

# Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting: Wednesday 2 August 2023, 17.30

## Attendees

**NCH:** Pravin De Silva, Phillip Lott

**Oxford Architects:** Terry Lai

**Residents:** Barbara Taylor, Deb Clark, Sharron Dennis, Paul Jenkins, Rebecca Watts, Carol Williams

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

## Introduction

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

## 1 Actions from previous minutes

1.1 The group asked if we could display signage on external walls where alarms were fitted. Orbis will put signs on properties that have alarms in.

1.2 Cllr Alex Pimm asked how many houses Taylor Lane have built. The last 5 years Taylor Lane have been manufacturing roughly 1700 kits/dwellings per year and with roughly 70 new projects starting in each 12-month period, this includes the self-build department carrying out single units all the way up to 200+ unit schemes.

## 2 Project Plan

2.1 Prav advised there were no changes to the project plan this month.

## 3 Design Update

3.1 Terry updated the group on the change from Top Hat to Taylor Lane as they can offer a more flexible option for MMC follow the review of the Welsh Government feedback on our Concept submission.

3.2 The tender information has now been issued for the 2 refurbished pilot properties; we are currently reviewing the specifications from EPC A / Net Zero to EPC C to understand what our options are.

3.3 We are also looking at getting the newsletter sent out before the trailer event on the Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September where Rebecca, Phill and Prav will be in attendance

3.4 We will also be joining the Councillors surgery at the Hope Centre on 7<sup>th</sup> September, this will be an evening surgery

### Regeneration

3.5 Surveys have been taking place of the concrete slab on Acacia Avenue

3.6 Water and Gas monitoring is ongoing from the Ground Investigation works we had carried out on NCC land at Acacia Avenue and the woodland area behind Laburnum Drive.

3.7 Ecology and Tree surveys will be carried out over the summer.

3.8 A parking survey has been commissioned and is planned to take place in September.

3.9 On the 11<sup>th</sup> July, NCH and the design team met with Newport City Council Planning team to discuss Somerton. They met in Somerton for walk around of the estate so that they could better understand the area and the plans we are looking to take forward. After the walkaround we came back to Nexus House for a presentation of each of the planned areas and feedback was given. We are working with this feedback to further inform the designs for each area

3.10 Comments received for Area 1 included no need for the pedestrian link through the centre. Ground floor flats near the retaining wall need to be looked at, houses overlooking back gardens is not ideal. Banks of parking with no soft landscaping will not be accepted but parking next to properties was seen favourably.

3.11 General comments received were about the importance of green infrastructure, and new properties needing to blend with refurbished properties in terms of roof lines and shapes. Overall number of properties will drop.

3.12 As already discussed we are looking to submit a hybrid planning application, for now focusing on the comments received from NCC planning team for Acacia Avenue (Area 1)

3.13 Following on from NCC planning comments, we have been working on revised design for Acacia Avenue

3.14 Terry shared two revised plans for Acacia Avenue. From the 2 designs the group the preferred the option that retains the flats overlooking Chepstow Road and Aberthaw Road as it was felt it had a better layout of the site.

3.15 Councillor Deb Harvey raised the importance of traffic calming measures as the circular layout of the road could be a source of antisocial behaviour with cars.

3.16 Terry advised that we are required to provide a new allotment space within the development, to replace the Myrtle Grove allotments. We can re-provide these allotments anywhere on the estate, we have already started looking at the best possible location for these allotments

3.17 The group were also asked for their comments on the steps up to Aberthaw Road as the shop will no longer be included in the proposals. Cllr Deb Harvey commented that the existing steps behind the shop are quite dangerous for people and the group mentioned that there is a ramp access that has been fenced off for a long time that could be opened up again. **NCH to check with the council.**

3.18 The next steps for Acacia Avenue Area 1 are to further develop revised drawings and address the comments from the team and the Steering Group, we will then issue a pre application to planning for their formal comments on the scheme.

## Refurbishment

3.19 Terry advised that the Design Team has put together options to meet EPC C the new specifications have been issued to tenderers and costs have been received. The Design Team are currently reviewing these costs.

3.20 A question was asked about futureproofing on refurb properties; Prav and Phill explained that the current specification is in line with the new regulations.

3.21 Prav advised that the design team is working with NCH internal colleagues to understand the best solution for Somerton Estate. Further updates will be reported back to the RSG next month.

## 4 Communications

4.1 Prav advised that the Community Development Team will be visiting all NCH estates over the summer. The date for Somerton Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September when the NCH trailer will be outside the shop on Acacia Avenue from 10am. This will be to cover any questions that the community have, as already mentioned, Rebecca, Prav and Phill will also be in attendance. There will also be a litter pick during the day.

4.2 Prav asked the group if they thought the newsletter should go out before the 7<sup>th</sup> September, the group all said it should.

4.3 The Regeneration Team will also be at the Councillors surgery at the Hope Centre on the evening of Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September, this will be advertised on the Somerton Facebook page

4.4 Prav advised that we are arranging a visit to Taylor Lane in Hereford, followed by a visit to a development site nearby in Fownhope. The visit is being arranged for Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August and Prav asked if any of the group were interested in going.

## 5 Any Other Business

5.1 A resident asked how we would ensure that privately owned properties will be monitored for damaged where an adjoining property is being refurbished. Prav advised that a Party Wall Surveyor will be appointed, and properties will have a condition survey completed before works began.

5.2 A resident asked about reletting empty properties on the estate, Phill advised that we are looking at funding sources to bring the properties back into use, but this does not include Acacia Avenue (Area 1) properties as they would not be let long enough to make them cost effective.

## 6 Next Meeting

Time and Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September: 17.30 - Hybrid Meeting