



# Information for Somerton residents



# Hello,

We recently wrote to you with some information about the work Newport City Homes is looking at in Somerton.

We invited NCH tenants and private homeowners who may be affected by this work to attend an online Zoom meeting on Wednesday 23 June 2021 to talk through the options, listen to concerns and answer questions in as much detail as we can given the early stage of our work.

The sessions were very well attended, and we didn't have time to answer all of the questions we received. In the meeting, we stated that we would answer all questions raised, and send this out to all residents, so that everyone receives the same information. This booklet contains all of the questions asked during the online sessions.



**At this early stage in our work, we've been working with residents to understand your views on the possible options, collect feedback about how you may feel should these options be progressed and listen to any concerns or questions you have at this point.**

Our consultation so far has been on which option to take forward for more detailed work, and not on the final plans for Somerton. This also means that as our work is at such an early stage, there are some questions we're not able to answer fully yet. We're really sorry as we know this has caused some frustration and concern for affected residents. However, it's important to involve residents at every stage of our decision-making process, which means that we don't know all the details at this time.

In terms of the regeneration and hybrid options (option three and four in your information packs), it's important to know that the plans we have shared are highly unlikely to be the full and final version. For example, we already know that we need to include some four-bedroom houses in our future plans to respond to the needs of existing families.

Any development of our future plans will take on board comments we have already received, more detailed design work and more consultation. At the moment, the plans we have shared are an example of what Somerton could look like in the future, to support initial conversations with the community about the type of work we may look at.

By engaging with the community from a very early stage, your views have been able to inform our work from the very beginning. We are incredibly grateful to the local community for all of your input so far. Your input has helped us to understand what is important to you, and how you may be affected by any future work.

Our very first initial stage of consultation is complete but our work with the community is by no means finished, and we look forward to working closely with you over the coming months to develop any plans moving forwards in keeping with the community spirit of Somerton.

We will talk to all residents to understand your individual circumstances and support you throughout any future work that takes place.

In the meantime, I hope that you will find the information in this booklet useful. We apologise once again for not being able to answer some of these questions in full at this time. Where this is the case, we will revisit the questions asked and respond to them in full as soon as we can



**Kind regards,**  
**Rachel George**  
**Head of Regeneration at**  
**Newport City Homes**

## Missed our recent online sessions?

Scan the QR code with your phone to view the session recording. If you don't have access to a smartphone, the recordings can also be found on our website.



Scan here if  
you're a  
homeowner



Scan here if  
you're a  
NCH tenant

# Your questions

In the following pages, we have included all questions and comments raised during the recent online sessions on Wednesday 23 June, and in the registration form.

Some of these questions are very similar, and so we have grouped them together and provided one overall response where applicable.

## Basis for work

**What is the basis of this regeneration?**

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**How did you identify Somerton as suitable for regeneration over and above other sites? Where is your paperwork containing the justification?**

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As part of our 2025 Strategy, NCH is committed to investing in our homes and services. We know that we have a number of empty homes in Somerton currently, due to their condition, and we wanted to find out more about the condition of our homes in the area.

The results of the surveys that we have carried out, and our commitment to the Welsh Government zero carbon targets helped us understand that we may need to take some action to improve the condition of our properties in Somerton.

In order to identify the best way of doing this, we have been carrying out an options appraisal to look at the different approaches we could look at to improve our homes.

**I'm concerned about the community with flats being built on here, we want to keep our community and houses as they are, can't you just do the upgrades on the estate.**

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We understand that residents have concerns about the possibility of flats being built in Somerton and that there are mixed views about the options we are looking at.

We are committed to providing high quality homes for our existing residents and communities, which means looking at homes and areas which we think may need work in the future. As part of work on the regeneration option in Somerton, we have looked to improve the homes and environment for the benefit of the local community, whilst also helping to improve the crisis currently caused by a shortage of affordable homes in Wales and beyond.

There are currently more than 8,000 people waiting for a home in Newport alone and we are committed to helping to tackle the Welsh housing crisis. We have committed to build 250 new homes each year as part of our NCH Strategy 2025 - this involves a variety of new developments across Newport, and more information on these can be found on our website.

Newport City Homes is a not-for-profit organisation, and all company profit is placed back into the community and services we deliver.

# Previous work carried out in Somerton

**Why have you invested vast amounts of money in the past just to waste it like that?**

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**If you are promising to be careful with choosing contractors like you have been in the past, why is one of the problems that the work carried out in the past has been unsuccessful in making properties in Somerton habitable?**

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**Why would you trust NCH as the work carried by them in the past has been substandard?**

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**Lack of investment led us to this point. How can you reassure people that this has changed and that you intend to build good quality homes with that track record?**

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**Why have previous attempts at repairing your (NCH) properties failed?**

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**Who were your professional advisers who provided the advice on previous repairs? Were they within NCH organisation or external? Why are their insurances not being pursued for damages for providing negligent advice? Was it a design failure or contractor failure?**

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**If your tenants are living in sub-par living conditions, why is this so? If the same situation was faced by a private landlord, they would have enforcement notices served against them by Newport City Council (NCC). Why are you any different?**

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We previously carried out substantial work in Somerton through external contractors, which included external wall insulation and new roofs. This work did improve the homes on the estate however it may not have addressed all the problems such as damp.

We completely understand and appreciate that our previous work may have affected the trust that many in the community have in NCH, which is why we have started talking to the community about this work at the very beginning of the process, before any decisions are made.

Unfortunately, we are unable to comment on details relating to our previous contractors. However, we would engage closely with the community should contractors be required to carry out work in Somerton in the future as part of either a refurbishment or demolition option. Any procurement process would look to make sure any contractor selected is the right choice for Somerton, and we would look to include the community in this process where possible.

**Why are you holding onto empty properties for long periods without repairing / re-housing those in need? Private landlords in the same position are penalised.**

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The properties that are currently empty in Somerton have all previously experienced issues with damp. Through our holistic options appraisal, we aim to ensure a long term, sustainable solution for all our homes in Somerton and to deliver good quality affordable homes for the local community.

“Any procurement process would look to make sure any contractor selected is the right choice for Somerton...”

# Questions for NCH tenants

## If it's demolition, are we guaranteed to be able to stay in Somerton?

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We completely understand that in this option many residents want to remain in Somerton, and we would want this to be the case for everyone who wants it. We can't make any guarantees at this stage, however we would look at this very carefully in any ongoing stages of work. Please see below for further information as to how this might work.

## Will residents who have to move be able to return to the same area as our original house?

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## Will residents be able to choose temporary/relocation?

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## Will I be able to return to my own property?

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### If we progress the refurbishment option:

We know that some NCH residents are especially concerned at the potential permanent move from your home if significant refurbishment work is required.

We have heard this very clearly from the community. We would investigate all options and talk to you about your individual circumstances to consider how any permanent or temporary re-housing process would work. Until we know more about this option, we can't make any guarantees, though it has been helpful to understand your views. We would always look to re-house you in homes that meet your needs because even if a move is intended to be temporary in these circumstances, some prefer to stay.

### In a demolition and new homes option:

The way that we would typically rehouse NCH tenants in this situation would be for as many residents as possible to move once, within the new development, to homes that meet their needs through a rolling, phased programme. This means re-housing most people, hopefully as many who want it, in new homes within the existing community with the majority of people only moving once within Somerton.

## Will you be able to do half refurbishment if needed?

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If refurbishment is progressed as an option, we would work with each property on an individual basis to understand the problems and then works required. We will know further details on this should detailed plans be created at a later stage.

**If I did have to move homes, I would only move if I could go into a three-bedroom house instead of a two-bedroom house. I live with just my two little daughters.**

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**If offered a new build would this be the same size and configuration as the current property? The reason we purchased this house is precisely because new builds are smaller and we didn't want that but the bedroom is just way too small for them to share and my back garden has steps in which my daughter has fell down numerous of times now my health visitor has written you a letter to get us into a 3 bed property with a flat garden and got nowhere this house also has damp and it's really bad for my baby's asthma makes her have flare ups a lot.**

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We would assess any requests against your individual circumstances, before making any decisions about moving. Any rehousing would be carried out according to housing need in accordance with the NCC allocations Policy.

**If demolition is involved how will residents be accommodated, especially when there is more than one person in the house, including pets. How will things be handled for people with mental disabilities who find change very difficult. Perhaps a case worker from your company keeping in touch. This worked recently with a bathroom refurb.**

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Should demolition be progressed as an option, we would allocate our Community Services team as key points of contact for affected residents, who would support each individual household. We would work with you to understand your individual needs, including any health issues we may need to consider, and would support you fully throughout any changes.



### **Will financial support be given for moves if needed?**

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If you're a NCH resident and we need to move you permanently away from your current home and you have lived there for longer than 12 months, your household may qualify for a home loss payment, which is a sum set out by law. Currently, the Home Loss payment is set at £6,200.

If we need to move you temporarily, then you may be entitled to a disturbance payment, to cover moving expenses.

### **Will physical abilities or lack of be taken into consideration?**

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Yes absolutely. We will take individual circumstances into account before any decisions are made.

“We would work with you to understand your individual needs, including any health issues we may need to consider...”



# Questions about valuation of properties

These are substantial houses and it would be impossible to find homes with the same square footage in the surrounding area. There are concerns over how they will be valued and I'm in agreement that they will be undervalued, not allowing people to buy quality homes. Are you taking into consideration the refurbishment of houses we may buy and cost of moving? I have no mortgage and no additional funds to start again.

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If an independent surveyor values our homes, why is it any different to an estate agent doing it? As houses are worth what people are willing to pay as with everything, it feels like we have to do it how you would like. How do we know they won't favour you?

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When you are saying purchasing the homes at the market rate, does that mean everyone is to get their own evaluation for an estate agents and present that to yourselves for settlement? I have had three evaluations; one for 230, one for 250, and one for 265 - who decides which rate is right?

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There is concern amongst homeowners that a RICS surveyor will undervalue our property as they are not looking at market value. I understand we can appoint our own RICS surveyor (at your expense but within reason) but our homes may still be undervalued as a surveyor will take a different position to an estate agent. This is not equity.

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You said market value originally, how is it different? House is worth what someone is willing to pay, only choice we have is you?

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Shouldn't NCH value and homeowners' value be the same, no need to negotiate, this tells me that homes will be undervalued, not taking into account rise in prices.

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Surveyors value less than estate agents and most places in Newport have gone for 10k above what they have been listed as. It's not a fair option, and when you can't say what the buy in would be for a new home, we could end up in debt for allowing this to go on.

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In the case you are refurbishing around me and I don't want to live in a building site (something I did not know was a possibility when I was buying) will you give me full market value for my property as people will likely not want to buy whilst the estate is a working site. Please note I have only been in my house since 1st May 2021.

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How are you going to calculate market value in this area when the value of NCH properties are zero (if they are going to be demolished)? Plus, as soon as word is out about the possibility of this regeneration plan going ahead, property prices will plummet as no one will be able to sell their property until the work is finished. You have potentially completely destroyed the housing market with all this.

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Will an offer price be based on the average market value or on individual property values? Many if not most homeowners have invested thousands to improve their homes. You would need to assess every home on its own merits to make this fair.

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We completely understand concerns over the valuation process, and we have shared some initial information below. If valuation is required, we will provide a detailed breakdown of the process and any considerations homeowners should be aware of at that stage.

If we need to purchase your property as part of any future work, in discussion with you, we will instruct a valuer registered by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) to carry out a valuation on your property, and this will happen for each homeowner/ owned property. We then share the valuation with you.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors is a professional body that makes sure surveyors reach required standards of experience before they can advance a valuation for us. We will only use RICS Chartered surveyors to make sure that valuations are independent, of a high quality and fair. RICS valuers are not permitted to purposefully undervalue properties for any reason and we would not want or ask them to.



If you would like to, you may also instruct a RICS registered valuer to act on your behalf to provide you with additional reassurance around the valuation process. Newport City Homes would pay for this to take place. The two valuers would then negotiate until we agree. This process is intended to allow each homeowner to have representation during the process. If you are happy with the initial valuation you do not have to carry out your own, that is your decision.

We do need to use RICS registered valuers rather than an estate agent because we need to agree on the value of the home, not what an estate agent would market it for. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept valuations from estate agents who are not RICS registered as part of the statutory buy-back process.



Scan the QR code with your phone to access information about the difference between estate agents and surveyor valuations.

We have included this because we think that this website may contain some useful information. However, Newport City Homes has not written this content.

The RICS valuer will look at similar homes that have been sold locally as well as the condition of the home, including homes currently under offer.

**The negotiation does not take into account any regeneration scheme, so the value of your home would not be affected by any possible redevelopment work.**

RICS valuers follow published guidance on valuations and are required to be impartial during the valuation process to provide a fair representation. You can find more information about RICS online at [www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org).

The valuation process takes into account the condition of the property and will therefore reflect any significant work that has been carried out to improve the condition. However, we would typically not directly recompense homeowners who have had works carried out over and above the valuation, as this would already be reflected in the overall market price.

It should also be noted that whilst not a legal requirement, most property purchases on the open market also require a surveyor valuation to take place if a mortgage is involved. Further information about market rate and market value can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3hkwKSu>

Should valuation be required as part of any future work, we would publish detailed guidance on the process for homeowners, as well as how to instruct a RICS valuer if you would like us to pay for this for you.

We understand that some homeowners may be concerned about debt. In any scheme we would want to work with you to understand your circumstances and how we might help or support you through any process.

“The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors is a professional body that makes sure surveyors reach required standards of experience before they can advance a valuation for us.”

# Questions about affordability and mortgages

How would you find us a house similar to ours without our mortgage being an extra 100k with the prices of new builds?

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You say that you want homeowners to be able to own a home in an affordable manner. As well as a homeowner, I am a house owner. Do your plans include an option for me to remain a house owner in an affordable manner?

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What is going to happen to someone who cannot get enough on the sale of their home to buy a new house in the area where they would need to live due to age and disability, how would you plan on helping them?

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Those with existing mortgages may find it harder to get a new mortgage, circumstances change. Those whose income may have changed due to the pandemic may well find themselves unable to buy again.

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Many homeowners have been here for decades with no intention of moving out of their homes, we have raised families, undertaken renovations at great personal expense to make houses into family homes, some are multi-generational homes. We acknowledge that Somerton has lower house prices than more well-to-do areas, therefore where do you expect us to move to so we can have the same footprint and amenities elsewhere without having to undertake renovations to a property or have to take out a higher mortgage? Many of us are not in a position where we will even be able to get another mortgage.

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Are you prepared to give us homeowners like for like (current footprint of our home including outdoor space and off-road parking) in the new development? If not, why not? You are effectively kicking us out of our homes in option 3.

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Many people have invested huge amounts which can be seen! All of that for nothing?

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Do you accept that a number of people have bought houses which they expected to be “homes for life” Therefore they have spent money on their home to make it “Nice” not worrying if the work will be reflected in the value of the home, because the intention was never to sell it?

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Our house is done to a very high standard. I don't think you can provide me with a replacement not only regarding to size, but the gardens, parking around...

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If a person is mortgage free, and you wish to purchase their property. Would you find that homeowner another property mortgage free as they have worked hard to clear this debt?

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Buying this house, we wanted to stay here for life, that's why we invested so much. By not informing us early enough we have already lost our money.

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I believe there is a lot of Homeowners mortgage free. Also, there are a lot of elderly residents who won't be able to obtain a mortgage at their age. What will happen to those people?

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The reason we bought a house here is because we didn't want to buy a new build, I've looked locally and can't find anything locally anywhere near the same size for the same money.

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I still have a small mortgage with my son, I don't want another mortgage.

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I bought my house and have no mortgage what happens there?

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We know that some residents are concerned about the affordability of a new mortgage or property should purchasing of privately-owned homes be required as part of our work in Somerton. Because we're in the early stages of our work, we do not have all the answers yet. We will answer these questions as soon as we can, should this be required moving forwards.

We are also looking at other, additional ways of being able to provide you with information and assurance such as through independent financial advice, should this be of interest.

We would work closely with each homeowner to understand your current individual circumstances and identify a suitable way forward, including affordable home-ownership options within any new development. It is our intention that homeowners would be fully supported through the process.

If you do not currently have a mortgage and were looking to buy a home in the potential new development, it would be our intention that you still wouldn't have one. We would look at this in more detail should a demolition option be progressed.

We also appreciate that many homeowners have invested significantly in their homes, and any significant refurbishment would be picked up through the valuation process.

Should demolition be progressed as an option, we would put together detailed plans of the support available for homeowners and share this with each household as part of consultation and discussions, including affordable home-ownership options as part of a new development.

“We would work closely with each homeowner to understand your current individual circumstances and identify a suitable way forward...”





# Compulsory purchase orders

**What is NCH legal status and what authority do you have for a compulsory purchase order?**

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**If you go down the route of compulsory purchases, we have had no choice, even if we say no, you say it “benefits” the community therefore we have no choice.**

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**If a CPO was granted we need to know how the process works. If this option goes ahead how long would a homeowner be given to find somewhere to live? What if they cannot find a suitable home for their needs?**

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**You mention compulsory purchase, but we wouldn't get anything like the size and location of this property anywhere else in Newport for the money.**

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**What happens if a homeowner doesn't want to move house as they have done a lot of work on it etc. and doesn't want to move?**

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As we have not made any decisions about the approach we'll be looking at, we are still at the early stages of any future work in Somerton. We'd like to clarify there is no Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in place or underway for Somerton at this time and our priority is to work with and for the benefit of the local community.

It is our hope that if demolition is progressed as an option, we would build strong relationships with the local community to see how such a scheme may benefit you. We would work with individual homeowners to understand your circumstances and work with you throughout any buy-back process to negotiate an agreement to purchase any privately-owned homes.

If we believe that a CPO may be required, we would notify all homeowners in advance in line with legal requirements and follow a statutory process required by law.

Newport City Homes does not have the power to enforce a Compulsory Purchase Order until one has been approved by the 'confirmed authority'. In Wales, the 'confirming authority' is the Welsh Government.



Scan this QR code to find out more about Compulsory Purchase Orders.

We have included this because we think that this website may contain some useful information. However, Newport City Homes has not written this content.

All homeowners would have significant notice of any CPO activity taking place, as this would only be used as a last resort. Our priority would be to work with and for the benefit of the local community.

“It is our hope that if demolition is progressed as an option, we would build strong relationships with the local community to see how such a scheme may benefit you.”

# More information on individual options

**Why in option 4 do you feel the need to demolish my house for a parking space?**

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**You want to demolish my home to put in a park. there is a park down the road. Why!?**

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**All my neighbours of twenty years can keep their houses but ours will be demolished for 8 trees in option 4**

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**You talk about creating green spaces... we have beechwood park a stones throw away!**

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**Why don't you look at brownfield sites... plenty of those in Newport**

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**Why have you gone to all the trouble and expense of hiring architects and publishing detailed plans, if you still "haven't decided**

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**Having looked at the plans, even if our property is not demolished, the environment around it will be completely changed, ( and not for the better) we currently have a very private and relatively quiet outlook which will be ruined. It looks like the intention is to turn the area into one big race track for the boy racers who already cause havoc.**

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**Carry renovations out on houses that need it instead of demolishing our perfectly good house. This is not environmentally friendly and I have serious concerns about the effects it will have on the environment. I deem my house to be of a high standard as well as my neighbours so absolutely no reason to knock it down. What a waste of resources and damage to the environment. Highly unacceptable.**

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In looking at the options as part of our early work, it is important to consider whether the options being assessed are realistic and deliverable. This means that some initial design work and advice from design teams were needed to inform the early stages of our options appraisal.

In doing so, we are using up-to-date planning guidance and requirements. This means that in any new development scheme, we need to allow for parking requirements, high quality landscaping, amenity and public realm (which is now referred to as 'placemaking') and sustainable drainage.

We also consider routes and access. In accommodating zero carbon, we need to consider the direction of the sun for solar gain and energy. This is all in addition to accommodating the number of homes we need and can provide of different types and sizes.

Therefore, any new designs are highly likely to look different to how Somerton looks now, with homes, parking and green spaces in different places. Our designs are also likely to change going forward as we develop ideas and take on board the responses from consultation with the community.

If a demolition option is progressed, we would very much like to hear your views on what you would like to see in future designs for Somerton, and how our early designs may be improved on.

At NCH, we have an ambitious building programme, where we are building new homes across Newport. We are also committed to ensuring the quality of the homes of our existing residents, which is why we are looking at homes in Somerton.

# Queries on house numbers/ affected streets within current options

**Can somebody please confirm for me that on Option 3, Liberneth road is within the boundary but greyed out with a note above saying 'Existing Units to be Retained', does this mean that those houses at the bottom of the road, towards the pond, are not to be demolished?**

Yes, this is correct within the current plans these houses would only be refurbished. However, please note that these plans are early drafts and subject to change as we move through more detailed planning and community engagement.

## We need to know house numbers

**Can you provide the house numbers to be demolished as part of the refurbishment/ demolition option? It looks like all of Hawthorn Avenue and parts of Sycamore Avenue.**

**Could you tell me the house numbers in Hawthorn Avenue that if it is to be refurbished or demolished what they are please as I am sure you know what there are if it goes to option 3 or 4.**

**Could the whole of Hawthorn Avenue be demolished?**

**Why is Somerton road affected in this proposal?**

**Why is linden road proposed when there are only 2 out of 20 houses that are council?**

**I'm not sure if my house is even really affected, I don't feel like the plans shown are clear.**

The regeneration plans developed as option three did include a wider area across Somerton, because we think an approach like this may benefit the local community, however if a new homes option is progressed, the area included may change, especially in response to local views.

If you are unsure if your property is included, please speak to us individually.

We have listed the addresses below which may be affected by the current draft plans. Please note that these plans are likely to change through further planning and community consultation, so should not be considered a final list of affected properties.

## Addresses affected by option 3 (demolition and new build)

- **Acacia Avenue** 1-12 (all), 14, 16, 18, 20
- **Springfield**, Acacia Avenue
- **The Grove**, Acacia Avenue
- **Myrtle Grove** 1-12 (all)
- **Acacia Square** 1-12 (all)
- **Poplar Road** 1-8 (all)
- **Laburnum Drive** 2 – 104 (even numbers only)
- **Laburnum Drive** 1,3,5,7 (odds)
- **Sycamore Avenue** 1-84, 86, 88, 90, 92
- **Hawthorne Avenue** 1-11 (odd numbers only)
- **Hawthorne Avenue** 12-60 (all)
- **Linden Road** 2-20 (even numbers)
- **Somerton Crescent** 1-8 (all)
- **Ashley Road** 1-16 (all)
- **Palm Square** 1-13, 15 (all)
- **Liberneth Road** 2-10 (even numbers), 11-17 (all), 19-33 (odds), 33a
- **Hawthorne Fosse** 1-12 (all)
- **Hawthorne Square** 1-12 (all)
- **10 Aberthaw Road**
- **Somerton Road** 9-31 (odd numbers only)



### Addresses affected by option 4 (hybrid)

- **Hawthorne Avenue** 12-54 (even), 17-53 (odd)
- **Sycamore Avenue** 2-20 (even), 1-23 (odd)
- **Hawthorne Square** 1-2
- **Hawthorne Fosse** 1-12
- 20 **Linden Road** only
- Laburnum Drive 1-7 (odd)
- 31 **Somerton Road** only
- **Acacia Avenue** 10-16 (even), 1-11 (odd) including newsagents
- **Myrtle Grove** 1-12
- **Acacia Square** 1-12
- **Poplar Road** 2-8 (even)

**On Somerton Road they are substantially larger than most houses in Newport. They are 4 double bedroom homes, you certainly won't be building on that footprint.**

We know that our current draft plans do not include any four-bedroom homes at this time, and we recognise that they should be included. We will look to amend this in any future designs.

In terms of property sizes, there are a large number of different house types in Somerton and some are larger and/or smaller than others. Some residents have told us they like the size of their home, and others have said their homes are too small. This is because there is a mix of sizes. We would be building homes to the Welsh Government standard, which are generally the size of the larger existing homes on Somerton.

**These properties are freehold. Are the new builds freehold or lease?**

As we are at the very early stages of any scheme there have been no decisions on this. However, it is usual that houses are freehold and flats are leasehold.



# Questions about building works

**What about the damage you could actually cause to our homes whilst the building site was going on?**

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**If you do half refurbishment and half brand new do the rest of us have to deal with being on a building site whilst this is happening?**

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**Disturbance? At the site previously it was a lot of robbery and we were disturbed nearly every day because of this. So it is not/ was not to minimal**

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**If you choose option 2 what would you do if the works caused any damage to our homes? Why should we have to use our insurance and then our premiums would go up?**

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**If the decision is made for part demolition, how will you compensate home owners that will be part of a building site for years that may affect the house price during that period and make it difficult or impossible to sell or to rent out rooms? Will there be an option to ask for buy out and compensation to prevent this scenario?**

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**If this was to go ahead and my property isn't affected directly by any demolition that goes on in my area, if by chance vibrations from machinery causes movement of the ground and my property sustains damage due to this i.e subsidence/cracking etc. Will this be fixed by NCH?**

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**If you decide to rebuild or refurbish the surrounding houses, will I receive compensation for noise and possible loss of rent (I am advertising to rent rooms)?**

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Whenever significant construction takes place, and especially if demolition or excavation works are to be undertaken near neighbouring houses, NCH or the relevant contractor engages with adjoining owners to undertake 'condition surveys' in any property that could feasibly be affected by proposed work before any work begins.

A condition survey will establish the precise state of the property before any work commences and will identify and record any deficiencies in the property, such as cracks or maintenance issues. This information will be used as a baseline in the event that the works cause damage to these adjoining properties.

However, building work is regularly carried out in close proximity to existing homes and in most instances, no issues are caused.

If there are concerns about anti-social behaviour and robbery we would work with local residents, Councillors and the Police to see what action could be taken to minimise risk and address any issues.

As building work takes place regularly in residential areas, work does not tend to affect property values or the ability to rent out homes.

We do understand that some homeowners may want us to consider buying their homes if we were carrying out a major refurbishment programme and we may be able to consider this if this option were taken forward.

**“As building work takes place regularly in residential areas, work does not tend to affect property values.”**

# Approach and board

## What is your preferred option?

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**Out of the options identified is there one more likely to happen? This process wouldn't be taking place if you are planning on taking no action so is one more favourable? I think option 3 would be in the best interests for all residents.**

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**Part new and part old on the estate identified in option 4 wouldn't have a positive effect. The whole area needs to be rebuilt.**

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**P.16 states "your views will be included in the information that is considered by the NCH Board in July."**

- **How will our views be represented? Please clarify the process / method / format.**
  - **How will you ensure transparency, impartiality and equity in representing our views?**
  - **Can homeowners attend the NCH Board meeting in July in order to represent our views?**
- 

**Zoom conference held to answer questions which you can't answer as its "too early to say", yet you're taking it to a board next month. What exactly are you telling them, or am I missing something?!**

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**How are you at early stages when you are advising your board on the suitable option in July for decision by august/sept?**

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**How can you be going to board in July/August yet you don't know what you are going to do?**

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**What is the decision-making criteria and or due process? Please publish it.**

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Over the last few months we have carried out a lot of work on Somerton. This includes surveys to better understand the condition of homes, we have looked at and developed the options, including works required to refurbish homes and proposals for what Somerton could look if we build new homes. We have been consulting with the community to find out your views

of your homes and local area and your views on the options. We have also costed these options and we have discussed the options with colleagues at NCH. We are taking this information to Board so that they can consider a **preferred option** for us to progress in greater detail. We are **not** asking the NCH Board to sign off the final plans for Somerton.

A significant amount of work would need to take place, including much more detailed consultation with the community, before this would happen.

NCH Board meetings are not open to the public. However, as part of our early consultation we have engaged extensively with the community, and this feedback will be shared with the Board to support an informed decision.

Our Board minutes are made publically available through our website at a later date following Board meetings. Please note that where information is considered to be commercially sensitive, some information may be redacted in the minutes. More information on how and why information may be redacted can be found on the Board page of our website.

## **What weight will be given to our views? If there is substantial resistance to the demolition of Somerton will you still go ahead?**

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The views of the community in Somerton are incredibly important to us. Your feedback and views have helped us shape the initial options and identify what impact each of the four options may have on the community.

Communication, engagement and consultation with the community will continue to be vital at every stage of decision-making throughout any future work, to make sure we are working closely with the community to take your views into account during our work.

At this stage, Board are looking at a preferred option for us to take forward in more detail. In looking in more detail at the preferred option, the expectation will be that we work more closely with the local community to develop an approach that is supported.



### What is the appeals process / grounds?

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We have been consulting on the options and then we will be able to talk to the local community about any next steps. As outlined earlier, we are expecting Board agree a preferred option for us to progress. We are not asking the NCH Board to sign off the final plans for Somerton.

We recognise that there are different views about the work we are doing and different views on the options we have presented. Any next stages of work will include a lot more engagement with the local community.

### What company will be building the new properties? Will any be going on the open market? If so what will be the percentage of owned to NCH be?

---

No contractor has been appointed for any future work in Somerton. This is something we would look during a later stage, following much more detailed planning and community consultation, should a demolition option be progressed.

The percentage of owned properties to NCH properties is also something we would look at in detail if a demolition option is progressed and would require more detailed consultation with homeowners before any numbers are confirmed.

## Tenants in privately owned properties

### We have tenants. If the house is compulsory purchased will the council rehome the tenants first?

### What happens to people in private rented houses that have a long tenancy agreement?

Generally, we would look to provide as much notice as possible to homeowners if we progress with buy backs of privately owned homes. This would allow homeowners to provide sufficient notice to their private tenants.

However, we understand that this may cause significant concern for private tenants, and we may be able to offer advice and support based on your individual circumstances. More information on this would be made available at a later date, if demolition and rebuild is progressed as an option.

Newport City Homes is not the same organisation as Newport City Council. Newport City Homes became a separate organisation in 2009 through a stock transfer process. At this time, all 'council houses' moved to ownership by Newport City Homes.

# Timeline

**Sorry you didn't get the chance to ask me to speak. The problem we all face is we don't know! We don't know if we should get work done on our house to keep it in good repair, Please can NCH put ALL its effort into letting us know a specific date when we will be informed what route we are going down.**

---

Deciding whether to carry out repairs is ultimately each homeowner's decision. However, whilst we understand that residents may wish to wait and make a decision on any non-essential decorative work until after they know what work NCH may be carrying out, we would not recommend waiting to carry out any essential work required to maintain the structural integrity of privately owned homes.

**Is there a time frame to make a decision on what option you are going to go with? Also, if demolition was to happen. When would this be, a year, two, ten?**

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**When a final decision is made, how soon after will the first phase start? Is NCH prepared to buy private property before work begins?**

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**When will all this be taking place?**

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**Timescale if compulsory purchases happen**

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**What date will the decision be made?**

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**I'd also ask if previous renovation have been done and failed, that probably options one and two are not good enough for the results you want. How likely are the remaining two options and with Newport councils planning team not even having permission or the works signed off, if option 3 was used what timescales will resident expected to be moved on by... as I'd guess such a big project may take a couple of years to action/acquire?**

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**If you choose to knock it all down will you give us enough time to find somewhere else to live?**

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We know that many of you are concerned about the timeline for this work to take place.

As you know, we will be taking the options to the NCH Board in July. At this point, we expect the Board to indicate a preferred option to progress. This would then be the main option that we would focus on moving forwards, and we would start looking at this option in much more detail after a decision is made.

At this stage, we would need to carry out a great deal more work, including working up that approach in more detail and further consultation with you on the details of any work and talking to you about your homes and circumstances.

With regards to the new homes option, this means that the designs we have provided, whilst indicative of the type of work we may look at, are likely to change in response to your views and comments. They have been developed to support conversations with you at this stage before any decisions are made. A new homes option would take some time before any works could commence, including stages to work the scheme up in more detail and amend/ revise to respond to consultation with the community and with Planners, then the planning process and then selection of any contractor. During that time we would need to work with you to carefully plan processes for re-housing tenants and any properties we may need or be able to buy from home owners. Because the next stages of work will take time to develop, you will have notice of any work that will be taking place. We would speak to each and every resident and homeowner individually to understand your individual circumstances and concerns, and we would look to help to address these as much as possible.

No work will be taking place immediately after a decision is made. We will look to provide a high-level timeline as soon as we can when we know what option we will be progressing.

# Costs

**On all the options, why have you not shared the costings for each option as well as a timeline for delivery/implementation? We want to see these costed options. This would also play a part in the decision-making process and we cannot imagine you have set out options without undertaking research on the financial commitment involved.**

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**If you're looking at the Welsh government to fund, then we as homeowners and taxpayers will lobby against it. Our AM will certainly hear our views.**

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**What is your source of funding?**

- **Is it provisional or has an outline / firm funding amount been agreed?**
  - **How much is from public funds?**
- 

We have carried out some high-level initial costings to understand the potential overall investment that would be required to undertake each option. However, this is highly likely to change as we will need to carry out significant work once an option has been agreed to progress in detail. This includes reviewing designs, including further consultation with the community. We aren't able to share our costing information because it is commercially sensitive.

The Welsh Government supports building new homes across Wales because there is a housing crisis and a need to build new homes. It may be that any proposals to build new homes are eligible for some funding from Welsh Government however there is no agreement in place for any grant funding.

# Planning and NCC, public services

**What input has NCC had on all the options?**

- **What pre-planning has been discussed or agreed (preliminary or otherwise) with NCC?**
  - **How are you ensuring complete transparency regarding your discussions with NCC?**
  - **We want all discussions shared with this group.**
- 

Newport City Council are a key partner to NCH and we work closely with them. NCC advise all social landlords, including NCH, on property sizes and numbers based on local housing need. This is how we know that there is a need for one and two-bedroom homes in Somerton.

As part of understanding whether building new homes as part of option three or four would be deliverable, we have had high level discussions with the Planning department at Newport City Council. This is a usual approach. We have worked through the early plans with them and discussed the high-level principles that we are trying to meet. These have been outlined previously and include making sure homes are carbon neutral, that we provide a mix of housing types and sizes and that we meet standards for drainage and parking.

No agreements have been made and there would be further discussions with Newport City Council should we need to go through a planning process in the future.

**What consideration have you given to the additional pressure on already stretched local services, like doctor surgeries. They are already at a stretch.**

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**What consideration has been given regarding an increase in traffic flow, parking availability, air pollution, environmental assessments, increase in anti-social behaviour and increase in demand for public services such as GP surgeries (which are already under pressure), if options 3 or 4 are pursued? Please share all of the above and any other relevant assessments undertaken as part of scoping the options.**

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In all new developments, consideration is given to traffic, doctors surgeries, schools and other local services through the Planning process. This would be part of any future process.

**Why has Somerton Primary remained untouched (no CPO) as part of option 3? It is an underperforming school. Can do with an uplift and more investment.**

---

Responsibility for local services, including schools, sits with Newport City Council. Newport City Homes is not part of the council, and as a separate housing association, our focus is on the homes within the community.

We have had high level discussions with NCC about the local school, however, any action would be their decision. We are therefore not looking at Somerton Primary School as part of our work at the present time. However, we would work closely with the school to support them if required through any future activity.

**This is a business opportunity for NCH, demolishing 300 houses to build 490 houses in a good area of Newport as there is no explanation why you would not just buy land and build from new and sell the existing houses to private buyers that can get rid of damp.**

---

Our work on Somerton is for residents and the community to see where and how we can provide better homes and improve the wider environment. It is not about making money. Newport City Homes is a not-for-profit organisation, and all company profit is placed back into the community and services we deliver.

**Take our opinion on board, fix the houses that need doing all this green space we didn't ask for it and it seems funny how this SOMERTON RAILWAY STATION was not mentioned in the first zoom meeting**

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**Train station hasn't been mentioned. That's the benefit for them. Train station is in option 3 so if its approved option 3 will probably go ahead?**

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South Wales East Transport Commission released a report in 2020 which looked at alternatives to the M4 Relief Road. This included proposals to improve the rail network in South Wales, and Somerton has been referenced as a possible location for a 'Newport East' train station.

This work is not something that NCH is directly involved in. At the moment, we don't know if a Somerton station will go ahead, however, we have

tried to take it into account should it go ahead as we think that a train station in Somerton could be positive for the local community.

Should a demolition option not be progressed, we would work with Welsh Government on any future plans as required.

**Have you followed national guidance for a large major development proposal?**

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We are aware of and work to guidance set by both the Welsh Government and UK Government.

**Who are your current professional advisers on the options? Are they the same as the ones who recommended the previous repairs to your NCH properties?**

---

We have a team of professional consultants that has helped in developing the options, this includes Oxford Architects.

We have not used the same team as was used with previous works.

**Just on a side note, if want to improve the area, put a zebra crossing by the Crosshands pub as you take your life in your hands crossing by there.**

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Unfortunately, as we are not Newport City Council we have no ownership over the road next to the Crosshands. We would encourage you to contact your local councillor with this feedback.

**You don't knock down people's homes to make spaces to park cars. You don't tell people that they need more visibility across the estate when that's the last thing they want. You don't enforce public spaces on them when they want privacy. Why don't you upgrade the houses you are responsible for, rather than knocking down privately owned houses and then patronise us with the "change is scary" comment.**

---

We appreciate that this is a highly concerning time for affected tenants and homeowners, and we're sorry if our wording in the recent online session came across in this way, it was absolutely not our intention.

We will continue to consult with the community should a demolition option be progressed for Somerton to take all views into account.



# Communications

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## **Please can you also send the power point when you send the recording of this session?**

You can find a copy of the PowerPoint presentation for the online sessions on Wednesday 23 June on the Somerton page of our website (under 'Your Community' on the homepage).

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## **Will you answer the questions in the chat bar and share the answers with us?**

All of the questions have been included in this booklet.

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## **Where are these "social media discussions"?**

A Facebook group for this work, Somerton Estate, was set up by members of the community in February 2021. We are active members of the page and frequently respond to questions and concerns. If you have a Facebook account and would like to join the group, please search 'Somerton Estate' from your homepage.

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## **You have set a very unrealistic timeframe (many have not been consulted and were unaware of the regeneration prior to the pamphlet). You are making recommendations based on limited consultation (June and possibly July) and engagement which will involve uprooting individuals and families from their homes.**

As we are at the very early stages of this work, our initial consultation with the community is to understand your initial views and concerns on the potential options we are looking at for future work in Somerton. Our plans are not final, and significant further engagement and consultation will be taking place with the community as our work progresses and before any work can take place in the future. This includes further consultation on developing any final plans, should demolition be progressed as an option.

We appreciate this feedback and have taken it into consideration for our future activity.

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## **Can you please answer the questions that were provided while we filled in the entry email for this session?**

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## **Will you answer the questions in the chat bar and share the answers with us?**

**The important things about the question we are asking is the answers should be shared with everyone, simply by parking the questions to be answered by individual e mail or phone call means we don't all get the same information, is this not the point of this exercise?**

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## **I'm sure I'm speaking for everyone when I request that all the questions and comments on this chat bar require a written response from NCH to be shared with all the homeowners ASAP. Honest and transparent responses please.**

All questions received through the online sessions and registration form have been included in this booklet, which has been delivered to all NCH tenants and homeowners who may be affected by this work. We have tried to answer all questions as best we can, at the current time.

Where we have received questions that we do not have the answers to at this stage, we have indicated this. We appreciate that this is frustrating for affected residents and homeowners, and we will try to answer these questions over the coming months should further work take place.

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## **The problem is the letters make it look like they are about NCH and nothing to do with homeowners, people who have bought their homes from NCH over the years have just assumed that you still had us down as NCH tenants and ignored the letters**

We have taken this feedback on board, and will make future communications clear that information is for private homeowners and NCH residents.

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## **I think the survey should be reopened, now that we are all aware of it's purpose**

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## **Will you now carry out a new survey following today's session to gather homeowner's feedback and include ALL?**

We have carried out two community surveys in Somerton as part of our work so far. Our first survey asked for views on homes and Somerton as a place to live, and our second survey asked for views on the options we are looking at currently and we have outlined what the surveys are for in both cases. There will be further opportunities to provide feedback as part of any consultation and engagement in the future, should demolition or refurbishment be progressed as an option, before any further decisions are made.

Our second survey was open at the date of the online session and closed on Friday 2 July. This was to gather initial views from NCH tenants and homeowners on the possible options and more than 100 responses were received.

Whilst the survey is now closed, we still welcome ongoing views from NCH tenants and homeowners. These can be shared with us by e-mail or post.

**community@newportcityhomes.com**

#### **Somerton project team**

Newport City Homes  
Nexus House  
Mission Court  
Newport  
NP20 2DW

**Communication has been poor from the start, any letters sent prior to the leaflets were not that clear, so you did not get enough responses from the first round of conversations with residents**

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**Why have you pursued this regeneration during a global pandemic? Options 3 and 4 impact homeowners substantially and communication is limited between residents / homeowners as well as from NCH which from my personal perspective has been vague and almost non-existent.**

---

We have started this work in Somerton because we think we need to: because we are committed to providing high quality homes for our residents. We were planning for this work before the pandemic started and have adapted our approach as much as possible so that we could carry on.

At the moment, our work is in early stages, and further consultation and engagement will be required with the community as part of any refurbishment or demolition option taken forward. We appreciate that the community have requested face-to-face activity, and we will introduce this as part of our engagement activity as soon as it is safe to do so.

We are currently looking at our communications and engagement approach to take on board the feedback received during this initial phase of consultation and will look to continuously improve our approach should work progress.

**But you haven't worked with us you have TOLD us what will be happening to our family homes. A leaflet to say, your home will no longer exist is telling us not working with us**

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At this stage we have been asking the local community what you think of your homes and area and what you think of the options. No decisions have been made about what, if any, work will be carried out. This includes any decisions about individual homes being demolished.

At the moment, our focus is on understanding how the community feels about the potential options and identifying any initial concerns that we may need to take into account in our future work. Please be reassured that no final decisions have been made regarding any work, and further consultation and engagement with the community will be required as part of our activity, should we progress to look at a refurbishment or demolition option in more detail.

**Your pamphlet was received w/c 14 June. P.2 states that “we have written to you previously about this, in February and April.” Neither is true, first we heard was via an extremely vague doorstep visit in May which simply mentioned refurbishment of NCH properties and when questioned if homeowners would be affected, were told ‘no’.**

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We identified some properties at a later stage in our work and wrote to these affected properties week commencing 17 May 2021 with more information. These properties would not have received previous communications relating to work in Somerton.

We would like to explore this feedback in more detail – please contact us at [community@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:community@newportcityhomes.com).

**P.6 of your pamphlet, views and feedback. You had 42 responses out of ‘over 300’ = 14% response rate – cannot be considered as representing the Somerton homeowners / residents views.**

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As part of our commitment to being transparent with the community, we have openly shared the response rates for previous surveys. We are aware that a 14% response rate is quite low and whilst responses are being considered as an indication of views, it is not considered to be 100% representative survey of all residents.

We hope that community engagement will increase as work progresses, and we are continuing to adapt our communications approach to encourage all affected residents and homeowners to provide feedback where possible.

## Current properties

**Meanwhile, please will Newport City Homes look at what is happening in your empty properties, The gardens are full of rubbish, a haven for vermin, while you are keeping the properties empty for this project, can you arrange for the gardens to be kept in an acceptable state?**

**And is anything going to be done about rubbish accumulating in the front gardens of boarded up houses apart from all the stress we’re under we are going to have a problem with vermin**

We appreciate that our empty properties are causing some issues for nearby residents due to the amount of litter nearby and garden conditions.

We have discussed this issue with our in-house maintenance teams and will look to take action where we are aware of issues. We would encourage residents who are affected by the condition of empty properties to continue to raise issues with us so that we can address them.

## Wellbeing

**Linden Road is virtually all privately owned. They’re well maintained to a high standard. We don’t need the upheaval and stress, especially the older residents.**

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**Not just the financial cost, but mental cost.**

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We understand that this is a highly stressful time for many residents, including those who may be elderly or have additional support needs. Please be reassured that should a demolition option be progressed we would work closely with each and every household to understand your individual circumstances and fully support you throughout any work.

We thank you for your feedback and will take this on board in any further design work.

# Compensation and financial recompense

**As we have only very recently moved into the property and had no inkling of this, we potentially face two lots of costs relating to purchase / relocation / mortgage fees which is incredibly stressful. We also have legal fees for a breach of contract with the vendors - a nightmare scenario to have to pay out. How are compensation costs determined?**

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**What about the costs for redecoration, carpets, curtains, furniture etc? Why should we be out of pocket to put a house right to how ours already is?**

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**I have just bought a house and was not aware of any plans that you are suggesting. If you decide you want to buy me out, will I receive compensation for needing to leave my fixed mortgage early? Due to recently moving and the potential to need to move again, will these costs be reimbursed?**

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**As a homeowner, if you decide to go for complete regeneration how will we be fully compensated? The market value plus 10% will not buy me an equivalent property in this area. Plus, at my age I wouldn't now get a mortgage so whatever compensation you were going to offer would have to be substantial enough to cover off my existing mortgage plus buy me an equivalent property somewhere else.**

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If you are a private homeowner and we need to purchase your property as part of work carried out, NCH would pay statutory compensation as required by law.

The statutory compensation consists of:

- 10% of the property value for owner occupiers (up to £62,000)
- 7.5% of the property value for owners who are not resident

NCH would pay for any fees incurred through needing to leave a fixed-term mortgage early.

Examples of costs which NCH may be able to support with are listed below. This list is not exhaustive, and more information and confirmation of support would be provided at a later stage in our work, should a demolition option be progressed.

- Removal expenses
- Legal fees arising from the acquisition of a replacement property
- Stamp duty arising from the acquisition of a replacement property
- Surveyors fees arising from the acquisition of a replacement property
- Survey fee and costs in connection with the transfer of an existing mortgage or raising a new one
- Special adaptations of the replacement premises
- Altering soft furnishings and moveable fittings and fixtures to fit your new home
- Disconnection and reconnection of services such as telephone and electricity
- Forwarding of post (for a reasonable period)
- Incidental costs of acquiring replacement property

Every loss would be considered on its merits and should be recoverable if a natural, direct and reasonable consequence of being disturbed. The onus is on the claimant to justify their claim and there are some reasonable time limits placed on the costs/ payments above.



# General/other

**I'm not sure how bad my home is affected - only damp I noticed was under the stairs but have no ideas if it's any worse?**

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If any residents have specific concerns about the condition of your property, please contact us so we can look into this for you.

**Can we ask the panel how they would feel if only their houses would be demolished and neighbouring houses would stay?**

---

**Total waste of time ticking boxes no more information given to very worried people. I don't like the fact that people who actually don't live here haven't lived here for over 41 years like myself making decisions about my home.**

---

We understand that these are your homes, and this is your community. We have committed to engage with the Somerton community from a very early stage of our work so that your views can be considered throughout. As work progresses, we hope to build strong relationships with residents and homeowners. It is really important that we understand your views and feelings as part of our work.

**The new estate looks very different indeed with many more flats rather than houses. This will alter the whole feel for the area. We didn't buy a house to live somewhere like this. Options 3 and 4 will have a massive impact on homeowners and there are no reassurances that we won't be left in a worse financial position. If these options are taken, to be fair I feel very strongly that the option of offering financial support for homeowners to take independent legal advice is vital if you want people to co-operate. There are obvious benefits for the housing association in gaining more homes. There are no benefits for homeowners who are going to lose their home / be offered a surveyor valuation/ possibly have to take on an additional mortgage and live in a building site.**

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If a demolition or regeneration option is progressed, and we start to look at these options in more detail, we would want to work very closely with homeowners and work in partnership wherever possible, to understand your individual circumstances and your preferences.

It is our view that if demolition and regeneration is progressed as an option, that by working closely with the local community and affected residents we could build a Somerton that benefits everyone, and we would try our best to work with the community as much as possible throughout this process.

If there are specific issues that homeowners would like professional advice on, we may look to explore this further at the appropriate time.

**If homeowners cannot afford to buy a new property on the estate because they would not be able to take out a new mortgage, would it be possible for them to become NCH tenants on the new estate and not have to move away from disabled family members who they care for?**

---

As part of working up any preferred option, we would need to talk to all homeowners to understand your individual circumstances and we would look to work with you on an approach that met your needs.

“We understand that these are your homes, and this is your community.”

# Contact us

There are several ways that you can get in touch with us to talk about our work or share your views.

**By phone:**

Wesley Ford  
Community Services Officer  
01633 227614

**By e-mail:**

[community@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:community@newportcityhomes.com)

**By post:**

Somerton project team  
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