



Consultation on the use of Woodleaze, Yate as a Young Person's Housing Scheme.

Background

During 2018 the Council consulted on the future use of the former Woodleaze care home in Yate, exploring options including demolition of the building and redevelopment of the site for family housing and retention and conversion of the existing building as a Young Person's Housing Scheme.

The Council's Cabinet on 24 April 2018 commissioned an option appraisal and consultation, the results of which were reported back to Cabinet on 3 December 2018 when the Cabinet made a decision to proceed with the Young Person's Housing Scheme in partnership with Solon Housing Association.

This second phase consultation is therefore not as to whether Woodleaze should be converted for use as a Young Person's Housing Scheme as that decision has already been made. This consultation is to explore how Woodleaze will work as a Young Person's Housing Scheme.

Next Steps

Next steps are now required in two areas. Firstly preparation for the conversion which, if planning consent is required for change of use, will include its own statutory consultation opportunity as part of normal planning process. Secondly preparation for how the scheme will work when it is ready including how it will fill a recognised gap in current provision, achieve better outcomes for young people, deliver better value for money for the council taxpayer and improve the Local Offer for Care Leavers. It is this second area of preparation that is the subject of this consultation.

Our proposal

What gaps will the new scheme fill?

There is a need for additional housing for young people in South Gloucestershire. More need housing with support to help them transition effectively into adulthood than is available. We have a statutory responsibility to ensure all homeless 16 and 17 year olds are adequately accommodated as well as to those transitioning from care. Along with these young people we have more young people needing supported housing at a higher level than what we currently commission.

In South Gloucestershire there are currently around 190 children in care for whom the Council has a corporate parenting responsibility. From the age of 16 up to 25 young people transition to adulthood and as corporate parents we have a responsibility to support these young people and enable them to gain the skills they need to live full, independent lives. Typically there are **around 20 Care Leavers who have support needs that cannot be met within existing Young Person's Housing schemes**. In neighbouring Bristol that number is only four as they already have schemes similar to that proposed for Woodleaze where these young people are accommodated. Consequently, too many South Gloucestershire Care Leavers are accommodated in self-contained accommodation with periods of 1:1 support, often at some distance from South Gloucestershire where they grew up. More Care Leavers from South Gloucestershire are currently accommodated in this way than in other areas. This form of support is expensive, and often does not achieve the independent living skills needed to progress towards independent accommodation, and so, for those people their transition to adulthood is less successful.

It is recognised that some Care Leavers are not suited to living in supported housing with others and for those we are pursuing other options with local housing and local support providers.

For those young people who are able to live in a communal setting and engage with support it is proposed that Woodleaze accommodate up to 20 young people of c.10 care leavers for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility (ages 16-25) plus c.10 young people (ages 16-25) from other backgrounds, some of whom will

have been homeless. Woodleaze will be better equipped than current supported housing services in South Gloucestershire, with more staff and on site services. It will provide intensive support and partnership working, creating a better sense of safety and security to be able to meet and manage the needs of Young People from South Gloucestershire. Consequently the scheme will be where those with higher needs start their journey through supported housing.

The proposed housing would have a training room, catering kitchen and communal hall; these facilities and spaces can be made use of in a variety of ways and in partnership with other agencies and the local community.

How will it be paid for?

A Young Person's Housing Related Support scheme at Woodleaze is designed to achieve better outcomes for Care Leavers and other Young People with support needs, some of whom may have been homeless. An effective Housing Related Support service can reduce demand for, and the cost of housing and homelessness as well as health and care services. The scheme will cost £1.4million to convert and this cost will be met by Solon Housing Association who in return will receive rental income from the support provider. Support services for the Young People who live there are estimated to cost around £400,000 per year but this represents only half of the current costs of meeting care leavers needs in independent accommodation. The scheme is expected to last at least 30 years over which time it should achieve savings of £12 million for the local taxpayer.

How will the on-site Support Provider be appointed and what will they do?

The Council has agreed to work in Partnership with Solon Housing Association to deliver a Young Person's Housing Related Support Scheme at Woodleaze. Solon will be the landlord, and the Council will commission through a competitive tender process a Housing Support provider who is experienced in delivering such schemes for Young People. The overall objectives of a Housing Related Support service are to support people to manage and maintain their accommodation, and enable them to gain the skills they need to live independently. The Housing Support Provider will

staff and operate the scheme and will provide support directly to the Young People, help signpost them to other services plus also respond to needs and issues that can arise on an ad-hoc basis.

The Housing Support provider will need to ensure that the scheme is adequately and suitably staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

It is normal for the landlord, in this case Solon, to enter into a management agreement with the Housing Support Provider. In doing so they may include an arrangement between them which results in the Housing Support Provider performing functions on behalf of the landlord, for example management of licence agreements, rent collection, reporting and checking repairs, operating CCTV, and liaising with other organisations who may be allowed to use the building to complement services to the Young People who live there.

The appointment of the Housing Support Provider is therefore of importance to both Solon Housing Association and the Council. For that reason it is proposed that the Housing Support Provider is appointed through a joint commissioning process by the two partners.

It is proposed that the Housing Support Provider will be tasked with hosting regular engagement meetings to which a range of local stakeholders will be invited to maximise how the scheme works within the local community. We are seeking input on the membership of this stakeholder group. We currently anticipate this including representatives of local residents, local councillors, representatives from the Young People who live in the scheme, Police, representatives from neighbouring organisations, Solon Housing, Officers from South Gloucestershire Council.

How will allocations be made into and out of the scheme?

The Council will have 100% nomination rights to Woodleaze and it is proposed that allocations will be made by the Council's Housing Access Team working closely with the Council's team which supports care leavers and those who work with homeless young people.

How will the scheme fit with the wider area?

Under the principle of it takes a village or community to raise a child, it is hoped that we will bring young people from South Gloucestershire back to where they can be supported more locally, and we are keen to link with the social responsibility agenda within the local community. The Council already has a Local Offer for Care Leavers which can be found here <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/care-and-support-children-families/childcare-and-parenting/looked-after-children/support-for-young-people-who-have-left-care/>

Have your say on how we develop Woodleaze

The consultation is open from Monday 10th December 2018 until **Monday 11th March 2019**.

We are interested in hearing views on:

- How the site can be best used in partnership with other agencies to enhance the Care Leavers' Local Offer and achieve better outcomes for young people
- What can Woodleaze residents do to support and enhance the local community?
- What can the local community can do for Woodleaze and its residents?
- How to manage the future relationship with other nearby young people's housing (Southwold House and Andrew Millman Court) and the benefits or drawbacks of commissioning support services for Young People across all three schemes from a single provider

There are a range of ways to take part:

- Go to our webpage: <https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/Woodleaze> to see more information and complete our online survey, or print out a copy of the paper survey

- Pick up a paper survey from your local library or One Stop Shop, which can be posted back to us at the address below, or you can ask the library for a Freepost envelope to return the survey without the need for a stamp
- Telephone: 01454 868154
- Email: consultation@southglos.gov.uk
- Write to: *South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF*
- Attend the resident and stakeholder engagement **drop-in event**, where you can hear what we are looking to achieve from the scheme, give your feedback to council officers and ask them any questions you have : **15:30 – 18:30 on Thursday 17th January 2019 at Council Chamber, Poole Court, Yate, BS37 5PP**
- Read the Cabinet reports on Woodleaze that were considered by the Council's Cabinet on 24 April 2018 and 3 December 2018 by searching for "council meetings" on our website: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/>

In addition to the range of stakeholders the council always engages with for public consultations, we will be speaking to:

- The South Gloucestershire Youth Housing Partnership will be asked to give their own feedback and to encourage individuals that use services and relevant stakeholders to submit their views.
- Care Leavers and other young people who may use the scheme
- Local groups such as the Sodbury and Yate Business Association and the Bennet's Court Neighbourhood Watch to seek views and see how we can work together.

What Happens Next?

We will use the consultation feedback to inform the production of a service specification in April 2019, and open the commissioning process in May and June 2019. A contract will be awarded in October 2019, with the intention to commence the new service in March 2020