

Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting: Wednesday 4 October 2023, 17.30

Attendees

NCH: Pravin De Silva, Phillip Lott,

Oxford Architects: Terry Lai, Phillippa Budd

Residents: Janine Clarke, Danny Davis

Councillors: Deb Harvey, Tim Harvey, Alex Pimm

Introduction

Phill advised that the meeting was being recorded, there were no objections. Prav introduced Phillippa to the group.

1 Actions from previous minutes

1.1 Prav advised that there were no actions from the previous meeting.

2 Project Plan

2.1 Prav advised there were no changes to the project plan this month and the timescales are still the same and this is what we are working to.

3 Design Update

3.1 Terry outlined what had been discussed at the previous meeting and shared the plan for option 1 Acacia Avenue and confirmed that the pre application is now with planning.

3.2 Discussion is ongoing within NCH regarding the refurbishment specification.

3.3 We will also be carrying out a scan of the utility service on Acacia Avenue in the next week.

3.4 the Regeneration Team were at Somerton with the NCH trailer on 7th September, which was well attended. We also attended the councillors surgery meeting later that evening, which was also well attended.

Regeneration

3.5 The parking survey has been carried out with residents to better understand the levels of car ownership. This will help when we come to submit our planning application.

3.6 Underground utility scans are due to be carried out in the coming months around the Acacia Avenue area, with the first planned for w/c 9th October.

3.7 Ecology and tree Surveys are ongoing.

3.8 A resident asked if any of the original houses in phase 1 would be retained, Terry confirmed that the current plans do not include any of the existing houses. Prav confirmed that we are still in conversation with the remaining homeowners.

3.9 Terry showed the plan for Area 1, Acacia Avenue and confirmed again that it has been submitted, pre application to Planning. Will update the group further once the response is received.

3.10 Area 1 plan currently has 55 units, 77 car parking spaces and public open space near to the Hope Centre.

3.11 With regard to the wider masterplan, we are currently working through the other areas to incorporate the planners' comments.

3.12 A resident asked further about whether we would consider compulsory purchase for any privately owned houses in Area 1. Prav confirmed we are still in conversation with remaining homeowners and looking at option to work with them.

3.13 Terry shared an image showing two views of Acacia Avenue within the plans. She talked through the design principles and how they address the comments from the planners. The group were asked what they thought of the drawings, the comments received were all positive of the drawings.

3.14 The next image showed the corner of Chepstow Road and Aberthaw Road and looked at the possible material to be used. Terry talked through how the apartments will sit within the level changes between area 1 and the two road.

3.15 It was suggested that nearer the time when work will begin we should be able to show residents of Somerton some samples of the materials to be used so they can better understand what is going to be built. Comments were positive about the possible materials and how they would be used to break up the appearance of the apartment buildings.

3.16 Two of the house types were shown to the group, the first, a two bed, four person terraced house. The second type was a three bed, five person, semi detached house. Terry talked the group through the design layout for both property types.

3.17 The group were asked for any comments regarding the two house types, comments were positive around the use of entrance hallways and not being too open plan.

Refurbishment

3.18 Terry advised that the Refurbishment specification is still being discussed within NCH.

3.19 A question was asked about whether gas boilers would remain in refurb properties. Prav explained that if we are aiming to achieve EPC C in line with Welsh Government requirements then existing boilers will remain in the properties and we will look at ways of incorporating new tech to help reduce energy use.

3.20 A question was asked about how disruptive works would be to a house if we left existing boilers in refurb properties and then the boiler needed replacing in a few years. It was confirmed that it would only be the boiler that would be replaced, not the whole system with radiators etc.

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 as decisions are made.

4 Communications

4.1 Terry confirmed that the Trailer Day on 7th September in Somerton was well attended with around 50 people visiting the trailer and speaking to staff. The Councillors Surgery was also held in the evening of 7th September and was well attended.

4.2 New signs advising of CCTV and Alarms in empty properties have been put up and currently seem to be effective in reducing ASB around empty properties.

4.3 A consultation event is being planned for December, this will allow time to incorporate the feedback before planning is submitted for Area 1 in February.

5 Any Other Business

5.1 There was no AOB

6 Next Meeting

Time and Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 1st November: 17.30 - Hybrid Meeting