



THORVERTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING – STEERING GROUP

Report on the meeting held on Thursday 29 February 2024, The Exeter, Thorverton

Present:

Andrew Foster (AF), Jan Wills (JW), Geoff Pook (GP), Steve Rendell (SR), Stuart Crebo (SC), Noel Tancock (NT), Bry Uglow (BU), Andrew Wiles (AW), Helen Ratcliffe (HR – minute-taking until item 5), Roger Cashmore (RC – minute-taking from item 5, Andrew Saunders (AS)

Apologies:

Jim Roberts

Discussion on financing the project:

The CLT needs to make a fully informed recommendation to the public meeting about whether we should work with a Housing Association (either wholly or partly) or become a Registered Provider.

It was agreed that the benefits and risks of each potential route should be fully explored prior to making any recommendation to the public meeting; we want to get as much control and quality into this project as we can, but that the potential risks associated with this have to be identified, understood and managed

It was noted that there may not be enough time before the proposed meeting in late March (NB delayed to April 11th after the meeting) to investigate all options fully, but that we should present the information which we do have in a very clear way to keep the community informed and engaged

It was agreed that members of the Finance Focus Group (SC, AW, RC, JR) together with representatives from the other Focus Groups (BU, JW and AS) should meet (possibly via Zoom) with representatives from Abri, Teign and Aster Housing Associations to establish ways in which HAs may be prepared to work with us.

It was noted that a degree of flexibility about mode of provision can be retained when the corporate body is set up and that all the background work which we carry out could be used by an HA, and so not wasted, if we did ultimately decide to proceed that way.

Finally, it was also noted that a decision to proceed with an HA for this project would not necessarily preclude other options for future projects – indeed, there may be opportunities to consider a mixed model in the future

Community Engagement

It was agreed that a vision statement should be short and pithy and established that the current 'strap' line ("The provision of affordable housing for Thorverton's local people in perpetuity") should be proposed as our vision. The additional aims as proposed by the sub-group were accepted.



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The more descriptive statement proposed by the sub-group was accepted as providing a broader context for the vision. It was agreed that these three elements should be merged into one document for presentation to the public meeting.

Governance

Recommendation 1 – that we incorporate Thorverton CLT as a Community Benefit Society (CBS), non-charitable and (initially) without an asset lock – was agreed.

Recommendation 2 – that, within the above headlines about incorporation, detailed choices about the Rules etc are delegated to the Governance Group – was discussed and it was agreed that proposals for the Rules etc should be brought back to the Steering Group for agreement. It was noted that the Parish Council definitely want to have a reserved place on the Board.

Recommendation 3 – that we make use of the incorporation service provided by the National CLT Network at a probable cost of ~£475 – was agreed.

Recommendation 4 – that the final formalities of incorporation are delayed until the proposed membership/public meeting has been held, giving this meeting the opportunity to endorse or challenge this approach – was agreed.

Technical and Site Procurement (TSP)

It was noted that the wording of the MOU with the Church Commissioners was agreed, but that it had not yet been signed. However, the MOU is not legally binding and we would be able to use previous conversations and correspondence with them if required. It was noted that a “Call for Sites” has happened as recommended – via Focus and also in the Crediton Courier. It was agreed that the TSP Group should lead on discussion with the Church Commissioners and any other landowner from now on.

Finance

It was noted that it is important for all groups to identify and consider costs needed to agree budgets in order to reach Stage I funding totals (~£2,500) and subsequently to provide credibility for MDDC in order to receive further funding for Stage II. Costs associated with resourcing and fulfilling the Church Commissioners’ MOU will also need to be identified

It was agreed that Stage II budgets should be adequate to fund the project up to outline planning.

It was agreed that we need to have an accurate record of all income and expenditure incurred by the project to date and that SC would contact the Parish Clerk (JR) to request this information. It was agreed that any ideas or suggestions for budget from members of the Steering Group should be forwarded to SC as a higher budget may be easier to negotiate.

Any Other Business

Outline discussion regarding roles and responsibilities for the future Board confirmed that we would need the roles of Chair and Company Secretary to be filled prior to incorporation – AF agreed to be the Chair and AW the Company Secretary. The selection of a future minute secretary was deferred to a future date.



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It was agreed that GP's terms of engagement would be forwarded to SC and that termination of the engagement could happen at a mutually convenient time.

It was agreed that a Steering Group WhatsApp group should be set up RC agreed to circulate some further notes and a link regarding the use of Cloud storage for the project.

Future Meetings It was agreed to try to hold the public meeting on 26/27 March and to have a pre-meeting on 22 March to finalise the agenda and the materials for presentation.