

**Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting**   
**Wednesday 6 April 2022, 17.30**

**Attendees**

**NCH:** Wesley Ford, Pravin De Silva, Phillip Lott, Rebecca Sluman,

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

**Residents:** Barbara Taylor, Simon Goom, Janine Clarke, Danny Davis, Brian Stevenson, Jenny Jenkins, Gina Cooke, Debbie Clark, Debbie & Paul Hoare, Rebecca Watts, Sharon Dennis, Lindsay Brown

**1** **Introduction**

1.1 Everyone was offered the opportunity to introduce themselves

**2.** **Update on actions from last meeting**

2.1 Plans to have a community engagement event on the 30th of March. This went ahead as planned

2.2 Newsletter to be distributed to the community. This was sent out as planned, however residents did not receive the newsletter until the day before the event on the 30 March

2.3 Will homeowners get the opportunity to buy into the refurbishment scheme. Curtains have been commissioned to carry out intrusive surveys on the estate, once we have the information back from this work, we can update homeowners.

2.4 Concerns raised during the chat function regarding the lack of parking in the designs for Acacia Avenue. NCH are working with the procurement team to get a transport consultant on board to look into this issue

**3.** **Project plan**

3.1 Prav showed the project plan for Somerton

3.2 NCH have managed to achieve the key milestones set out for March with the engagement event and the quarterly newsletter. We have also commissioned intrusive surveys to take place, Curtains are the contractor carrying these out, they have completed 3 properties so far.

3.3 For April we will continue to work with the design team to explore further options for the different areas in Somerton

3.4 During April we may also need to carry out further surveys on Newport City Council land. We will be having further discussions with them to see how quickly we can get this work underway

**4** **Financial advisor**

4.1 Phillip Lott informed the group that the company we were in contact with, have withdrawn from the process. NCH have contacted three other companies, all of which have now been sent the procurement documents. The companies have relevant experience and are keen to take on the work. There is going to be a meeting with the procurement team as soon as possible, to move the recruitment process forward, and hopefully appoint one of them that have submitted their application. Hope to have progress on this in the next couple of weeks.

4.2 Resident volunteered her assistance to assess financial advisor submissions if it is within the next fortnight. **NCH to confirm timescales with resident.**

**5** **Refurbishment activity**

5.1 We have commissioned Curtains to undertake intrusive surveys on our void properties throughout Somerton. They started work the week of 21 March, they are carrying out surveys on ten void properties and will be there until end of April. Rebecca asked that residents please bear with us while we do the work, as there may be some additional noise and traffic. The findings from this work will then help us to put a specification together for how we will look at the refurb programme moving forward. We have some pilot properties that we will look to do the work on, to check viability for NCH and residents. We will have to wait until end of April, until we have all the information back in and look at scope of works needed. **Rebecca assured everyone that NCH will keep them updated**.

5.2 Rebecca asked if there were any questions. One resident said that in terms of the surveys, the level of refurbishment required in each property may well be different. She asked is there a plan to have different types of refurbishments or is there an expectation that the refurbishment works will just have a generic approach? Rebecca answered stating that from her understanding it will be specific to each property, because ‘one size does not fit all’. Pravin agreed with this, explaining that surveys have been done on different house types. Rebecca stated that there are no questions in the chat.

5.3 A resident said she wanted to check that we are looking at all parts of the estate, so findings are representative, because if NCH are just looking at voids that have been empty for some time, they’re more likely to represent a worse part of the estate. Pravin De Silva said that we took this comment on board previously.

5.4 A resident asked, with these refurbs, is this survey work to see whether we are going to refurb certain properties or are we definitely going to refurb areas, and this is just a pilot scheme to project costings? Pravin said no and that when we first started, we looked at full regen and based on findings, it is a more hybrid approach. Areas that we can regen, we will regen, but the areas that we cannot regen, we will concentrate on the refurbishment side of it. Pravin acknowledged that we spent a lot of money on EWI works, so we need to make sure we do it properly this time, hence the pilot approach.

**6** **Design updates**

6.1 Andrew gave a summary of the slides from the previous meeting and explained he would provide design updates for Acacia Avenue, Laburnam Drive, review and feedback on the Community Consultation, and engaging with other stakeholders including Somerton Primary School engagement and will provide a summary of the engagement NCH have had with them. **Andrew stated he would then discuss the next steps for the next month of work**

6.2 Andrew explained they have reviewed the housing need and summarised NCH’s views looking to provide a good mix of homes and attractive smaller accommodation also which could include 1 and 2 bedroom flats. Andrew discussed NCH have looked at property sizes and the fact that the vast majority of Somerton homes are smaller than current standards. We shared the Acacia Avenue concept plan to show and gage opinion of the mix of homes NCH are willing to provide. Andrew explained we received good feedback from the meeting and from the consultation. We started to explain we would look at Laburnam Drive and the key considerations of the vast level of differences at each end of the road including car parking, refuse and recycling and where the bins are kept

6.3 Andrew explained the design update looking at Acacia Avenue and what NCH have been doing, stating we’ve submitted information to NCC planning department in the form of a pre application enquiry, which means we sent over basic information to begin discussions to engage them in initial conversation and to show the concepts we are looking at and from there a Microsoft Teams meeting was held on 16th March 2022 where we gained good feedback from them. Initial comments from the meeting included:

* The design of ground floor flats should ensure they receive as much natural light as possible
* Subsequent planning applications should provide details on change of level across the site
* Existing trees should be retained where possible
* Planning applications will need to justify that the existing allotment are redundant or provided elsewhere
* Transport assessment/ travel plan will be required

6.4 Andrew gave a design update on Laburnam drive which included:

* Reviewing the existing levels across Laburnum Drive
* Analyzing various points at each end of Laburnam Drive to understand the level variations
* Exploring options/ suitability to possibly adjust the levels and improve vehicle and pedestrian access

6.5 Andrew shared an update on the Community Consultation, Over 70 people were in attendance and we received a wide range of feedback from NCH tenants

and Private Homeowners, and we will be circulating the feedback once collated.

6.6 Comments from group member explained there were a wide range of

opportunities during the event for people to provide feedback and NCH were able

to provide information in a transparent and coherent way

6.7 Comment from group member asked if NCH could give at least 7 days' notice to residents of upcoming events in the future. Some residents explained they were

only made aware a few days prior

6.8 Andrew provided an update on the engagement undertaken with Somerton

Primary School. He explained it is not in our remit to make adjustments to the

school or school grounds and our relationship with them is vital. We have

discussed the constraints and opportunities and we will maintain this relationship

and try and schedule events within the school to involve the children to try and

engage the next generation to get their thoughts on what NCH are trying to

achieve in the area

6.9 Access routes to the school was discussed with the school, antisocial behavior at

one of the access routes and the Schol concerns. NCH have taken their

feedback and we want to provide improvements where we can and open

opportunities to improve access and visibility around the school.

6.10 Suggestion from resident regarding restricted access to vehicles going forward

at certain times of the day. Andrew explained it would be difficult to impose restrictions on certain roads but it's something we could explore moving forward. Andrew advised we would be able to move entrances to the school but improve

the entrances, for example making them bigger to improve access

6.11 Andrew provided a summary of the next steps which included:

* Discuss comments/feedback from the information shared in this meeting
* Review the feedback received from the Community Consultation Event
* Review the formal written pre-app feedback for Acacia Avenue and agree the next steps to develop the design proposals
* Continue to review the constraints and opportunities along Laburnum Drive and develop concept plans based on these findings
* Reviewing other possible regeneration sites in Somerton based on the criteria previously discussed

6.12 A resident asked if we had comments from residents from Acacia Avenue on

the design. Andrew confirmed they had spoken to some homeowners and NCH

tenants, and we want to keep the dialogue open and work with them going

forward.

Andrew explained the information that was shared was based on whether NCH

could purchase these properties, but if we were not able to, we would work

around them

6.13 Resident stated we must build homeowners feedback and their choice to remain

in their homes into NCHs plans

**7** **Any other business**

7.1 A resident asked if CCTV could be installed on the estate to help prevent the anti-social behaviour (ASB) that occurs on the estate. Pravin advised that

Secure by Design (SBD) would be consulted for the redevelopment

and explained their role in the process. If they recommended CCTV, it would

be looked at as an option as part of regeneration.

7.2 A resident advised there are current problems with ASB across Somerton and

they understood that one of the best solutions is for wider and well-lit walkways

and paths. Another resident said that the cost of ASB outweighs the cost of CCTV.

7.3 Pravin advised that he will speak with Laura Palfrey about the options for CCTV.

**NCH to advise on CCTV options**

**Time and Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 4 May at 17.30pm