

## Area West Committee – 15th September 2010

**6. Crowshute House, Chard**

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*Assistant Director: Helen Rutter, Communities*  
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**Purpose of the Report**

To advise members of the potential transfer of Crowshute House, Chard and the vision for its future.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee note the Crowshute Centre Ltd vision for the development of Crowshute House as an asset for the community.

**Public Interest**

SSDC is currently looking at opportunities to transfer council-owned buildings to voluntary and community groups, where there are benefits both to the community and the Council. Crowshute House Management Committee has for some time been working up a business plan to take on a long term lease, in order to manage Crowshute House more effectively and meet the needs of the local community. In order to facilitate the transfer, the Council will need formal approval from District Executive.

Representatives of Crowshute Centre Ltd will give a brief presentation outlining their vision for the future of the centre and their aspirations to develop it as an asset within the community.

**Background**

In 2007, an in principle agreement was given to the Crowshute House Committee to embark on the process of Asset Transfer as a way of developing their organisation and becoming self funding. The group has worked hard over the last few years to achieve Incorporated Charity status and bring themselves to the position where they can take this forward.

Late last year Somerset County Council submitted a bid to the Development Trust Association (DTA) to assist in the alignment of the Asset Transfer policies across the Districts and County and take forward two pilot projects, of which Crowshute Centre was one. With the support from the DTA they are currently reviewing their business plan, which will enable them to maximise the potential benefits that a long term, full repairing lease will provide, developing their organisation and the building for the benefit of the community as a whole.

The government's Asset Transfer Unit describes community asset transfer as a partnership with the public sector, which can empower communities, help develop a robust community sector, support enterprise and deliver public benefit.

Dave Hill - Chair and John Phillips - Secretary will give a short presentation on their vision for the future of the centre and their aspirations to develop it as an asset within the community.

The full business plan will be assessed by Property Services and the Head of Finance before any recommendation is made to District Executive. Subject to this, it is expected that a report recommending the move towards a full repairing, 175 year lease will be presented to District Executive at their November meeting. On approval the final stage will then be for the District Council's legal team and Crowshute Centre to negotiate the heads of terms for the transfer.

### **Financial Implications**

None at this stage. The report to District Executive will recommend that if the Asset Transfer is agreed, a condition will be that no further funding for running costs will be awarded to Crowshute House.

### **Corporate Priorities**

Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities  
4.22.2 continue asset transfer to the third sector (3 buildings by 2012).

### **Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)**

None.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

By supporting a community group to take on the management of Crowshute House it is anticipated that there will be more opportunities to develop activities meeting the needs of the local community.

**Background Papers:** *SSDC Asset Transfer Policy 2007 & Updated 2009*