

Confidential extract of Minutes of 4 January 2023**Item 2.5 Future of Middleham Key Centre.**

Cllrs Byford, Skelton and Mashford, each having a non-pecuniary interest in this matter as trustees of Middleham Key Centre Limited had been granted a dispensation at the meeting of 21 December 2022 and accordingly could speak and vote on this matter.

The Clerk had recommended, by reference to guidance in Arnold-Baker on Local Government Administration, that this was a matter appropriate for public discussion. Following discussion, It was Resolved that consideration of this matter be held in private and recorded in the confidential minute book. This had been a condition of the MKC Trustee Board agreeing to release its report to Council.

There was no formal agenda item for this matter. The suggested topics from the previous meeting agenda as a guide for discussion.

Cllr Byford, as chair of the trustees stated that the report resulted from a business review of MKC operations. It had considered two options, a housing development in partnership with Broadacres and a proposal from Racing Welfare for shared use alongside its activity as an employee welfare charity supporting the racing industry. Further enquiries of both were required; to date no detailed financial information had been received for either option.

Cllr Watson questioned whether further strategic options should be explored; the trustees explained that they had considered commercial letting, as 29% of the floor space could be let to business tenants without prejudicing the charitable exemption from paying business rates. Unfortunately, there appeared to be insufficient demand and alternative venues undercut MKC's required charge rates. Therefore, this option was not looked at further.

Cllr Watson recommended that before proceeding further Council should identify its objectives for the Key Centre.

There was discussion on the timing of public engagement over the Centre's future.

It was noted that a balance of approximately £17k remained from the RDC grant of £20k, which could only be used to investigate housing feasibility. To date, a topographical survey and outline architect's plan for divided use as housing / community purposes had been purchased.

It was agreed that the current status of enquiries to both potential counterparties be shared with Council and future correspondence undertaken by the Clerk on Council's instruction. Discussion of MKC future would be for Council to determine.