

# Somerton Resident Steering Group meeting: Wednesday 3 July 2024, 17.30

## Attendees

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

**Oxford Architects:** Tony Mullins, Phillipa Courcoux

**Residents:** Janine Clarke, Linda Clarke, Danny Davis, Gwyneth Mcloughlin-Johnson, Carol Williams

**Councillors:** Deb Harvey, Tim Harvey

## Introduction

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

## 1 Actions from previous minutes

1.1 Rebecca advised that there were no actions from March's minutes

## 2 Project Plan

2.1 Prav explained that our priority is Acacia Avenue (Phase 1) and we are working with Newport City Council planning department

## 3 Design Update

3.1 Tony explained that the ecological surveys, have been instructed for bat and reptile surveys to be carried out during their relevant seasons. If there any bats or reptiles present this will be presented in the report a plan will be put in place to ensure they are protected

3.2 On the 6<sup>th</sup> February NCH had an internal review to show teams and colleagues the proposed plans for Acacia Avenue (Phase 1) (These comments were discussed in March's meeting and are in the minutes. This is a recap)

3.3 Please see questions raised during the meeting and replies to these questions:

- Play Area: Would there be enough space for kids to play football? *Most of the space would be longer grass as it will be a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) water retention feature, but there will be some space to play*
- Are we doing anything to help with the lack of parking at the Hope Centre? *Additional pull in spaces are being provided on Acacia Avenue*
- Have Play Wales been involved? *The landscape architect will contact Play Wales to discuss these designs*
- The Hope Centre is still not overly visible. *Consideration to be given to whether more of a connection can be made, this may come in a later phase*
- Landscaping and the management/ maintenance of the landscaped areas needs to be considered by NCH. Additional ground maintenance support required until the landscaping is established. *NCH will speak to relevant departments / teams to ensure there is a robust plan in place*
- Block A Flats: Will there be a lift for just 3 flats as service charge would not be affordable. *NCH and Oxford Architects will look at design options to overcome this*
- Could the ground floor flats be designed with older people in mind. *All flats are Lifetime Homes compliant, but the flats are general needs not specifically Older Persons' Accommodation*
- Do we need to consider mobility scooter storage? *If we do then consideration will be given to fire compartments due to the batteries*
- Waste management: What has been learnt in other schemes? External bin stores usually see an increase of people from outside the block using them. *Bin stores need to be secure and only accessible to those in the relative flat blocks. NCH will confirm whether Euro Bins are acceptable for communal bin stores*

- Bike stores are generally not used as people prefer to take their bikes into their flat. Can we add some sort of buffer to stop the walls from getting damaged? *This will be looked at in the detailed design stage*
- Will car parking on pavements be an issue? Can we do anything further to stop this happening? *Our Transport Consultant will look at this but we are already introducing off street parking for all new houses and flats*
- Acacia Avenue is quite narrow and are the pavements going to be made narrower? *The road width is remaining, but additional pull-in spaces are being provided*

3.4 The community consultation event was held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February, we collected feedback from people who attended

- Comments below on questions asked at the event. These comments were in March's minutes. This is a recap.

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

The space	Different range of accommodation for families	Looks good x2
Materials used & the flow	Modern look x4	Houses & flats look brilliant
More green space x2	The colour scheme	Sleek, well spaced
Enclosed gardens	Downstairs shower with bath upstairs	Eye catching
Impressive	Houses are a nice design	

**Q2) What do you not like about the designs:**

Modern	Nothing x7	All electric
All the same	Modern designs	Solar panels
Lack of colour	Lack of bins	It will change the outlook of the estate drastically (hopefully for the better)

**Q3) What would you change / like to see in the design proposal**

Nothing x7	More bins	More street lights
Houses to have more garden space	Less flats	Plenty of garden space

Decent roads & pavements		
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**Q4) What do you think of the public open space / play space**

Looks better for the children	Love it as the kids need it	Needs to be maintained & not left to go to rack and ruin
Beneficial for children & parents	A very good idea as there are lots of children living here with nothing to do	Very nice
Good use of space as more for younger children to do	Good, but depends if children use it. Kids play rugby & football but nowhere to do that	Brilliant idea for younger children
Good x2	Really good idea, area needs it	It will be good if kept safe & maintained
Really like it as the kids have nowhere to play	About time there was open / play space for children it is much needed	Better for children
Happy about this for the kids as there is nothing here for them at the moment		

**Q5) What do you think of the location of the allotments:**

Brilliant	Should be good access for all people	Easy access for people
Nice to see them and have them more up to date	Good x4	Fine x2
Seems ok x2	Great	

**Q6) Is there anything else you would like to tell us**

Would local residents be able to rent the allotments	Adequate storage space in lofts	Parking for 2 or more cars per property
Keep the communication going as it does help the residents	Additional bins / dog litter bins as this is a huge issue on the estate	

3.6 Prav explained we are looking to purchase the land from Newport City Council which is land next to the Chinese takeaway and land where the allotments currently sit. These 2 pieces of land belong to different departments within the council so we are just awaiting a decision from them so we can progress with these purchases

3.7 Prav explained that we are also working with homeowners to look at purchasing those homes that sit with Acacia Avenue (Phase 1)

3.8 Welsh Government Pre-Planning application was submitted and granted in April

3.9 We are still awaiting the Cabinet Ministers approval for the 2 parcels of land that we wish to purchase from Newport City Council

3.10 The Designing out Crime Officer has been sent all the drawings for the scheme and it has all been registered with a reference number. Further drawings will be sent once we entered the detailed design stage

3.11 We have put together the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) and it will be submitted once we have a decision on the land we are looking to purchase at Acacia Avenue

3.12 The purchasing of the properties in Phase 1 is progressing

## 4 Refurbishment

4.1 We received funding from Welsh Government to bring 8 properties back into use. Ian Williams have this contract and are currently working on 3 properties, 1 in Linden Road, Hawthorne Avenue and Sycamore Avenue

4.2 Rebecca showed photos on the inside of these properties and they have been taken back to brick

4.3 Below is some of the works that is being carried out in these 3 properties:

- Floor slab removed and replaced
- All ground floor walls hacked off, ready for scratch coat and skimming
- Damp Proof Membrane injection complete
- All ceilings removed and replaced
- Kitchen and bathroom removed
- First floor door frames fitted
- 80% of stud work complete
- Copper pipe work in place for new boiler
- First fix electrics complete

4.4 Once the works are complete then the steering group will be having a visit to have a look at the refurbishment works carried out

## 5 Communications

5.1 We will be sending out a letter in August to update residents as to where we are with Phase 1 (Acacia Avenue)

## 6 Any Other Business

6.1 A resident brought up about how quick the gardens have grown. Rebecca explained that the gardens in Phase 1, will be cut back. The other gardens are being looked at

6.2 A resident raised that there is an over growing hedge at a property on Hawthorne Avenue. Rebecca emailed the Estates team during the meeting

6.3 A resident asked in the refurbished properties are the windows being replaced. NCH to look into this

## 7 Next Meeting

Time and Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 17.30 - Hybrid Meeting