

Former military houses are snapped up by buyers

Homes reserved in village where asylum seeker base was due to open

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A GROUP of former military homes in Linton-on-Ouse have now all been reserved by private buyers – shortly after it was announced a hugely contentious plan to open a new asylum seeker centre in the North Yorkshire village was being scrapped.

Annington, which owns around 3,000 military properties across Yorkshire, said that all of the first eight three-bedroom properties have been reserved with more due to be released on the market shortly. Up to 56 properties will eventually be sold.

The Yorkshire Post understands that the majority of the eight properties had already been reserved before it became clear earlier this month that Government attempts to open an asylum seeker centre to host up to 1,500 single men in the village's former RAF base would not be going ahead.

One of the concerns raised about the plan had been its potential impact on house prices, as well as whether the village and its existing facilities would have been able to cope with the planned numbers.

The idea of using the facility for asylum seekers was put for-

ward by Home Secretary Priti Patel, *inset*, and supported by Prime Minister Boris Johnson as a key element of their new immigration plan, which also includes the idea of sending some asylum seekers to live in Rwanda rather than allowing them to stay in the UK. But after Tory leadership contender Rishi Sunak told *The Yorkshire Post* earlier this month he was opposed to the Linton-on-Ouse scheme, a day later Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who is supporting Liz Truss's campaign, said the MoD had withdrawn an offer to the Home Office for the use of the facility. With both leadership contenders against the Linton-on-Ouse plan, it now seems certain not to go ahead as previously planned.

The off-base properties, which are priced from £245,000, have been put on sale from local agent William H Brown. They have been refurbished with new carpets and internal redecoration.

Karen Watson, Branch Manager at William H Brown, said: "Our office has been inundated with enquiries. These properties have proven extremely desirable, thanks to their attractive rural setting, and the homes themselves tick the right boxes for pretty much every buyer."

Stacy Whitehead, Marketing Manager at Annington, said: "We are delighted to see these comfortable homes about to be put to good use again."

"There is a national shortage of three-bedroom homes, so we're not surprised that the majority

were reserved so quickly, especially given the competitive price.

"We are looking forward to releasing more homes to the market shortly, so we would urge anyone looking for this kind of property to register their interest with our selling agent so they will be the first to know when they become available."

MINISTRY WANTS TO BUY PROPERTIES

Annington Homes is currently involved in the early stages of a legal battle with the Government over the future of its military homes portfolio.

Annington has a portfolio of 38,000 military properties including 3,044 in Yorkshire.

The Government originally sold off 55,000 properties in 1996 for £1.7bn but a number of the leases have been returned since then.

The company said earlier this year that the Ministry of Defence and UK Government Investments, the state's investing arm, are now seeking to forcibly buy back the remaining properties.

