**Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting:**    
**Wednesday 5 October 2022, 17.30**

**Attendees**

**NCH:** Pravin DeSilva, Phillip Lott, Rebecca Sluman,

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

**Residents:** Janine Clarke, Danny Davis, Carol Williams, Paul Jenkins, Ceri Antonen, Jane Fry, Raqaia Mahmood

**Councillors:** Debbie Harvey, Timothy Harvey

**Introduction**

Rebecca advised the group that the meeting was being recorded, there were no

objections

1. **Action from previous minutes**

1.1 Prav explained that we have shown the project plan at the engagement event on the 29th September. He went through the project plan with the actions / milestones we need to reach with indicative dates next to them

1. **Project Plan**

2.1 Prav explained that we have split the actions into, Community Engagement, Regeneration Areas, Refurbishment, Approvals, Residents, Procurement and Onsite / Construction, these will run from 2022 until 2026.

2.2 Next steps we will be looking at for Regeneration, using the data we have collected from NCH customers over the summer and the housing mix information we get from NCC to inform our designs, look at our overall placemaking opportunities, purchasing the land behind Acacia Avenue and consider our phasing options.

2.3 For refurbishment we will develop our specification, look at the costs for the 2 pilot properties, look to start works on the 2 plot properties

2.4 Approvals will need to be sought throughout the project, these range from Welsh Government approvals, sustainable drainage process, pre-application submission, Planning approval consultation process (PAC) and NCH contract approvals process

2.5 Residents we will continue to have conversations with our NCH customers around housing need. Continue with the voluntary purchase scheme that is currently available, financial advise will be available to homeowners through Peter Alan, we will work up with Peter Alan home ownership offers for those wanting to stay in Somerton

2.6 Procurement, we will look to select a contractor for the refurbishment works and also or the regeneration works.

2.7 On Site / Construction we will be looking to re-house residents by phase, carry out refurbishment works, Phase 1 and 2 of regenerations works

2.8 A resident asked if any thought has been given to what area of regeneration will be put into each stage. Prav explained that over the coming months we will be looking at this.

2.8 Prav explained that these time scales are indicative and can be subject to change

**Valuer**

3.1 Phill explained that valuations are still on going, and the requests for valuations is currently at 39, there are 13 that have had a valuation, report and an offer letter sent to them, 5 have appointed a second valuer and these are progressing, 14 properties are in the legal stage with solicitors. 2 properties have completed and been bought back, there are 4 that are awaiting a valuation inspection

3.2 Cllr Deb Harvey asked what is that total of homeowners, Phill explained that we are concentrating now on the regeneration areas. Phill is going to find out of the regeneration areas how many homeowners there are. **NCH to action**

3.3 A resident asked that if lots of homeowners in a certain area decided they wanted to sell, will the area change from refurbishment to regeneration. Prav explained that residents have expressed if they want to sell or not, this is how we have come up with the areas for regeneration and or refurbishment.

3.4 Cllr Tim Harvey asked if an option of downsizing could be looked at, if older people are in bigger houses and they want to sell they could buy a smaller property in Somerton out right. Prav explained that we will look at all options with Peter Alan.

3.5 A resident said that NCH hasn’t ruled out CPO. Prav explained that CPO is not our first option and we want to work with the community and residents and work our plans around people who want to remain in their homes

3.6 A resident asked Phill, of the 14 in the legal stage and the 2 that have been bought back, did they have a second valuation of their home. Phill explained out of these the first valuation was excepted

3.7 A resident explained that they believe their house was undervalued and, on the report, received it states the land registry date was 2021 and why aren’t they using current house price information. Phill explained that the comparative sales that are quoted on the report are the most up to date figures that are available. It takes time when a house sells for that information to be updated on the land registry

3.8 Phill explained that this is a voluntary purchase scheme and no one is under any pressure to sell their home. People may want to wait to see what home ownership options will be available until they make any decisions about selling their home

3.9 Cllr Deb Harvey, explained NCH can’t categorically say they will not use a CPO, but I am reasonably comfortable that NCH are doing their best to look at other options and, in the beginning, refurbishment wasn’t on the table. NCH are working up options as to how we work around homeowners who want to stay and if homeowners do want to sell and purchase a property within the new development what options are available to them, especially if they don’t currently have a mortgage.

**4 Design Update – Boards from Event**

4.1 Andrew stated that we through the boards that were displayed at the event as there is information that the steering group hasn’t seen previously. Andrew explained that these boards are available on NCH website

4.2 Andrew showed the plan for the estate wide approach, that was hand delivered to properties in Somerton. It shows our proposed approach to areas of regeneration / refurbishment and areas that could fall into either category

4.3 Refurbishment is still underway looking at the specification of works for the 2 pilot properties

4.4 Andrew showed the proposed regeneration plans for Laburnum Drive, this includes a section of Sycamore Avenue. We have looked at the constraints and the opportunities for this area. From the surveys carried out there shows high levels of damp in the properties.

4.5 From laburnum Drive there are steps down to the road and steps down to Sycamore Avenue and then onto the school. These steps are frequently used however there has been issues with ASB. The parking isn’t great for residents who live on Laburnum Drive, we want to improve this and have incorporated natural surveillance with flats and houses overlooking the step and ramp areas.

4.6 For this area we want to improve public and green space and incorporate place making areas. We also want to open up the visibility to the school, with steps and ramps to ensure they are accessible to everyone, soft landscaping will also be introduces as this is currently lacking

4.7 There is a mixture of 1 and 2 bed flats and 2 and 3 bed houses, this will ensure a diverse mix of homes, we are looking to open up this area, currently the houses on Laburnum are 2 bed houses and they are tightly packed in, therefore there is a decrease in the number of new homes we are building from 72 to 63. There will be off street car parking for the vast majority of homes.

4.8 A resident said they cannot welcome enough the opening up of the steps and the widening of the entrance to the school, if this could happen sooner rather than later that would be beneficial

4.9 A resident said that on Laburnum Drive where there is some green space at the top of Laburnum would be amazing and could this be opened up to the woodland area to make it a nice nature walk and the school could use this area for teaching and learning

4.10 A resident felt that by having steps and ramps will this encourage anti-social behaviour. Another resident said that with the steps and ramps opened up, natural surveillance by the houses and flats then this should help to design this out

4.11 Cllr Tim Harvey, stated that at the top of Laburnum Drive with the green space if there could be an area for an allotment for residents and the school, then people are more likely to take an interest in this area and will ensure there is ownership of what is put there if it is designed with the residents

4.12 Cllr Deb Harvey stated that NCH will have to adhere to secure by design and look at how we design out crime and anti-social behaviour.

4.13 Andrew showed a design for the top end of Sycamore Avenue (high numbers), this area is currently ear marked for either regeneration or refurbishment. We have looked at this and came up with a regeneration design. There are currently 34 homes in this area, if the voluntary purchase scheme was successful here then NCH would own a majority of the homes

4.14 This area is relatively flat and will link into the Ashley Road site where the green play space will link the 2 sites. There is a mix of accommodation proposed, 2, 3 and 4 bed homes with a small number of flats which will sit at the end of Sycamore Avenue and Acacia Avenue and will provide natural surveillance onto the green / play area. There is a total of 45 proposed units in this site

4.15 There will also be a smaller link from Laburnum Drive to Sycamore Avenue, with steps and a ramp

4.16 A resident said that he isn’t sure about the design as he is currently living in this area. Prav explained that we are exploring all options and we have proposed a regeneration design, if this doesn’t pan out then we will look at refurbishment.

4.17 A resident said that they don’t want a mortgage but would like a new build house. Prav explained that we have Peter Alan on board and they will be coming up with options for homeowners

4.18 Another resident asked where do people go if they want sell their home and stay in Somerton. Prav explained that it is down to phasing, this is what we will be working through as part of the project.

4.19 A resident said that the proposed design isn’t too dissimilar to what it looks like currently, the stated that we could have this area as a hybrid area and regenerate what we can and refurbish other properties in this area. Andrew explained that there is one change and that is for off road parking which will make it safer for people moving and travelling around the site

4.20 A resident asked about the narrowness of the roads on Sycamore Avenue and Laburnum Drive and should there be a one-way system where vehicles go up sycamore Avenue and back down Laburnum Drive. Andrew explained that we are exploring Laburnum Drive as it is narrow for a 2-way road and could this be a one-way system. Andrew explained that Sycamore Avenue is wider and by us providing off street parking the road is wide enough for two-way traffic, but we are open to all options. Andrew stated that we have a transport consultant onboard and they will be looking at this area as well as all the other sites in Somerton to ensure we get the parking and movement of traffic around Somerton right

4.21 Cllr Tim Harvey asked about if we will be looking at giving private homes off street parking especially if we are working around their homes. Prav explained that we can look into this as we progress through the project

4.22 Andrew showed the proposed design for Hawthorne Avenue (lower end) and Sycamore Avenue, on the left-hand side if you are driving up towards Libeneth Road. There will be a mixture of 2, 3 and 4 bed home with 1 and 2 bed flats addressing the corners. There are currently 20 homes in this area, we are looking to increase this to 29. Parking for the flats will be to the rear of the site

4.23 Cllr Deb Harvey asked what the height of these flats will be. Andrew explained that we are looking 3 storeys for these flats, ground floor, first floor and second floor. They will be slightly taller than the houses but will be placed on corners so they won’t be overpowering

4.24 A resident asked if they could have a copy of these designs, Rebecca explained that a copy of the slides which are the boards shown at the engagement event are on our website and there are paper copies in the Hope Centre for people to look at

4.25 A resident asked about Hawthorne Avenue where the mini roundabout is, Andrew explained that we haven’t looked at this area yet, but we will be looking at this

4.26 A resident asked have we not looked at this area due to the rumours about a train station being put there. Prav explained this wasn’t the case and we will be working up proposed designs for this area

**5 Communication and Community Events**

5.1 Andrew went through the comments that we have received so far from the community event. We had 86 people sign in and it was a very busy afternoon

5.2 The comments we have received so far:

What do you like about the design:

* People think the designs were well presented
* The open playing / green space is welcomed
* Design for older person housing is goodWhat don’t you like about the design:
* Too many flats
* Regeneration of Laburnum Drive

What would you like to see in the green / amenity / play space

* Childrens play area
* Area for animals
* Play area that cannot be vandalised
* Bins

What do you think about the new pedestrian links around the estate

* Better
* Good idea
* Great
* Better than they are now

Any other comments

* Safe homes for older people
* Park for children

5.3 Rebecca said that the boards on the website and we were giving out QR codes for people to take away to complete a survey online. I asked for the group if they haven’t given any feedback can they complete the survey on our website

5.4 Danny said that he said to Rachel that he will add the boards to the groups he is part of. He had a conversation with Laura and she should be able to post on these groups. Rebecca said that she will contact Danny to see what we can put on these groups – **NCH to action**

5.5 Prav asked how we can improve our communications to residents. A resident said about sending out letters giving an update. If we are going to be in the area then send out letters advising of this. I explained that for this event we hand delivered the letter and invites to ensure everyone on Somerton received this information. Rebecca also explained that from the letters we hand delivered, I have had phone calls and emails from people from residents who don’t want to or cant attend the event then I have communicated with them through email, phone calls and home visits

5.6 A residents explained that communication is key and maybe we need to strip it back and explain what regeneration is and people need different ways to communicate. Rebecca explained that we will accommodate anyone and communicate with them in a way that they want to.

5.7 Cllr Tim Harvey said about having a house open on the estate as a drop in so people from the estate can come and have conversation with us or use the Hope Centre for a drop-in session. Rebecca explained that we are looking into this idea

5.8 A resident explained that residents maybe more comfortable speaking to the Cllrs int the first place. Cllr Tim Harvey said that if NCH are in the Hope Centre doing a drop-in session then they will happily attend

**6 Any other business**

5.9 Cllr Tim Harvey explained that they will be setting up their sessions again and they will be at the Hope Centre, the first Wednesday of every month and they are happy to have NCH joins their sessions – **NCH to action**

**7 Next Meeting**

Time and date of next meeting:

**Wednesday 2 November: 17:30pm – Hybrid meeting**