

**Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting** - **Wednesday 2 March 2022, 17.30**

**Attendees**

**NCH:** Pravin Da Silva, Llyr Morris, Wesley Ford, Rebecca Sluman, Phil Lott

**Oxford Architects:** Terry Lai, Andrew Brown

**Residents:** Deborah Hoare, Paul Hoare, Sebastian Czarnecki, James Waters, Matthew James, Ceri Antonen, Rebecca Watts, Deb Clarke, Sharon Dennis, Lindsay Brown, Kirsty Essery, Tes Ahmed, Halima Begum, Brian Stevenson, Raqaia Mahmood, Naomi Davies, Danni Davies, Simon Goom

**Councillors:** None in attendance

**Please note**: This meeting was held at Nexus House and was also made available online via Zoom. Residents were contacted individually in advance to discuss arrangements.

**1.** **Introduction and actions from previous meeting**

1.1 Pravin opens the meeting greeting the members in attendance in person and online and will run through the previous meeting minutes. Wes also advised that this meeting was being recorded, there were no objections to this.

1.2 Rebecca confirmed that we have made contact with a resident who raised concerns regarding no contact within the chat function at the previous meeting. Wes liaised with the residents and the action detailed in the minutes was actioned.

1.3 In response to a query in the previous minutes regarding properties being let within the estate, Rebecca confirmed that there are 3 properties that are due to be let on the estate and advised that one property had been let during August of 2021.

1.4 Pravin updated the group regarding the issue with rubbish/waste on the estate particularly voids and advised that we are working with estates to improve this. Images were shared of the works advanced by the maintenance team to improve the appearance of the estate.

**2.** **Project Plan**

2.1 Pravin showed the group the Project Plan and Key Milestones, discussing the works to date and the works planned for March. There were no comments from the Resident Steering Group members.

2.2 Pravin informed the group, of plans to have a wider community event which will take place on 30th March 2022 at the Hope Centre. The event will share boards containing the current proposals. NCH will include details of the event in our next newsletter that will be issued W/C 21st March. NCH will also share a social media posts to inform residents of the event. **NCH to promote the Engagement Event.**

2.3 Llyr provided an update on Michael Dyson’s damp and visual surveys with residents. Individual letters were produced summarising the findings of the damp and visual surveys for their property and posted to them direct. A resident advised that they have not received a survey letter. Llyr asked if they had a survey carried by Michael Dyson in which the resident advised that they have not. Llyr confirmed that the individual survey results have only been provided to households who have had a damp and visual survey completed, and the overall findings of the surveys will be shared in the newsletters. **NCH to share newsletters with residents steering group prior to wider distribution.**

2.4 Llyr advised that a Community Event will provide an opportunity for the wider community to review the current proposals and provide feedback. The event will take place at the Hope Centre on the 30th March (time TBC).

**3 Financial Advisor**

3.1 Pravin provided an update explaining that we initially went out to tender in November and then again in January however we were unsuccessful. We then contacted partners we’ve worked with historically but their main focus is commercial work. We are currently working with the Procurement Team to explore other avenues to recruit a valuer for this project. Pravin stated that NCH will continue to update the steering group and provide another update on the progress at the next meeting.  **NCH to continue process to appoint a valuer.**

1. **Refurbishment activity**

4.1 Llyr advised that we are looking at a pilot run for refurbishment of properties and will be carrying out intrusive surveys on our void properties to collect data to identify the issues and look to build a specification. A resident raised concerns over surveying only void properties as the data could influence the decision to be in favor of demolition. Rebecca responded to the resident advising that voids have a mix of issues so they are a good representation of problems with the homes.

4.2 Llyr explained that we, NCH, have commissioned further intrusive surveys to a sample of void properties to build up a clearer picture as to why some properties are experiencing damp issues and others aren’t.

4.3 A resident asked whether homeowners will get an opportunity to buy into a refurbishment project? Pravin and Llyr both advised that we are exploring the possibility of allowing homeowners to opt-into a refurbishment project. NCH will continue to look at this and provide updates where necessary. **NCH to provide an update of the findings of the intrusive surveys.**

**5** **Acacia Plans**

5.1 Pravin advises that the plans for Acacia Avenue are indictive and we want the group to have their say and share their views in relation to the plans shared by Andrew.

5.2 Andrew talked attendees through the key design principles considered during the design process, and our rationale behind the layout proposed.

5.3 Andrew explained the housing need data provided by NCC, and NCH housing team that guides our unit mix and schedule of accommodation for the area and has explained that NCH has worked alongside Peter Alan to retrieve data on the need for properties within Somerton. The data shows there is a high demand for 1 bedroom accommodation within Somerton.

5.4 Andrew shared a table which demonstrated the difference in property sizes against the WDQR standards. The table demonstrated that 85% of existing homes are below the WDQR standard.

5.5 A resident asked if we were considering 2 bedroom houses within the chat function and Rebecca explained that we will be providing a mix of housing including 2 bedroom homes. Andrew also stated that this is not the final design and is a concept, we are keen for residents to have their say and directly input into this project.

5.6 There were concerns raised in the chat function regarding the level of car parking proposed. Comments were also raised that a lot of households already have a shortage of parking and also own more than one vehicle. Andrew advised that we will be looking to ensure that we have enough car parking available for existing and new residents and will work alongside transport consultants to make sure our designs meet the demand. We will also be engaging with NCC highways department to agree the car parking requirements early in the planning process. **NCH to appoint Transport Consultant to advise on highway matters.**

5.7 A resident asked about the current situation with homeowners within Acacia Avenue as NCH previously said that they were not pursuing CPO’s at this moment in time? Pravin advised again that we are not currently looking at CPO’s and we want to work with homeowners on a voluntary basis throughout the process.

5.8 A resident commented that the shop shown on the design was not located near the older persons accommodation and this could be problematic and also unsafe for them to access it. Andrew explained that the precise location of the shop is yet to be agreed, and we will be working with the community and the shop keeper to finalise its location when we further explore design options.

5.9 A question from a resident stated ‘what process we are going through to get to the final design?’ Andrew advised that we want the group and residents to input directly into the design and for us to work together to help build a final design that’s right for everyone. NCH will achieve this by continuing to hold RSG meetings and by holding community events. Andrew advised that we will have regular communication with stakeholders throughout the process.

5.10 A resident asked for a breakdown of NCH and private properties from the concept design for Acacia Avenue. We confirmed that we will not be highlighting the location of private properties due to issues of confidentiality and data protection.

5.11 Andrew shared precedent images of examples of homes and regeneration schemes within other developments to gain the residents views regarding the style of properties that could be achieved within Somerton. We received positive responses from residents regarding the design.

5.12 Andrew shares his initial thoughts regarding Laburnum Drive and talks about design considerations and constraints. Andrew asked the group for their thoughts. A resident raised concerns regarding existing car parking at Laburnum Drive. Andrew advised that we will review car parking standards with the Transport Consultants to provide sufficient car parking in line with NCC car parking standards.

**6 Next Meeting**

6.1 Wednesday 6th April 2022 – 17:30-19:00

6.2Pravin thanks everyone for their attendance and closes the meeting.