

Dorchester Area Community Area Land Trust

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Wednesday 16th January 2019 at 5.30pm

Present: Izzy Aldwinckle (IA), Alistair Chisholm (AC), John Christmas (JC), Douglas Dearing (DD), Ian Gosling (IG), Lynda Kiss (LK), Andy Stillman (AS), Felicity McLaren (FM), Tricia Mitchell (Chair) (TM) and Barry Thompson (BT)

Also Attending Philip Jordan (Trust Member), Teresa Rabbetts (WDDC), Adrian Stuart (AST) (Dorchester Town Council) and Steve Watson (SW) (Wessex CLT)

Administration: Georgina Wakely – Minute Clerk

For Action

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul Derrien and John Palmer.

2) Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made at this point. The Chairman reminded those present that they could declare an interest at any time throughout the meeting if required.

3) Minutes of the last meeting

DACLT – Board Meeting held on 19 December 2018

The minutes were agreed by the board and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of that meeting subject to deleting confidential commercial information in minute number 4.

4) Withdrawal of Hastoe Housing. Feedback on Meeting with Places for People. Other Potential Developers

It was reported that confirmation had been received from Hastoe Housing that they do not wish to pursue a working partnership with the DACLT.

Members had met with Places for People on 9th January. It had been interested in DACLT's original proposal to provide affordable housing units for young Dorchester workers to buy. However Places for People had now informed us that they would only be able to work with the DACLT to provide housing for rent under the affordable rent model or for shared ownership since the substantial grants they received could only be used to provide affordable housing on those terms.

5) Developing the tennis court site totally or partially for rental rather than sale. Other potential developer partners

Members felt that if they were to proceed with Places for People it would be advantageous for the DACLT to pursue the affordable rent model as opposed to the shared ownership option as it was more in keeping with the

original values defined by the DALCT, meeting the needs of the original target group and allowing the DACLT to retain ownership of the properties.

It was noted that Places for People had previously conducted viability studies for the scheme and would be in a position to proceed with the grant funding that they were in receipt of without the need for further finance.

The Town Clerk was asked what he thought the Town Council's position would be if the DACLT were to adopt either a shared ownership or rental model for the development. He was of the opinion that the Town Council would most likely find a mixture of tenures acceptable but there may be some concern that should the tenants have the opportunity to purchase 100% of the properties, then they would be removed from the pool of affordable housing. He thought that that the Town Council would be more supportive of the scheme proceeding on a revised basis rather than for the tennis courts not be utilised to provide some form of affordable housing to help young key workers. However it had been hoped that the scheme would offer help to young key workers to access the property ladder.

The Town Clerk asked if Places for People could build the homes and sell them to the DACLT but was informed that this would not meet the terms of its grant financing.

Members queried the financial risks to the DACLT if it were to provide properties on a rental basis and heard that they were no greater than in a build for sale scheme since, DACLT would remain the freeholder and Places for People were unlikely to encounter financial difficulties, since they were regulated by the Housing Association Regulator.

A member queried if there was a demand for rental properties and was informed that the Housing Register held by West Dorset District Council could be used to identify people under the age of 35 wishing to rent.

Members were informed that the Unitary Authority would adopt a Local Lettings Plan which would determine the definition of 'Key Workers'.

It was agreed that Steve Watson would redraft the DACLT's standard heads of terms to include rental properties.

The Town Clerk recommended that the heads of terms be adapted and agreed with Places for People before the DACLT notify the Town Council of the proposed changes and request confirmation of approval at the next Full Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, 26 March 2019. A member queried if the proposed changes could be put to Dorchester Town Council prior to this meeting and was informed that this would only be possible in exceptional circumstances.

It was suggested that if the properties were built for rent, then the surface area of the units could be increased from 37 to 42 square meters.

There was some concern as to who would maintain the properties and communal areas should some of the properties become available on a shared ownership basis and others on a rental basis. It was confirmed that Places for People have a management company which would maintain the building.

SW

It was proposed and agreed that the DACLT would in principle work with Places for People and would proceed to investigate the viability of both rental and shared ownership schemes.

It was also proposed and agreed that on receipt of the grant from Homes England the architects, Reed Watts be instructed to proceed with the design of the scheme.

It was proposed and agreed that the changes to the DACLT's project for the tennis court site be submitted to Dorchester Town Council for consideration at their earliest convenience for their approval to enable it to proceed.

6) Progress on obtaining the grant of £62712 from Homes England to cover pre-development revenue funding

The group heard that the Due Diligence Team was still processing our application. The Group noted that assurances had been given that the application was being given the highest priority. It was hoped that the funds would be released within 7 days of the meeting.

Adrian Stuart left the meeting.

7) Future Projects. Accessing WDDC's register of Brownfield sites

Douglas Dearing reported that he had viewed a property owned by Dorset County Council at Monkton Park that was in disrepair and had met with a representative from Dorset County Council. The property consisted of 2 acres of land which could be developed to hold in the order of 40 units and a building that could be converted into 6 – 8 flats if it were to remain. Douglas Dearing informed the group that he had indicated that the DACLT would be interested in holding discussions with Dorset County Council about the possible purchase of the property and had requested that Dorset County Council confirm if they would be willing to sell the land to the DACLT.

Ian Gosling informed the group that he had heard that West Dorset District Council maintained a Brown Field Site Register. A member also told the group that there were over 800 vacant residential properties in West Dorset and queried if any of them could be utilised. It was agreed that Ian Gosling would try to obtain a copy of the Register.

Steve Watson left the meeting.

9) Applications for Membership

No new applications for membership had been received.

10) Treasurer's Report

John Christmas reported that the current balance in the account was approximately £25k, the majority of which was already committed.

IG

11) Any other business

Members agreed to begin compiling the next newsletter to cover recent developments. Members also agreed that the website would need to be updated.

A member requested and it was agreed that its properties should be as eco - friendly and low - carbon as possible. It was agreed that the architects, Reed Watts would be reminded of this value held by the DACLT.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 6.55pm with notice that the next DACLT Board Meeting would be held on Wednesday 20 February 2019 at 5.30pm.

DRAFT