

## Agenda item 5

### For decision: Tenancy agreement for Saxonvale Training Centre

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#### Summary

This report provides information on the activities of Somerset Skills & Learning Community Interest Company (CIC) at Saxonvale Training Centre and seeks approval for entering into a tenancy agreement with the CIC in respect of their continued occupation of the site. It is also recommended that a peppercorn rent applies.

#### Background

FTC acquired land at Garsdale from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) in 2013. At the time, Somerset Skills & Learning, part of Somerset County Council was operating the Saxonvale Training Centre on part of the site in some portable Elliot buildings. More recently, a not-for-profit social enterprise, Somerset Skills & Learning CIC was established to deliver the training services and Somerset County Council transferred the buildings to the CIC to enable this work to continue. As a not for profit organisation, any surpluses are ploughed back into the CIC to support its operations.

The CIC regard the buildings as an asset and are in good condition with a life of at least 15 years. They are the only buildings that they own – others are subject to full repairing and insuring leases with upwards only rental arrangements. Should they be forced to move from the site to enable the future redevelopment of Saxonvale, the buildings are capable of being relocated.

To date we have been content to allow the CIC and previously Somerset County Council to occupy the site without any formal lease arrangement. However, as we get closer to a situation in which development proposals come forward for Saxonvale, it is important that the arrangement is formalised.

#### Activities at the Training Centre

The Saxonvale Training Centre is used by the CIC to deliver training to adults to improve their employability and prepare them for work. This includes:

- Counselling
- Computing skills
- Maths & English
- Adult apprenticeships
- Courses to improve access to Higher Education

The CIC also supports 16-18 year olds with:

- Vocational study programmes
- Learning to work/traineeships for those that would otherwise not be in employment, education or training (NEET)

- 16-18 apprenticeships (The CIC is working with Terry Bishop, our Apprenticeship Project Coordinator to enable local employers to put in place the apprenticeship training that they need).

The centre also provides community learning resources and together with the centre at Frome College, brings education to the community for all ages and abilities. The CIC is building links with Frome Community Education (FCE) to strengthen progression routes from FCE to the CIC's accredited provision. There were a number of Frome based Community Learning Projects in 2015/16 and the CIC has just awarded more for 2016/17. They are co-ordinated from Saxonvale and involve grants to local community groups and learning organisations to deliver target focused Community Learning activities in the local area to disadvantaged groups.

Over the last 2 years, the CIC has supported 195 learners to achieve qualifications. Of these, 89 are adults.

In addition to the CIC, the following organisations are using the Training Centre as a regular resource:

Blue Arrow (recruitment)

Strode College

Your First Support Services (support to adults with learning disabilities)

Learndirect (Maths, English & IT and apprenticeships)

Riverside Training (apprenticeships and commercial training)

Access Training (training for industry)

Open Storytellers (support for those with learning disabilities)

ADD International (disability rights)

Prospects Training Services (adult and youth training)

Chard WATCH (voluntary group that supports socially isolated adults)

PLUSS (support for disabled back into employment)

Overall, Saxonvale Training Centre has become an important resource for a wide range of people in our community that helps overcome barriers to work and training. As such it is potentially a key component in the Council's support for economic wellbeing.

### **Tenancy agreement**

It is proposed that FTC enters into a 'tenancy at will' with the CIC to enable their continued occupation of the Garsdale site. This arrangement would enable either side to walk away from the agreement with minimal notice and no penalty. It is proposed that a peppercorn rent should apply in recognition of the not-for-profit status of the occupier and to reflect our desire to support their work and the ongoing provision of an important community resource. Further information will be provided at the meeting in terms of what we would charge as a market rent so that Cllrs have an appreciation of the value of this subsidy.

### **Recommendations**

1. To agree to a tenancy at will for the Somerset Skills & Learning CIC in respect of their occupation of part of the Council's Garsdale site
2. The agreement to be subject to a peppercorn rent only