

COUNCIL – 27th JUNE 2016

BUTTERPARK, IVYBRIDGE

In 2014 Devon County Council consulted on the future of residential care services and the decision taken was to close Butterpark, along with some other homes across Devon.

At that time the Town Council registered an expression of interest in the site as it was hoped that it might be possible to broker an arrangement for additional extra care housing for older people, or some other community service.

Since then Devon County Council (DCC) has been exploring whether it had any other in house uses for the site but in the meantime there was an emerging need for accommodation in Ivybridge for people with moderate learning disabilities, supported by visitors to the Councillor Surgery and information directly from organisations like the DOVE project.

Cllr Roger Croad supported the investigation into other housing needs for the site (rather than just selling the site for market housing) and following a meeting with potential partners in early March, a site visit was organised and then a follow up meeting on 9th June.

To provide time to explore options DCC were asked to consider putting a brake on the marketing of the site, due on 4th July 2016, and it has been agreed that the Town Council may have until 31st August to put forward proposals to DCC with a view to seeking a community development. The terms that have to be met are as follows:

“Dear Lesley,

Matthew has asked me to set out the DCC process for considering community value for any bid from qualifying community organisations for DCC surplus assets. As this property does not fall into the criteria that is normally considered to be an asset of community value under the guidelines of the localism act we will need you to provide us with the required information as soon as possible to avoid delay to any disposal on the open market.

In order for DCC to consider your proposal we will need:

- 1. Full details of the organisation that the transfer of the freehold will be made to. This will need to be either the Town Council or a similar community organisation set up for the purpose of furthering this proposal. The organisation must have clear and strong local links and must be either a registered charity, an Industrial and Provident society or a community interest company.*
- 2. Full details of your proposal setting out in detail how this will increase community provision and detailed evidence that this meets known, quantifiable and as yet unmet needs in the community. We would expect substantial quantitative evidence to support your proposal: for example current demographic data and future forecasts; reference to data from local neighbourhood plan etc.*

3. *Any dependencies that underpin your proposal – so for example the disposal of another property to fund the purchase of this one*

DCC has a standard evaluation matrix for measuring the scale of community benefit that your proposal will be evaluated against and following the evaluation we would seek member consent to propose a transfer value based on the open market valuation, discounted where applicable to reflect the degree of community benefit. It should be made clear that there is no guarantee that the evaluation will deliver any discount. The transfer value will be set out in heads of terms.

The Heads of terms will include:

Transfer value

Details of organisation this transfer will be made to

Details of covenants to be included in the contract which will limit the use of the property to community benefit.

Details of overage provisions which will apply

1. *Should the property no longer be used for the purposes set out in the original proposal, or for other agreed community benefit (at the discretion of DCC)*
2. *Should the property be subject to planning gain*

Deadlines for

1. *Agreeing the heads of terms*
2. *Formal exchange*
3. *Completion*

I hope this helps

Kind regards,

Charlotte Reynolds

Asset Officer (Strategy and Partnership)

Procurement and Estates

Devon County Council"

The representatives at the meeting in June included Cllrs Roger Croad, Kathy Cuthbert and Ann Laity; Lee Rouse (Brook Housing); Tom Plant (DOVE Project); Cassandra Harrison (SHDC, Specialist Place Making); Tim Tod (Young Devon); Richard Pillar (Director, Rentplus) and it was agreed that Richard Pillar would develop a possible scheme by beginning July with a meeting planned of the group shortly afterward.

The plan of the site is attached and is information about Rent Plus.

At this early stage the site could include up to six units of accommodation suited for people with learning disabilities, possibly a block of four independent flats and one communal lounge/training space, plus two units for more intense support for people moving from supported living to independence. This accommodation could be funded by Brook Housing and rented out, with residents buying in their personal support from organisations like Dove Project. The design would be agreed with DCC Social Services as in the coming years overnight residential support is likely to be phased out and technology will need to be built in at the outset.

Those units could use part of the current building, but the rest of Butterpark would be demolished and a mix of housing for older residents, rent plus and a couple of market houses would enable a capital sum to be paid to DCC but to deliver the affordable units then it would be less than that achieved by a full market disposal.

Information on Rentplus is attached. It is a concept being rolled out in Plymouth and is also supported by SHDC. The intention is that whilst the houses are rented at the start, after five years a proportion are released for purchase by the tenants with a gifted deposit being provided on purchase. As these are gradually sold then Rentplus would seek to develop new sites to maintain the number affordable for rent.

Summary

Members are invited to support this initiative. Whilst it will for the time being require the Town Council to submit the expression of interest on behalf of the partnership, it is not intended that it would be directly purchasing the site, and would hope that the consortium of organisations under the Town Council umbrella would be sufficient to achieve consideration from DCC to address some identified needs in our community which are not being met by any other developments.

Mrs Lesley Hughes
Town Clerk