

Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting: Wednesday 1 March 2023, 17.30

Attendees

NCH: Pravin DeSilva, Rebecca Sluman,
Oxford Architects: Andrew Brown,

Residents: Janine Clarke, Danny Davis, Gwyneth Johnson Mcloughlan, Paul Jenkins, Lynda Piper, Debbie Clarke, Sharron Dennis

Councillors: Gave their apologies

Introduction

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

1 Action from previous minutes

1.1 There were no actions from the previous minutes

2 Valuer

2.1 Prav explained that we have purchased 11 properties to date. At this present time, we are pausing the voluntary purchase scheme due to its success and will not be taking on any new valuation requests. We will look to concentrate on the regeneration areas; therefore, we will be prioritising buying those properties in a phased approach. We have informed those who have requested or had a valuation that are living in a refurb area that we will not be pursuing the purchase of their property

2.2 A resident asked a question that if there are homeowners who do not want to sell that are in a regeneration area. Prav explained that we will have to look at our proposed designs and we will have to look at re-designing our designs around houses that do not wish to sell

3 Refurb

3.1 There are 2 pilot properties proposed 16 Linden Road and 24 Hawthorne Avenue, nearly all the design information has been completed by the team and the programme was to go out to tender by the end of February. However, in the last few weeks we have been exploring the potential of how we heat the homes. Currently

within the specification we have traditional radiators that are run off air source heat pumps (which are external units which are placed in the back gardens of homes) they are run off electric and not gas, they are a more efficient way of running the units and of heating the homes.

3.2 We have been in talks with Melin Homes as they have used a product called NexGen to heat some of their homes. NexGen doesn't use conventional radiators it uses essentially a thin heated wallpaper; you can have it within the ceiling or walls within a property. It uses infrared heating, which heats the objects and the person and not the air.

3.3 We have met with NexGen, we will look to have this heating option within one of the pilot properties, this way we can look at the installation costs and the running costs for both heating options. This will help us to make informed decisions when we roll out the refurbishment scheme across the estate.

3.4 A resident asked when they properties are ready then we need to ensure both properties have the same family types within them so we can ensure that when we are looking at running cost's they are comparative. Rebecca explained that we can look into this when it comes to us re-letting the properties

3.5 A resident asked about hanging pictures on the wall, Andrew explained that we are looking to have this heating system on the ceilings

3.6 A resident asked how it is controlled, Rebecca explained that each room will have individual controls in each room, so you can have different rooms at different temperatures

3.7 The group agreed that it is something that needs to be explored and is good that we are using it one of the pilot properties

3.8 Andrew explained that we will be meeting with NexGen to go through everything in more detail

3.9 We will then look to get the tenders out in the next couple of weeks

3.10 Rebecca explained that once the pilot properties have been refurbished, we can have a look around the properties and we can test out both heating systems, while we are there

3.11 A resident asked if the 2 pilot properties will look different internally, as in taking down walls. Andrew explained that the layout will stay the same, the bathroom and kitchen may have a different layout as they do now to ensure we are getting the most out of the space we have

3.12 We have got a party wall surveyor on board, and they will be undertaking a full survey of the adjoining property and will be in contact with those neighbour before and during the refurb works

4 Design Update

4.1 Andrew explained that NCH has signed the non-disclosure agreement with TopHat, we now have their house type designs so will go through them to see what house types fit into the homes we want to build. We will look to incorporate these into our designs

4.2 Prav explained that we haven't managed to go through TopHats finances, but we will do this now over the next couple of weeks

4.3 There are ongoing Ground Investigation (GI) survey works being carried out currently in NCH empty homes. The works being carried out uses a rig to core into the ground to check the makeup below ground and the stability of this ground

4.4 We are looking to carry out these works on NCC land at Acacia Avenue and Laburnum Drive, we need a licence to carry out these works and we are working with NCC to get the licence in place, but this is taking longer than planned

4.5 As we haven't secured the licence from NCC therefore there has been a delay with the additional design works that are needed

4.6 A resident said that there is hardly any noise or disturbance from these works which has been great

4.7 We have got a commercial agent onboard who will work with the shop owner and the shop keeper to look at the relocation of the shop within our designs

5 Communications

5.1 We initially communicated to the group that we would look to hold a community consultation event on the March, we have had to put this on hold for the time being. We currently do not have all the information due to the delay in carrying out survey works. Once we have the information that we want to show we will look to plan in another date for the event, which will take place at the Hope Centre

5.2 A resident said that we should be showing the NexGen product at the event

5.3 They would also like to see what the TopHat homes look like – a video / walk through showing on a screen

5.4 We are getting NCH customers registered on home options, this is the process that we need to follow for all NCH customers who are living in Somerton. The neighbourhood manager is ringing people and either people can complete the form online themselves, over the phone and the neighbourhood manager will complete the form for them or we will look to hold some sessions at the Hope Centre, and we will have neighbourhood managers there who can help them with this online registration. Please note you will not have to bid on properties, we need to ensure we are following Newport City Councils re-housing policy.

6 Any other business

6.1 A resident asked about what is happening with Hawthorne Fosse, plans were shown which have been shown previously

6.2 CCTV drainage surveys will be carried out in March, the group said the best way to get the information out is to put it on the Somerton Facebook page. This will also go on our website too – **NCH to action**

7 Next Meeting

Time and date of next meeting:

Wednesday 5 April: 17:30pm – Hybrid meeting