

# Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting: Wednesday 11 January 2023, 17.30

## Attendees

**NCH:** Pravin DeSilva, Phillip Lott, Rebecca Sluman,  
**Oxford Architects:** Andrew Brown, Terry Lai

**Residents:** Janine Clarke, Danny Davis, Gwyneth Johnson Mcloughlan, Paul Jenkins, Lynda Piper, Carol Williams, Debbie Clarke,

**Councillors:** Deb Harvey, Tim Harvey, Alex Pimm

## Introduction

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

### 1 Action from previous minutes

1.1 Residents asked what was happening in the garden of 1 Sycamore Avenue. Rebecca spoke with our estates them and the were carrying out digger training. I have asked estates to let me know if any further training is scheduled to happen in Somerton, so I can keep the steering group informed

### 2 Project Plan

2.1 We carried out a lot of work last year, Prav thanked the steering group for their help and support last year

2.2 We have got more surveys coming up along with Ground Investigation (GI) surveys

2.3 We are also looking at getting a Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) supplier on board

2.4 We will be looking to procure for a contractor on board for the refurbishment of the pilot properties

### 3 Valuer

3.1 Phill explained that we are up to 48 valuations to date. We are waiting on 1 valuation report to come through. 16 have had offer letters and valuation reports, there are 7 with a second valuation being undertaken. 16 are in the legal stages. We have completed 8 buy backs to date

## 4 Design Update

4.1 Andrew went through a summary of the last meeting where we focused on giving a design update on Acacia Avenue, Sycamore and Hawthorne Avenue and we showed a design for Libeneth Road, which we haven't discussed before

4.2 A meeting was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> December with NCH internal teams to show the scope of works for the refurbished properties. In the meeting were Oxford Architects and Vision Energy

### **Aim of meeting:**

- To discuss the scope of works to the proposed refurbished properties

### **Outcomes:**

- Each property will require their own intrusive surveys to ensure the scope of works accurately reflects the needs of each property
- NCH colleagues believe that the proposals are doing as much as we can within the constraints of the existing properties
- Training on new heating/hot water systems within the pilot properties will be very important
- Party Wall Surveyor has been instructed to monitor the condition of adjoining properties
- Agreed that Net Zero/EPC A option was the preferred solution
- Completion monitoring period likely to be between 6-12 months

4.3 In September we submitted Sycamore Avenue / Hawthorne Avenue Pre-application enquiry to Newport City Council and we had a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> December. The meeting was held between Newport City Council (Planning) Newport City Homes, Oxford Architects, Asbri Planning (Planning Consultants) Aecom (Highways Consultant)

### 4.4 Summary of comments:

- Three storey elements (flats on the corner) look appropriate, but shouldn't be any higher
- Provision of Bungalows are needed in the area
- Communal gardens – possibly keep them open for use by all
- Bungalow gardens – any reduction from standards will need to be justified
- Flats should have balcony provision
- Car parking provision is a betterment on the existing situation
- Additional soft landscaping to break up car parking
- Ensure that Refuse and Recycling Stores are within collection distances

4.5 A resident asked about parking as they believe parking is still not adequate within our design plan. Andrew explained that we are working to design requirements with regard to parking provision and on the bungalow site we are providing 2 parking bays per property, which is more than the stated requirements

4.6 MMC Site Visit – South Bristol – 20<sup>th</sup> December, with Newport City Homes and Oxford Architects.

**The aim of the visit:**

- To review the quality of TopHat homes which are occupied and speak to residents

**Outcomes:**

- This is a BokLok development (a joint venture between Skanska and Ikea)
- The homes are manufactured, delivered and installed by TopHat
- Phase 1 (circa 27 homes) have been completed and occupied
- Further phases, totalling 173 homes will be delivered over the coming months
- Delivery of homes has been delayed following 'unforeseen issues on site as well as the ongoing challenges to supply chain, materials and labour across the whole industry'
- Homes looked good quality, with variations in home size, brick colour and roof design all evident
- Resident feedback was very positive. Homes have been occupied for 3-6 months. Any small defects (mainly decoration) have been rectified quickly. Homes are spacious and warm.

4.7 Prav asked the group that if we were to arrange a visit to a TopHat site would people be interested. A resident said that they would want to speak to people living in these homes. The group are interested in this – **NCH to action**

4.8 A resident asked about the garden sizes of the new builds, Andrew explained that there are guidelines on this and garden sizes have to be the same footprint of the house

4.9 A residents asked if that it is only TopHat that is available. Prav explained that we have met with other MMC contractors and TopHat have more house types and sizes and more flexibility with design

4.10 A meeting took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> December with Newport City Homes, Oxford Architects and Welsh Government to discuss MMC opportunities for Somerton, the outcome of this meeting was:

- If the MMC supplier can also take on the role of Main Contractor, make sure they have good experience in this role
- Full review of MMC home options against the requirements of the Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR)
- Review size of homes, layout, storage requirements and energy performance criteria
- The design thinking to date seems logical

4.11 On the 21<sup>st</sup> December a meeting took place with Newport City Homes, Oxford Architects and Asbri Planning took place to discuss a planning strategy approach:

4.12 Planning Option reviewed:

**Outline submission for Estate:**

- Timescale – PAC submission March 2023.
- Following outline approval, a series of Detailed planning applications would need to be submitted which could take 18 months. TBC.
- Following approval, construction phases could start.

**Hybrid - Outline submission for Estate with Detailed planning submission for first phase (possibly Acacia Avenue)**

- Timescale – PAC submission July 2023.
- Following approval, construction works for phase 1 could start.
- Detailed planning applications would need to be submitted (whilst new homes are constructed in phase 1)

4.13 NCH preference is for the Hybrid approach, but this is subject to how discussions progress with TopHat

4.14 We intend to focus on this in far more detail in future RSG meetings

4.15 Option of using TopHat as part of the MMC solution:

- Sign NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement)
- Undertake full design review of possible home types
- Undertake financial Due Diligence checks

4.16 The next steps that we will be looking at are:

**Somerton Regeneration**

- Develop proposals for flats along Aberthaw Road and Chepstow Road
- Review the locations of Older Persons Accommodation
- Continue to develop concept plans for areas which have not been explored to date
- Review proposed numbers and mix of homes against local housing need
- Continue to work through what's required for planning and our approach
- Continue working with Peter Alan on options for homeowners
- Continue to review costings

**MMC Opportunities**

- Continue to work with NCH procurement on MMC options / TopHat
- Review TopHat homes against relevant design criteria
- Undertake financial due diligence

## **Somerton Refurbishment**

- Start the procurement exercise to appoint a Main Contractor
- Continue to review costings

4.17 A resident asked about an area that was previously hatched which showed we were looking at either regeneration or refurbishment options, this has been looked at our thinking is that this area will be refurbishment

4.18 A resident asked about TopHat being the main contractor, and will there be limits on the number of subcontractors on site. The advantage of Tophat is that they will take on the role of both main contractor and subcontractor, they will manufacture and provide the homes, they will also carry out all the other works around the homes under their remit. Other MMC suppliers will only act as a subcontractor so they only manufacture and deliver the homes, so it is up to other main contractors to provide all the other works

4.19 A resident asked about financial checks on TopHat. Prav explained that our finance team will be doing their due diligence and all the necessary financial checks on TopHat, before a decision is taken

## **5 Communications**

5.1 Rebecca stated that as agreed with the group we would hand delivered the round up newsletter, which we did on the 15<sup>th</sup> January

5.2 Within the newsletter we had a section on capturing email address so we can send up dates via this method. Rebecca explained that she hasn't had anyone come forward with email addresses, so for now we will continue to hand deliver communications to the estate

5.3 Rebecca explained that we are having Ground Investigation (GI) works starting at the end of January. It was discussed with the group and decided that we will get a letter out to the whole of Somerton re: these works, so people are aware of what works are going on. These works are likely to take a few months to complete. There will also be a site compound for these works

5.4 Rebecca asked if any of the steering group would like to help deliver these letters, a few of the group have said they would help

## **6 Any other business**

6.1 A resident asked about plans for Hawthorne Fosse, previously we have shown plans for this area to be regeneration and this is the proposed design we are taking forward

6.2 A resident asked why the school has to be opened up, there has never been issues since I have lived there. Prav explained that our plans are just to widening the access to the school, this is our opportunity to improve this area as it is very narrow

6.3 A resident asked why they have to move out of Somerton, it was explained that no one has to move out of Somerton if they want to stay there, we will work with every individual household and what they would like to do

## **7 Next Meeting**

Time and date of next meeting:

**Wednesday 1 February: 17:30pm – Hybrid meeting**