



# Heart of Newhaven Community SCIO

City of Edinburgh Council  
Operational Property,  
Community Asset Transfer Team,  
Waverley Court,  
Level 1.5,  
4 East Market Street,  
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

7 May 2020

Dear Sirs,

## **CAT 2 Application for Victoria Primary School, Newhaven**

We refer to the letter dated 23 April 2020 from Newhaven Heritage addressed to City of Edinburgh Council raising concerns about the CAT 2 Application for Victoria Primary School submitted by Heart of Newhaven Community SCIO dated 21 February 2020. We write to address the concerns raised in Newhaven Heritage's letter.

These concerns fall into two categories, (1) the process of our CAT 2 Application and its treatment by the Council, and (2) the substance of this Application and the Business Plan underpinning it.

### **1. The process of our CAT 2 Application**

- 1.1. Heart of Newhaven (the predecessor organisation to Heart of Newhaven Community SCIO) submitted an Expression of Interest to the Council on 19 March 2019. Newhaven Heritage submitted its Expression of Interest on 30 January 2020. At that point, the Council encouraged both Heart of Newhaven and Newhaven Heritage to enter dialogue with one another to try to agree on a joint approach. Although the two organisations did meet in good faith, it was not possible to reach agreement on a joint approach. When it became apparent that a joint approach would not be possible, we pressed on with the work on our CAT 2 Application and submitted this on 21 February 2020.
- 1.2. As the elected Council Members and Council Officials will be aware, on receipt of an application for a community asset transfer the Council is obliged, in accordance with the required procedure laid down in the Scottish Government's *Asset Transfer Guidance for Relevant Authorities*, to review such application in order to determine whether on its face the application is valid or not. This validation process involves checking whether the application is in accordance with the requirements of The Community Empowerment

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(Scotland) Act 2015, but without any review of the merits of the application itself. On receipt of our CAT 2 Application the Council undertook that validation exercise with the result that the Application was validated on 16 March 2020 and was published on the Council website.

It may be that Newhaven Heritage have misunderstood this validation process and wrongly assumed that by pronouncing our CAT 2 Application as "validated" the Council has in some way given preferential treatment to our Application. We know this not to be the case and we hope that this response, together with any explanation the Council has been able to give to Newhaven Heritage, will correct any such misunderstanding.

## **2. The substance of our CAT 2 Application**

2.1. Newhaven Heritage's concerns regarding the substance of our Application can be summarised as follows.

- The Business Plan does not address the community's wishes for a community hub.
- In particular, the proposal to include commercial lets does not reflect the community's wishes that the building not become flats, offices or a hotel.
- The siting of the heritage element in our plans is inadequate and inaccessible.

2.2. We believe that these concerns are without any foundation and that this is evidenced through the content of our Application and Business Plan, as we refer to below and explain further in this letter.

- *The Business Plan does not address the community's wishes for a community hub. We undertook an extensive community consultation exercise and have built our Application around the resultant themes.*
- *In particular, the proposal to include commercial lets does not reflect the community's wishes that the building not become flats, offices or a hotel. Our Business Plan seeks to deliver the key community benefit themes within a model that provides financial sustainability. Income from commercial lets is necessary to underpin that financial sustainability, although the Business Plan recognises that it is important to have commercial tenants that will support and enhance the community.*
- *The siting of the heritage element in our plans is inadequate and inaccessible. Our Business Plan proposes the entire first floor of the VPS building as a Heritage Suite, with an appropriate lift to meet disability access requirements.*

2.3. Our CAT 2 Application and Business Plan is based on extensive community consultation undertaken by Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) whose report was submitted in full as a formal part of our application.

PAS is Scotland's leading place and active citizenship charity, widely respected as an organisation that helps people to understand and influence the place where they live by providing impartial advice, skills training and supporting communities to develop and deliver their own aspirations for their place.

In the course of June, July and August 2019, PAS undertook its community consultation programme. This comprised: workshops with pupils from all the main schools in the area; a key stakeholder workshop with attendance by around 30 representatives; an online public survey was conducted which received 249 responses; numerous one to one meetings with key stakeholders; and a full day drop in session was held attended by approximately 180 people who viewed and commented on nine presentation boards displaying the context of the proposal, engagement which had occurred and a comprehensive list of activities suggested along with detail on how they could be realised.

2.4. The following key messages emerged from the consultation.

- Community and key stakeholders in the area wanted to see the school used as an accessible, welcoming, entertaining and eco-friendly venue to facilitate activities that address key local issues such as population growth, social cohesion and isolation, unemployment, family support and life skills.
- The sharing of knowledge and skills between generations through intergenerational practice is seen as a key way to address local issues and is supported by the community and partners.
- The community would like a centre to promote and emphasise Newhaven as a family.

2.5. The Business Plan appraised a number of options in order to identify a combination of uses which could present the optimum balance between the three themes of community benefit (culture and heritage, learning and enterprise and well being) and overall financial sustainability.

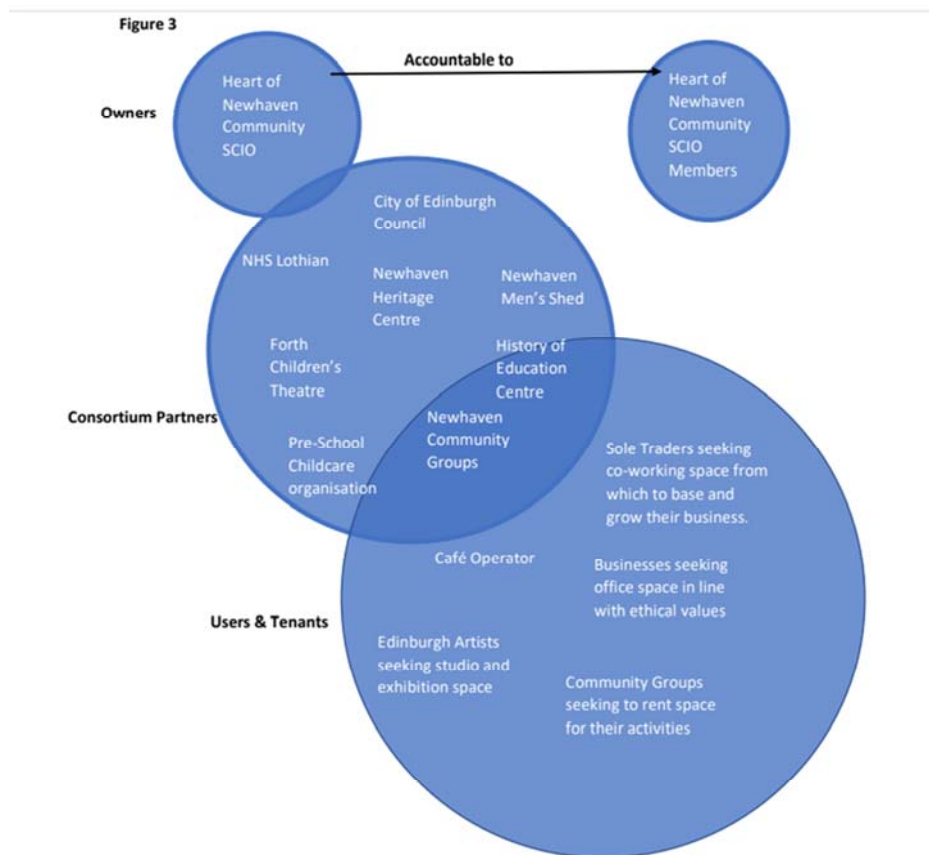
The potential uses have been categorised as follows.

- **Community Use** – Examples include Men's Shed, workshop space, community groups, training/learning for local community. Charged at typical community letting rates for the area.
- **Third Sector Use** – Examples include artist's studios, heritage offer, Youth Theatre. Charged at typical third sector lease rates for Edinburgh.
- **Commercial Use** – Examples include private sector office space rental, co-working space. Charged at typical commercial lease rates for Edinburgh.
- **Combined Use** - Examples include pre-school childcare, café or other commercial use with strong community benefits. Charged at a rate close to commercial rates.

This combination of uses delivers a variety of community benefits while maintaining the financial sustainability of the centre as a community led enterprise. All elements, including commercial operations such as early years provision and a cafe help to meet community needs and wants.

- 2.6. The Business Plan sets out how the proposals for the centre can be delivered and sustainably managed in the longer term. It also sets out the benefits of the proposals to communities and community organisations in Newhaven and the contribution of the project to the priorities of other stakeholders.

This diagram, included in the Business Plan, shows the nature of the potential stakeholder contributions to delivery of the proposal.



- 2.7. We believe that the maximisation of benefits for the community by such partnership working will deliver the following outcomes.

- The rapidly expanding community of the area has an active and engaging offer at its iconic heart to encourage newer and more established communities to integrate.
- Newhaven is a more attractive place to live and work.
- There is greater use of active travel routes as we work in particular with NHS Lothian, CEC and Edinburgh Leisure to promote well being.

- There are increased local employment opportunities through the provision of studios, co-working spaces, training and learning.
- There is an increase in the level of activities provided by community organisations as more space for activities is available.
- There is an increase in the capacity of community organisations to provide activities for all of the communities of Newhaven as our collaborative, partnership approach develops.
- There is increased social cohesion, well-being and safety in Newhaven.
- Local people are better informed and educated about the cultural heritage of Newhaven and have improved opportunities to participate in its management.
- There are increased and improved opportunities for the education of young people, including those at risk of exclusion.

2.8. The redevelopment of the VPS building into a community centre will be done on a phased basis. Phase 1 would involve establishing nursery provision in the Anchor Building which would not only meet that particular need as soon as possible, but also presents the greatest potential as a source of income early in the period after opening. It would also offer the opportunity for partners to begin to collaborate on small projects using intergenerational practice to bring generations together to share skills, knowledge and company. This would include the use of the outside space for a range of age friendly activities including growing opportunities.

2.9. Phase 2 would itself see a phased establishment of use of the main building as follows.

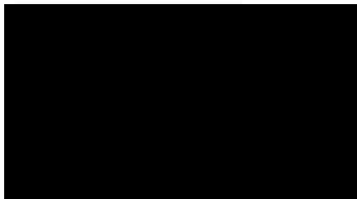
- Ground Floor Community use, e.g.
  - Café with exhibition space. This would provide a social area to bind together all the activities and people within the building.
  - Rehearsal and performance space.
  - Workshop. This could be combined with a “messy making room”.
  - Artists’ studios/SMEs.
  - Community activities space. We will provide a multi-purpose community use space for classes and educational activities, with an intergenerational approach, plus a touch-down space for advisory and support services.
- Mezzanine Floor - These spaces are generally suitable for co-worker’s office spaces or as artists’ studios.

- First Floor Heritage Suite in which a 'Newhaven Museum' would be a central feature. It is our hope and expectation that Newhaven Heritage will play an important part in this Heritage Suite, along with other heritage organisations ideally with few physical barriers between them, creating a seamless visitor experience. We recognise the need for fully inclusive access and our Business Plan provides for a lift to be installed.

### **3. Conclusion**

We hope we have demonstrated the manner in which our Application and Business Plan address the concerns raised by Newhaven Heritage.

Yours faithfully,



**Rodney Matthews**  
Trustee,

**Heart of Newhaven Community SCIO**