% AIR would total £57,900 p/a.

Overarching ideas - Community Asset Transfer.

City of York Council can dispose of Oliver House to a properly constituted community group at preferential rates in various ways including freehold, a long lease, a shorter lease or a licence to occupy. The constituted group then takes on responsibility for running and maintaining the facility for the benefit of the local community and/or communities of interest within the city.

The partners will work to develop a detailed fundraising strategy for either refurbishment or rebuild costs. Possible options include;

- Department of Health Social Enterprise Investment Fund
- Big Lottery Funding (Awards for All, Reaching Communities)
- Applications to relevant grant funding bodies
 - Tudor Trust (innovative responses to community needs)
 - Henry Smith (health)
 - Esmée Fairbairn (addressing gaps in provision)
 - Garfield Weston (general giving, including welfare, health, environment)
 - Hedley Foundation (encouraging development and change)

- Registering on the Big Give website
- Crowdfunding through Crowdcube, pleasefund.us or similar, making use of all partners social media networks
- Loan and grant funding from Keyfund
- Fundraising and income generating activities organised through the partnership

Conventional cost benefit analysis does not capture the true value for the city of this project. Valuing hidden costs and benefits to the city will ensure the most effective and efficient use of valuable and scarce resources.

Another consideration for the council is a lack of affordable and accessible start up space for emerging voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations. If they are minded to do so, there may be opportunities to work with the local authority in securing such space within this development, or through working with existing venues to make most effective use of the space available.

Should our request not be successful in securing Oliver House, we would be interested in working with the local authority to develop plans for use of other vacant, accessible properties as they become available.