

Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting: Wednesday 5 April 2023, 17.30

Attendees

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

Residents: Janine Clarke, Danny Davis, Gwyneth Johnson Mcloughlan, Paul Jenkins, Debbie Clarke, Sharron Dennis, Carol Williams, Matthew James

Councillors: Deb Harvey, Tim 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 CCTV drainage surveys to be carried out across the estate. Post to be put on the Somerton Facebook page – **This was carried out**

2 Design Update

2.1 Andrew explained that the Ground Investigation (GI) works being carried out on Acacia Avenue land which belongs to Newport City Council (NCC), these surveys are to understand the condition of the ground, the make-up of the ground and the water levels in that area, this will help us with our design of structural elements such as foundations and retaining walls

2.2 We will be looking to carry out these surveys on the woodland area behind Laburnum Drive. We are waiting on the licence from NCC so we can progress with this work

2.3 On the Acacia Avenue land we will be having the vegetation removed wc: 3rd and 10th April, this is to aid the structural and retaining wall surveys to be carried out

2.4 We had received the layout of homes from TopHat, we have been looking at these layouts and house types to see what is suitable for Somerton, we have picked out some house types that we think will work within Somerton

2.5 Andrew showed some house layouts. We have taken on board feedback we received from the visit with members of the steering group members to Kent to look at some of the homes TopHat are producing. The layouts show was 2 bedroom – 4

person house, 3 bedroom – 5 person house, 4 bedroom – 8 person house, this house is over 3 storeys. Andrew showed layouts for 1 and 2 bed apartments

2.6 Andrew showed an updated Acacia Avenue plan with the TopHat houses in this plan; the apartment blocks are not TopHat designs as we are still working through these plans

2.7 On this plan we have incorporate car parking within the boundary of each home, where we haven't been able to do this car parking is to the side of these homes, this is to ensure we are able to meet Welsh Government requirements for back garden space

2.8 In relation to the refurbishment of the 2 pilot properties, 24 Hawthorne Road and 16 Linden Road, we have been looking to install a new heating system called NexGen into 1 of these pilots, it has now been agreed that this system will be installed in 24 Hawthorne Avenue

2.9 We have updated the tender documents to include NexGen heating system, therefore we haven't been able to issue this at the end of March, this will be pushed back to April. We will still be expecting the tenders to be returned at the beginning of May

2.10 For both these pilot properties it is keys that we monitor the performance of the properties and we will be monitoring both these heating systems, what the installation costs are and what the running costs are for both heating systems

2.11 A residents asked how we are going to monitor the performance of these properties if they are empty, Andrew explained that when all the refurbishment works are complete, we will be looking to have families living in both these properties and we will be talking to them along the monitoring timeframe to seek their views on the heating system to ensure they are user friendly, cost effective to run. We will be looking to develop a performance monitoring strategy for these 2 properties over the next few weeks

2.12 Prav explained that we are going to use a framework to get a contractor on board. We sent out an expression of interest to contractors on this framework and we had 10 contractors come back to say they will be looking to put a bid in for these refurbishment works

2.13 Andrew explained that we have discussed the next community consultation in previous meetings and due to the GI survey works being ongoing and looking at the Tophat layouts, the next event will be pushed back to May / June 2023

2.14 At the next event we want to ensure we are showing more detail on:

- Areas of regeneration
- Areas of refurbishment
- Details on the Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) system proposed
- Further design information (look and feel of materials) for the Acacia Avenue proposals

2.15 Before the event we will look to get out a letter / newsletter with an update on our progress since the last update

3 Communications

3.1 We will be looking to carry out topographical surveys via a contract called Site Survey Solutions, we will write out to people where we would like to carry out these surveys, as they will be carried out in back gardens. These surveys are to position relevant features, such as, fences, paths, out-buildings, drainage etc

4 Any other business

4.1 A resident asked about the void properties, which are around properties where people are living, due to properties being broken into. Rebecca explained that while we don't want every property shuttered as it doesn't look very attractive, and if we don't shutter the properties, we can put alarms in them and if we need to then we can shutter them.

4.2 We can shutter the property straight away if this is what is required

4.3 Cllr Deb Harvey asked about letting the properties out as temporary accommodation. Rebecca explained that once a property becomes empty a survey is carried out to determine what works would be needed so it can be re-let, obviously there is a cost associated with this. We are working with NCC to look at these properties

4.4 Rebecca explained that with our insurance on empty properties we must carry out fortnight inspections of these properties. The group felt that while that is good, they are being inspected, once a fortnight isn't enough and they have been asked if this can be weekly – **NCH to action**

4.5 The group said that they will keep an eye on these empty properties and bringing anything to our attention

4.5 A resident asked about a property that was used temporarily is now empty, why can't this be re-let – **NCH to action**

4.6 Rebecca asked Cllr Deb Harvey about her looking into a bus coming into the estate. Deb explained that Newport Transport are happy once all the works have been completed, they will put on a nipper bus which will stop on the corner of Sycamore Avenue / Hawthorne Avenue. Deb said that a nipper bus is a 16-seater bus. Deb explained that if the bus isn't being used then the service will be taken away

7 Next Meeting

Time and date of next meeting:

Wednesday 3rd May: 17:30pm – Hybrid meeting

