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From
secondary
school to
affordable
housing



Mainway estate

- 257 flats (17 blocks – 3 x high rise, 14 low rise) 19 x leaseholders
- Built in 1960s (new cladding in early 1990s)
- Estate of last resort, high turnover, buildings end of life, poor health outcomes.
- BUT



Mainway estate

- Set on a river frontage (some flood issues)
- 5 mins from City Centre
- Iconic Lancaster views
- Has a strong sense of identity and community where residents know their neighbours names. Some residents have lived on the estate since it was first built



Mainway estate

- Following structural and other surveys in 2018 / 19 the Mainway project developed.
- No funding for regeneration and unable to borrow without new income coming in.
- The buildings meant it would be difficult to reconfigure to provide more modern homes.
- Residents told us they wanted their own defensible space, gardens, to feel safe.
- Opportunity to buy the neighbouring redundant school site, with the opportunity to build new homes – rehome residents and then work through Mainway on a rolling basis
- Once in a generation opportunity



Skerton High School

- Purchased in 2023
- BLRF secured supporting demolition at start of 2024
- Received planning permission in Dec 2024
- 135 new homes – 92 apartments (front), 43 homes (rear)
- Large community space on ground floor
- Restoration of community sports pitches
- Retention of cherry tree lined avenue
- New road access
- In keeping with art deco heritage and incorporates some historic features e.g. date stone, art deco stone detail
- Have worked closely with neighbouring school on their requirements



Issues

- Development takes a LONG time (covering several political terms)
- Starting from standing still position
- Lack of knowledge / capacity in the team
- Covid
- Skerton School purchase (becoming available and length of time)
- Changing environment:
 - Increase in interest rates for borrowing
 - Increase in material costs
- Different political preferences (we can't do everything)
- Very complex site – challenges with Sports England, air raid shelter, neighbouring school requirements, flood zone areas
- Requirement to get Investment Partner Status for Homes England funding
- Changes to Homes England funding for social rents / regeneration.
- Now having to wait for Homes England application process to re-open
- Challenging head room in HRA and cost of moving from planning application to start on site £££





Next steps

- Refining business plan
- Continued community engagement
- Continued dialogue with Homes England awaiting funding windows to re-open
- Wider Master Plan – Mainway is not Skerton School, and looking at how that can be bought forward (Joint Ventures, Partnerships, Disposals).

