

PALM CROSS, MODBURY

Summary report to Modbury Parish Council on high level meeting on 29th March 2022

Present:

Chris Davis – Bloor Homes SW Engineering Manager

Dai Antill – SHDC S106 Officer

Bryn Kitching – SHDC DM Planning Officer

Amanda Urmson – SHDC Landscape Specialist Officer

Trevor Pearce – SHDC Planning Enforcement Officer

Ross Johnson – SHDC Drainage Specialist

Colin Whybrow - Modbury Parish Council

Paul Rayment – First Port (Management Company)

Alexis Huggins, SHDC OSSR Specialist Officer and Barry Keel, MPC Planning Chair were unable to attend.

Background

The meeting was proposed by CW (on behalf of MPC) following a site meeting with four of the above SHDC team on 10th February. CW's request was to get all key players around the table to discuss the outstanding issues and agree an action plan. The issues were summarised in the annotated visual report issued by CW following the Feb 10th site visit and used by the SHDC team as the basis for their investigations. Amanda Urmson (SHDC Landscape Specialist) had circulated an excellent report in respect of the landscaping issues following the site visit.

The meeting was in two parts: a site tour followed by a round table meeting at the MARS pavilion, hosted by MPC but chaired by Dai Antill, S106 Officer from SHDC.

The tone of the meeting was amicable and constructive.

Minutes of this meeting are being issued by SHDC. The following is an overview for background and context.

Phase One

The predominant issue in Phase One is the SuDS scheme. The original scheme did not work, it was installed, dug up and reinstalled three times before being abandoned and a totally new design prepared and installed. The substantial earth works resulting from these

repeated excavations are likely to have impacted the water course of the natural springs in that area.

MPC have issued numerous reports to SHDC and DCC (as the flood authority) showing the evolution of the SuDS scheme and the PC's and residents' performance concerns. SHDC and DCC cannot say they did not know.

SHDC and DCC refer to the performance of surface water drainage (rainfall) but CW has repeatedly expressed the view that this is not the issue. It is the rising water table in wet winters that triggers the springs which emanate above the swale. Due to a relatively dry winter 2021/2022 the water table has not risen to a level where the springs have been running so in CW's view the current scheme has not yet been tested.

DCC intend to run a bowser test (running water down the swale). This is unlikely to affect the water table. The scheme has not yet been signed off by SHDC (discharge of condition).

CW reiterated to SHDC, First Port and Bloor that, if approved, and in the event that the scheme subsequently proves inadequate, the residents will not be picking up the bill for remedial work having raised evidence-based concerns on numerous occasions over the last three years.

Management company, First Port advised that in such an event they would turn to Bloor for remedial action. It would be wise for this to be formalised.

Grass on upper attenuation pond

There are two issues. One is a safety concern that children cannot recognise water is there due to the extensive grass covering of the pond surface. Second is whether the construction is to specification or whether the pond is too shallow which is permitting the grass to take root. A further consideration is that hay bales were temporarily placed in the outfall end to filter silt run-off from the construction of the play area. It has not been possible to determine if these have been removed and may be a contributing factor.

The pond construction will be investigated by Bloor.

Action points for Phase One are contained in the SHDC action plan.

Phase two

The over-riding issues here are that soft landscaping has not commenced and that extensive earth works, that were undertaken by Bloor's contractor (Roadform), were not given time to settle and as a consequence have subsided.

Subsidence has also affected the paths which, in addition, have not been constructed as specified. The wrong aggregate was used and contains fist-sized lumps of flint which will not enable the aggregate to bind and also act as trip hazards.

The delay in starting the soft landscaping and rectifying the paths and pond-side subsidence has been due to labour shortages being experienced by potential landscape contractors. Bloor advised that a contractor has now been appointed but a start date has not yet been given. CW requested that a start date be chased as a priority in order to give residents some reassurance of when work would commence.

Timetable and maintenance

The recurring Catch 22 for the whole site is that the Public Open Spaces on the site have not been maintained by Bloor and the maintenance company will not accept a handover of the site until Bloor bring it up to a maintainable standard.

Occasionally, a Bloor landscape contractor is sent in to do remedial work but this work also is not maintained, meaning it needs doing again a few months later. CW requested that, in future, Bloor's contractors, carrying out remedial work to get the site up to a standard that the management company would accept, must also 'maintain' the work they had done. This would ensure a 'progressive' improvement.

Realistically the planting season for bare root trees is passed and cannot be undertaken now until next autumn but other remedial work can be undertaken before then.

A realistic target date for completion of remedial work is autumn 2022 with a view to starting the handover process then with an snagging list audit of the site by the management company and a final handover by the end of the year.

CW and Paul Rayment (First Port – management company) will regularly liaise on progress in parallel with SHDC oversight.