**Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting:**

**Wednesday 7 March 2024, 17.30**

**Attendees**

**NCH:** Pravin DeSilva,Rebecca Sluman, Phillip Lott

**Oxford Architects:** Tony Mullins, Phillipa Courcoux

**Residents**: Janine Clarke, Linda Clarke, Danny Davis, Sharon Dennis, Deborah Clark

**Councillors**: Alex Pimm

Introduction

Rebecca advised the group that the meeting was being recorded, there were no objections.

1. Actions from previous minutes
	1. Rebecca advised that there were no actions from February’s minutes
2. Project Plan

2.1 Prav explained that the project plan has slipped slightly and we will be looking to submit the planning application in May

1. Design Update

3.1 Phillipa explained that we will be carrying out Bat and Reptile surveys in their seasons, when they are out of hibernation

3.2 The survey of the Water course has been carried out. This water course comes into Somerton on the land next to the shop from the allotments in Alway. From the survey we can see that the water course it is separate from the combined sewer. This mean we can utilise it for sustainable drainage, so the water run-off will be able to go into the water course, which should reduce the amounts of sustainable drainage features that we need throughout the Acacia Avenue site

3.3 On the 6th February NCH had an internal review to show teams and colleagues the proposed plans for Acacia Avenue (Phase 1)

3.4 Please see questions raised during the meeting and replies to these questions:

* Play Area: Would there be enough space for kids to play football? *Most of the space would be longer grass as it will be a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) water retention feature, but there will be some space to play*
* Are we doing anything to help with the lack of parking at the Hope Centre? Additional pull in spaces are being provided on Acacia Avenue
* Have Play Wales been involved? *The landscape architect will contact Play Wales to discuss these designs*
* The Hope Centre is still not overly visible. *Consideration to be given to whether more of a connection can be made, this may come in a later phase*
* Landscaping and the management/ maintenance of the landscaped areas needs to be considered by NCH. Additional ground maintenance support required until the landscaping is established. *NCH will speak to relevant departments / teams to ensure there is a robust plan in place*
* Block A Flats: Will there be a lift for just 3 flats as service charge would not be affordable. *NCH and Oxford Architects will look at design options to overcome this*
* Could the ground floor flats be designed with older people in mind. *All flats are Lifetime Homes compliant, but the flats are general needs not specifically Older Persons’ Accommodation*
* Do we need to consider mobility scooter storage? *If we do then consideration will be given to fire compartments due to the batteries*
* Waste management: What has been learnt in other schemes? External bin stores usually see an increase of people from outside the block using them. *Bin stores need to be secure and only accessible to those in the relative flat blocks. NCH will confirm whether Euro Bins are acceptable for communal bin stores*
* Bike stores are generally not used as people prefer to take their bikes into their flat. Can we add some sort of buffer to stop the walls from getting damaged? *This will be looked at in the detailed design stage*
* Will car parking on pavements be an issue? Can we do anything further to stop this happening? *Our Transport Consultant will look at this but we are already introducing off street parking for all new houses and flats*
* Acacia Avenue is quite narrow and are the pavements going to be made narrower? *The road width is remaining, but additional pull-in spaces are being provided*

3.5 The community consultation event was held on Thursday 8th February, we collected feedback from people who attended

Comments below on questions asked:

**Q1) What do you like about the designs:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The space | Different range of accommodation for families | Looks good x2 |
| Materials used & the flow | Modern look x4 | Houses & flats look brilliant |
| More green space x2 | The colour scheme | Sleek, well spaced |
| Enclosed gardens | Downstairs shower with bath upstairs  | Eye catching |
| Impressive | Houses are a nice design |  |

**Q2) What do you not like about the designs:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Modern | Nothing x7 | All electric |
| All the same | Modern designs | Solar panels |
| Lack of colour | Lack of bins | It will change the outlook of the estate drastically (hopefully for the better) |
|  |  |  |

**Q3) What would you change / like to see in the design proposal**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Nothing x7 | More bins | More street lights |
| Houses to have more garden space | Less flats | Plenty of garden space |
| Decent roads & pavements |  |  |

**Q4) What do you think of the public open space / play space**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Looks better for the children | Love it as the kids need it | Needs to be maintained & not left to go to rack and ruin |
| Beneficial for children & parents | A very good idea as there are lots of children living here with nothing to do | Very nice |
| Good use of space as more for younger children to do | Good, but depends if children use it. Kids play rugby & football but nowhere to do that | Brilliant idea for younger children |
| Good x2 | Really good idea, area needs it | It will be good if kept safe & maintained |
| Really like it as the kids have nowhere to play | About time there was open / play space for children it is much needed | Better for children |
| Happy about this for the kids as there is nothing here for them at the moment |  |  |

**Q5) What do you think of the location of the allotments:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Brilliant | Should be good access for all people | Easy access for people |
| Nice to see them and have them more up to date | Good x4 | Fine x2 |
| Seems ok x2  | Great |  |

**Q6) Is there anything else you would like to tell us**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Would local residents be able to rent the allotments | Adequate storage space in lofts | Parking for 2 or more cars per property |
| Keep the communication going as it does help the residents | Additional bins / dog litter bins as this is a huge issue on the estate |  |

3.6 Prav explained we are looking to purchase the land from Newport City Council which is land next to the Chinese takeaway and land where the allotments currently sit. These 2 pieces of land belong to different departments within the council so we are just awaiting a decision from them so we can progress with these purchases

3.7 Prav explained that we are also working with homeowners to look at purchasing those homes that sit with Acacia Avenue (Phase 1)

3.8 Rebecca explained that paper copies of the information we showed a the event on the 8th February are at the Hope Centre, if people wanted to have a look

3.9 The fly through video is on our website, however we could not put the information that we showed at the event on our website as the file is too big and if people were trying to access using a phone or tablet then you would not be able to see the information. If you would like to see the designs for Phase 1 (Acacia Avenue) please contact Rebecca Sluman: Rebecca.sluman@newportcityhomes.com

1. Refurbishment
	1. Rebecca explained that works have started in 8 of the void properties to get these re-let. The contractor is on site and has a base and welfare facilities set up on the land next to the shop on Acacia Avenue
	2. A resident asked if they are doing a full refurb on the property. Rebecca explained that they are carrying out works that we had planned to, but will still have gas boilers and not air source heat pumps that was originally planned. Prav explained that Welsh Government have change their policy and we do not have to reach EPC A target, therefore the properties can have gas central heating
	3. Prav explained that Welsh Government have more funding available that we will look to apply for
	4. A resident asked if the refurbished properties will have a downstairs bathroom. Rebecca explained that if there isn’t one there currently then one wont be installed due to the footprint of the building
	5. A resident explained that residents thought that there would be a downstairs bathroom like the new builds would have
	6. Rebecca explained that once a property is completed then we will arrange a visit so the group can have a look around to see what works have been carried out

5 Communications

5.1 Prav explained now that we are at the stage of submitting the planning application, these meetings will now be quarterly. The steering group has helped us get to this stage which is amazing. While the application is with planning there will be less information to bring to the group, therefore we will have quarterly meetings going forward

5.2 The Steering Group meetings for 2024 will be in June, September and December

6 Any Other Business

6.1 There was no other business discussed

7 Next Meeting

Time and Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 5th June 17.30 - Hybrid Meeting