**Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting:**    
**Wednesday 2 November 2022, 17.30**

**Attendees**

**NCH:** Rachel George, Phillip Lott, Rebecca Sluman,

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

**Residents:** Janine Clarke, Danny Davis, Carol Williams, Paul Jenkins, Rebecca Watts, Brian Stevens

**Councillors:** Debbie Harvey, Timothy Harvey, Alex Pimm

**Introduction**

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

objections

1. **Action from previous minutes**

1.1 Rachel went through the minutes from October’s meeting.

1.2 Phillip Lott sent the information that Cllr Deb Harvey requested.

1.3 Danny wanted to put the boards from the Community Event on to the face book pages he is admin for, Janine Clarke helped him with this at the end of last months meeting.

1.4 Rebecca Sluman was going to attend the Cllrs surgery at the Hope Centre on Wednesday 2nd October, however it was rearranged to Tuesday 1st November, Rebecca was on leave. Cllr Deb Harvey will send the future dates to Rebecca so she can put them in her diary and attend the surgery going forward

1. **Project Plan**

2.1 Rachel showed the project plan and the areas we are working around is the design, from feedback we have received from the engagement event and feedback from teams within Newport City Homes and our stakeholders and bringing it all together.

2.2 We are looking into land purchase at the Acacia Avenue site, we are carrying out further cost analysis and also looking at the phasing of the site which will determine the order in which we carry out the development works

2.3 Rebecca explained that the extra works at the 2 pilot properties which were removal of floor tiles on the ground floor and the removal of loft insulation. This is to check the foundations and to look at if the roof will support photo voltaic panels on the roof and the kit that may need to be installed in the attic space.

2.4 Our consultants can then carry out the surveys so we can firm up the specification for both these properties.

2.5 Rachel explained that Andrew has been working on a programme for these properties, with the design time. We would like to get these works started this financial year

2.6 The Cllrs raised with Rachel yesterday about the timing of submitting planning permission. In our last project plan we stated that we would look to submit planning permission before Christmas, unfortunately we aren’t in a position to do this. While we are ahead on designs in some regeneration areas we are looking at submitting a hybrid planning application, where we can show more detail in one area, we can move ahead more quickly. What we think is best for us and for the planners is to do an outline of the whole masterplan area, and this is what we need to work on and look at the areas for regeneration and refurbishment. In our next design team meeting it is the key item that we will be working on, to make sure we are ready for submitting the planning application

2.7 Rachel discussed the resident activities that we will be carrying out, this will be to look at all the information we have gathered from our customers during the tenancy visits to ensure we are providing the right mix of homes for people wanting to stay in Somerton

**Valuer**

3.1 Phillip explained that we have had 43 requests for valuations. There are 8 that are waiting for either the inspection to be carried out on their home or the valuation report to be sent to them.

3.2 There are a further 11 that have had valuation and we are in various stages of conversations with these homeowners

3.3 There are 6 that have appointed a second valuation

3.4 There are 14 properties within the legal stages

3.5 Four properties have been bought back

3.6 A resident stated that’s about 30% of the homeowners

3.7 Rachel explained that we have taken out key areas, such as Linden Road, Somerton Road and Palm Square, so the properties that we would look to buy back has significantly reduced

3.8 Rachel explained that we do not want to buy every home, we want people to stay within Somerton and we are working with Peter Alan to look at home ownership options for people

3.9 A resident stated that this number has jumped up. Phillip explained that we had a number of enquiries at the engagement event and since then we are getting requests still coming through

**Procurement**

4.1 We are looking into this with our internal team, with the pilot refurbishment works we will have to select a contractor to carry out these works. We will have to go through this process again when we carry out the refurbishment works throughout the estate. We could have the same contractor carrying out both works but it could also be 2 different contractors

4.2 For the regeneration works we will be looking at Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) if we were looking to do traditional house building then we would go through the planning process get planning permission and then get your contractor in place. This doesn’t work if we are using MCC and it is too rigid and changes can’t be made. With our procurement team we will be looking at soft marketing for an MCC contractor to help us sooner rather than later. If we are going to go down this route we would like the steering group to be involved

**5 Design Update**

5.1 We are going to be looking at the feedback in more detail from the community consultation event, internal NCH meeting, stakeholder meeting and Welsh Government (WG) meeting that have taken place over September and October

5.2 Over the summer 141 NCH customer visits took place and we will be looking at this information to feed into the designs

5.3 The community engagement event saw 90 residents attend on the day, we received 19 completed surveys these were completed on the day, in paper form or online using the QR code.

5.4 We held a stake holder meeting those in attendance were Community Development at Newport City Council, the School and the designing out crime officer for the police

5.5 Andrew went through the questions that were asked from the boards shown at the community engagement event

**Q1 What do you like about the proposed designs:**

* The proposed designs for many homes in Somerton is good for older people, people who have disabilities to make their homes easier for them
* All areas appear to be covered Eco friendly, ample parking, green space, older/younger generation catered for, play/school facilities
* That the area will look nicer and the boarded-up houses will be gone
* Opening up the area for better homes and improving the quality of life.
* Opening access to the school and the prevention of anti-social behaviour
* Open, green spaces and the aesthetics of the designs

**Q2 What don’t you like about the designs:**

* Too many flats
* The regeneration of Laburnum Drive
* Limited off-road parking places
* Concerned about anti-social behaviour opportunitiesand access to all for the open, green spaces - e.g. off road biking/scooters and setting fire to benches/bins etc.

**Q3 Do you think we have selected the right areas for regeneration**

* Of the responses we received over 60% thought we had selected the right areas for regeneration

**Q4 Do you think we have selected the right areas for refurbishment**

* Of the responses received just over 40% thought that we had selected the right area

**Q5 Do you think the Green / Amenity / Play spaces are in the right areas**

* Of the responses received just over 60% thought that we had selected the right areas of this

**Q6 What would you like to see in the Green / Amenity / Play spaces**

* Play equipment for all ages
* Play area that cannot be vandalised
* Places to sit, grass, shrubs, flowerbeds, maybe a community allotment
* Large green space for football / other outdoor games
* Picnic area
* Multi gym equipment to encourage and promote healthy living

**Q7 - Do you think the location for older persons accommodation is right**

* Of the responses we have received 60% think the older persons accommodation is in the right location

**Q8 – Do you think the flats are located in the correct areas**

* Of the responses we have received just over 30% think the flats are in the right location

**Q9 – What do you think about the new pedestrian links around the estate**

* Good well thought out
* Better than they are already
* They look effective and will help to connect Somerton to the rest of Newport
* Looks like it will make the estate a nicer place
* The should be more connection between these links

**Q10 - If you have any other comments about the Somerton regeneration plans please tell us**

* It is very exciting
* Plans and design looks good
* Would be good if work started asap
* Hope there is going to be opportunities for your families to buy a property as this area is going to be family friendly
* Not sure what is planned for my area
* Doesn’t want a new property but would like to move into a refurbished home

5.6 Andrew explained that all the comments and feedback that we have received will be looked at in further detail

5.7 A resident said that from the feedback there seems to be people who are living in Somerton want to buy and stay on the estate which is really promising. Rachel explained that we are working with Peter Alan to look at options for current homeowners on the estate and for those that wish to purchase a property

5.8 Andrew showed feedback from the steering group that we have received:

**Laburnum Drive**

* Opening up the steps and widening the entrance to the school
* The new green space at the top of Laburnum would be amazing if this could link to the woodland area, for nature walks and the school could use it for classes
* An allotment at the top of Laburnum for the community and the school to maintain could be a good ides
* Opening up the steps and ramp could encourage anti-social behaviour but felt with houses and flats around this should offer natural surveillance

A resident said that they currently have an allotment and half of them aren’t being used, so unsure if this will work

**Sycamore Avenue (North end)**

* The design is similar to what is already existing
* Should there be a one-way system to go up Sycamore Avenue and down Laburnum Drive
* Could we look at giving private homeowners off street parking while we are working around their homes

**Hawthorne Avenue / Libeneth Road**

* Are we going to look at this area?

Andrew explained that this area is on the roundabout, at the event it was still in white. Over the next few weeks we will be looking at this area and what we can do and what potential it has for either regeneration or refurbishment

5.9 **Stakeholder Meeting Feedback**

Andrew explained that we had a stakeholder meeting, those in attendance were Community Development at Newport City Council, the School and the designing out crime officer for the police. The feedback from this meeting:

* The opening up of the school access points are great as they are quite dangerous
* Nice open spaces for the community to meet
* Regeneration will help support the school
* Impressed with the green area outside the Hope Centre
* Need visible security around footpaths
* Bike calming measure may be needed
* External lighting needs to been part of the planning applications
* Green spaces being overlooked is fantastic but it needs to be protected

Andrew explained that we will be looking at this feedback when we look at the review of each area in detail

5.10 **Welsh Government Feedback**

Andrew explained that we met with Welsh Government, design advisor on our plans for Somerton:

* Need to consider when to submit the formal secure by design application
* Parking – it is a balancing act as there is a lot of frontage parking, but this could be used for greenage
* Placemaking – explain what you are doing in each area and why
* Could submit proposals to the Design Commission for Wales for their feedback
* Overall the design is the right approach and very well structured

5.11 **One Team Meeting**

Andrew explained that this is an NCH internal team meeting, so we can get their feedback on our design proposals. In attendance were colleagues from housing, maintenance, estates, finance. The feedback received:

* Need to think about how to manage any anti-social behaviour when the contractor is on site
* Older person accommodation – a communal space on one of the sites would be good to great for people to meet up and create a sense of community
* Provide a space for young people, such as a skate park
* Will the parks have play equipment
* How will the new play / green / amenity spaces be maintained such as play equipment
* Collection point for communal bins
* The scheme looks really good and will enhance the estate greatly

Andrew explained as with all comments when we look at the designs we will take these comments on board

5.12 **Design Review**

5.13 We have been working on the design review and have made some adjustments to the Acacia Avenue site, these include:

* The steps will be moved to ensure there is more natural surveillance
* Develop concepts on frontage of Chepstow Road and Aberthaw Road
* Ensure car parking is compliant and int eh right areas
* Look at how the shop is access, does it have / need street frontage, is it in the right location

5.14 We will be reviewing all the concept designs to ensure that areas of anti-social behaviour are being addressed

5.15 During all our engagement / meeting sessions we look at trends and will be looking at:

* Older persons accommodation – is it in the correct location and do we have the mix right
* General needs flats – Are they proposed in the right locations
* Green / public spaces – Are these in the right location, does each area need a purpose and if so what should the purpose be
* Connectivity – Are the new pedestrian links in the correct location
* Natural surveillance – How do we get the right level of natural surveillance, want people to feel safe
* Shop location – Are there other locations where the shop could be sited
* Open space at Laburnum Drive – This space needs a purpose can we look at connectivity to the woodland
* Car parking – Adequate spaces for each home, pedestrians to be given priority where appropriate
* Areas – Firm up the regeneration and refurbishment areas, work on areas that currently don’t have a proposal

5.16 Cllr Tim Harvey, said that maybe having flats and bungalows not being sited close together. Also said that maybe the shop being located closer to the bungalows

5.17 Rachel explained that if we move the shop then we have a duty to ensure they are accessible and we will be getting commercial advice to ensure the hope has natural surveillance, is easily accessible to people

5.16 A resident explained that maybe bungalows close to the shop isn’t the best idea as they do attract people who want to hang around also there is usually a lot of litter left around on times

**6 Communications**

6.1 Rachel asked how we can maximise responses to the event survey, we had 19 responses. We had QR codes on the board at the event, also take away QR codes, the boards were put on our website with a link to the survey, it was added to the Facebook group.

6.2 A resident said that it could be just where we are with the project, until they see something actually happening then they may not be interested

6.3 Another resident said that as the timescale is so vast that it might not be important to people right now

6.4 A resident said that people’s priorities may not be this project currently as everyone is in a different situation. The more light that is shed on what is happening and timescales people may become interested then

6.5 We look to have another event February / March time so we can give more detail to regeneration / refurbishment areas

6.6 A resident asked if they could have a look at a new property that NCH has built so we can look at the design of it – **NCH to look into**

6.7 A resident asked if we could send out update emails to every home in Somerton, this would include NCH and homeowners. **NCH to look into**

6.8 Rachel said we can look into this and we can put out a post on the Facebook group to see if people would be willing to give us their email addresses

6.9 Rebecca asked if the group thought we should put out any comms before Christmas

6.10 The group thought we should send out a round up of what has happened in 2022, and what we will be working on and coming up in 2023

**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**