

COUNCIL – 8th AUGUST 2016

BUTTERPARK, IVYBRIDGE

In June 2016 a report on Butterpark was brought to the Council, when it was resolved:

“BUTTERPARK: Consideration was given to a report on a potential community/social housing project (copy previously circulated).

Cllr Wilson highlighted that this project would provide something for the more vulnerable members of the community and it was a welcome development.

It was **RESOLVED** to support this initiative and submit the expression of interest on behalf of the partnership in accordance with the final paragraph of the report.”

The final paragraph of the report referred to the prospect of this Council leading the bid by submitting the expression of interest and this report seeks to update councillors on progress since that meeting.

On 4th July a meeting was held with key people and subsequently the following email was sent to those who had attended.

“Dear All

Following the very positive meeting yesterday I was tasked by George Link of Devon County Council with composing a letter which he offered to send out to the clients on his Social Services list who had been assessed as having learning disabilities who could be interested in accommodation as has been suggested at Butterpark.

The plans outlined by Richard Pillar suggested 6 independent living apartments (mostly using the converted end of Butterpark plus garage area) plus some extra construction on the side of that wing – on one side it would ideally have a three bedroom house to provide for people who need more support prior to moving onto independent living, so not a long stay permanent option but supported by workers. Richard also showed a small allotment plot next to the house which could be used as therapy by residents living there to grow their own vegetables.

George Link indicated that we had to demonstrate need and as discussed many people with learning disabilities who would welcome being part of this development are not on the housing register, and if they are then their needs are not separately noted. Kathy also helpfully explained why “children” who live at home, who could be much older adults, might not be recorded as parents feel uncomfortable that they are effectively saying that their children are homeless when they do not wish to give that impression, yet want to find some suitable accommodation long term where they won’t be isolated. I know that Kathy and Ann were intending to host a meeting of carers in order to talk this idea through.

Lee Rouse helpfully explained that where independent living is the ambition and the people want to go out socially in the evening, then there needs to be someone around to at least ensure that they have got home safely – whether this is by use of technology or by a shared support budget having someone living on site to keep a friendly ear and eye open. This might be possible and George Link is going to set up a meeting with Max Sellars and Malcom Veed so that we can see where other flexible housing benefits or personal budgets might facilitate better wrap around support at times it is needed. Examples of schemes at Yelverton operated by Golden Lane Housing and Liskeard were mentioned. Lee also referred to the Devon Home Choice Housing panel which covers Plymouth but also in surrounding areas where individuals who had difficulty finding housing might be flagged up and he was going to see if any for this area had been identified.

I attach my first draft letter to send to George Link but when we have the final version (and I really would welcome your comments, so I will not be offended if this is entirely wrong!) then I am assuming that people like Tom from Dove Project would be able to hand copies to people on their books so that the support workers and parent carers can assist those in need of accommodation to take this forward. This would be read with the leaflet which Cassandra circulated yesterday.

Whilst we were all concerned with raising expectations and being overrun with demand it is vital that we know what it is, because the next phases of housing development for Ivybridge are being planned and we will then be fully armed to ensure that other developments of this type are factored into suitable sites. We can also ensure that it is designed to meet the needs of those who will be living there from the outset.

Richard is currently reviewing the layout with a total of 38 units of accommodation, to include rent plus houses rather than apartments, so will hopefully have a new version of the plan soon.

Thank you all for your positive support to date. This can happen and now we need the evidence from those people who would be housed at the new Butterpark scheme to come forward and express interest. As ever time is of the essence so if you could give me comments by the end of this week it would be much appreciated as I would like to get the letter sent to George Link on 11th July at the latest so that discussions to identify the demand can commence asap.

Lesley Hughes
Town Clerk”

A copy of the finally agreed letter is attached and the first draft of the layout of the Butterpark site. Also the meeting proposed by George Link did not take place as one of the Officers mentioned had retired and the other person did not believe it was part of his commissioning role.

District Cllr Kathy Cuthbert and Cllr Ann Laity hosted a meeting with potential residents of the housing, supported by families and attended by Dove Project and George Link from Devon Social Services. They encouraged people to put their names on the housing register and a subsequent meeting is being held on 9th August to give practical help to do this task.

Possible grant funding

In May an email was sent to Locality enquiring whether some of their grant schemes which supported the development of community housing initiatives might be appropriate for this scheme. On 20th July Locality apologised for the delay in making contact but felt that the scheme was very exciting and suggested that a bid be submitted for the Early Stage support grant of up to £10,000. Information on fees from professionals who need to do the work are being obtained, to better understand the value of the land (if used for the type of development planned) plus the cost of establishing a suitable legal framework by which the Town Council could bid to DCC and potentially ensure long term ownership of the site for the specialist housing, with an overage or value being made to DCC for the commercial elements which make the site sustainable and deliverable. There is also a next phase grant programme of up to £40,000 which would contribute funding towards the planning application and designs which could be beneficial if the Town Council were to continue to take the lead.

A meeting was held with solicitors and Richard Pillar at the end of July to establish the method for submitting the bid and whilst the early thoughts were that it would be directly by Pillar Land Securities, it seems more likely that it will be from the Town Council, with no money being paid to DCC at the outset. Any funding which would be payable would be subsequently when the valuation was undertaken and agreements reached with the developer about the mix of housing and the value which DCC would obtain, linked to covenants, planning gain and/or overage.

Devon County Council requirements

Members are reminded of the email from Devon County Council and the information sought by 31st August.

“Dear Lesley,

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*

Asset Officer (Strategy and Partnership)

Procurement and Estates

Devon County Council"

Summary

This is a complicated but potentially very exciting project for the town. At this stage it is not definite whether the land would be owned, in full or in part by the Town Council and Members are recommended to endorse their resolution from June leaving sufficient flexibility to try and ensure that this project is delivered with the main aim being to provide accommodation for people with learning disabilities, but also some Rent Plus housing, alongside the commercial private rented development. A mix of housing is important and all of the types proposed are in very short supply, or are non-existent in Ivybridge. On this basis a bid will be submitted by 31st August with the relevant supporting information.

Mrs Lesley Hughes
Town Clerk