

## **Extract from Minutes of Council meeting held on 23 March 2022**

### **Minute 6.7.**

In a confidential discussion, before formal start of the meeting, the following were also present.

Fiona Colman                      Broadacres Housing Association.

Amanda Madden                Housing Manager, Richmondshire District Council

Cllr Byford explained that individual councillors had recently been appointed as trustees of Middleham Key Centre Limited, the Key Centre's managing trustee, and were conducting a business review. Whilst the outcome could not be anticipated, there was general recognition that the building was too large for current and expected use by community groups and businesses. It had never fulfilled its initial remit as an educational centre as planned collaborations with external bodies hadn't materialised; as a consequence the centre had consistently struggled to maintain viability, despite considerable efforts by previous trustees and the Council. As there was also local demand for housing it appeared logical to investigate potential for partial use of the building as community housing.

Cllr Byford emphasised that, should a change in use be required, approvals might need to be sought from initial funders of the centre as well as residents, which required further investigation.

Mrs Colman briefly outlined how adaptation would work, and roles for other partners. Initially, MKC must identify the area to be retained for community use, including parking spaces and access points; she recommended that a clean sheet be used for this process rather than to adapt what was currently in place. The likely structural alterations would also include the retained areas so for some time community use would be suspended.

Financing might be through granting a lease to Broadacres to operate the housing component. Financial support could not be granted for conversion of the community areas, although the income from the lease, which could be paid as a lump sum or monthly, could be put towards this.

Mrs Madden outlined what feasibility funding received from RDC could be put towards, including plans for the planning application, legal advice and structural surveys. She confirmed that if, for whatever reason, the project did not proceed, the funding was not repayable but this would not prejudice any future application for feasibility funding by MTC.

Capital funding from Homes England would be applied for by Broadacres.

Mrs Madden explained that she would retire at the end of the month but had prepared a housing feasibility funding application to be left on file. A successor had not yet been appointed and interim cover would be provided by Mark Robson.

Regarding an indicative timescale, the following key steps were outlined:

- Council to agree whether to make an application for feasibility funding, and whether this be in its own name or MKCL.
- Council to agree its requirements for community use.
- 2 Months to carry out site surveys.
- Mid to late summer – commencement of planning application; a process that could potentially run into early 2023
- Community engagement to be undertaken alongside the above

- Construction to commence sometime in 2023

At this point, having been thanked by the Chair, Mrs Colman and Mrs Madden left and the formal meeting commenced.

In a subsequent confidential discussion at the end of the formal meeting, there was consensus that scope for partial use of MKC for low-cost housing should be investigated.

Having been proposed by Cllr Fortune and seconded by Cllr Byford **IT Was Resolved that Council apply to Richmondshire District Council for a Housing Feasibility Funding.**