

23/03074/FUL Coton Hill House Conversion Applicant's Additional Supporting Statement October 2023

1. In response to the additional comments received in respect of the revised management plan and supporting statement the applicant would like to make the below additional comments and information.

Response to concerns

2. We welcome the comments from PORCH and others that recognise that the further clarifications in the updated management plan have helped address concerns raised. The further comments received start to get into the detail of this and at this stage we would summarise the response to the main themes.
3. The Council will be very willing to continue to meet with representatives of the local community to fine tune our management plan before the facility opens and to provide further reassurance that the facility will be well run and a part of the community. The management plan includes for meetings with the local community to discuss concerns, take on board feedback and make changes. If approved we would propose that the first of these meetings is held prior to opening to allow further comments and concerns to be raised, for the community to meet the staff working at Coton Hill House, and to see how the scheme has developed. This will also allow for fine tuning of plans in response to comments prior to first residents arriving.

Evidence of need

4. Currently Shropshire Council are housing 266 households in Temporary Accommodation.
5. 165 of these households are currently staying in bed and breakfast setting.
6. 128 of these households are single people. 24 of these individuals are housed Out of County where limited support from other services are provided due to their catchment areas, but as a council, Shropshire Council have a duty to provide interim accommodation. This data is correct as of Monday 9th October and the number of cases the Temporary Accommodation Housing Support Team hold.
7. As a service, we have been supporting households while in temporary accommodation for many years and this has given us the ability to form a strong management plan for this project to ensure in-house support and also that residents are tenancy ready and move on plans are set in place and followed.

Staffing

8. We can confirm 12 staff will be employed. Given that we have 12 additional staff for this project, we are confident that staff will be available to carry out the duties that are required. We can confirm that 2 officers will be on site at all times. One of these will always be a housing support worker.
9. The level of staffing has been increased following the consultation to address concerns of the local community. This level of provision and the provision of 24/7 coverage is only possible where we are housing 25 residents in one facility.

Training

10. Full training of all staff will be completed prior to the facility opening. We can provide further details prior the staff being employed. This will include: trauma informed support; domestic abuse, mental health, substance abuse awareness, safeguarding, support planning, tenancy ready programmes, enforcing tenancy conditions, the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act, amongst other training needs. This is just some of the training that existing staff are already undertaking.

11. Consultation working with the community

12. In addition to the statutory requirements to consult with local residents, we have also undertaken informal consultation. A full week of meetings in June 2022 and an afternoon/early evening in June 2023. We have amended our plans at each event and again following the planning application.
13. We are committed to continuing the dialogue with the local community after the planning process. We are very willing to work with the local community to address concerns and ensure Coton Hill House is successful.

14. The Ark

15. Although the Ark have expressed their support and recognise the need for this accommodation, The Ark are not involved in the management of the building including the referral process, the support provided or our management of tenancy breaches.

16. Crime and anti-social behaviour

17. There is not evidence to show that crime or anti-social behaviour has increased whilst Coton Hill House was used on a temporary basis. We are aware of some incidents and these have been addressed in a robust manner.
18. When residents break the condition of their non secure tenancy, we may give warnings if these are then ignored we would normally give reasonable notice to leave the accommodation. Usually this would be 7 days. However serious incidents would require the person to leave on the same day.

The funding

19. The ongoing management of the scheme will be funded from established income sources, the main source being the rent and service charges that residents will be liable for, which can be funded by Housing Benefit where residents are entitled to this.