

Seafield Sounding Board – 2nd November 2020

Attendees

- Ally Campbell, Montagu Evans (planning adviser to Arnold Clark)
- Cllr Kate Campbell (Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work convener)
- David Cooper (Commercial Development and Investment manager, CEC)
- Kyle Drummond (Commercial Development and Investment team, CEC)
- Andrew Fournet (Craigentenny and Meadowbank CC)
- Malcolm Fraser (architect, adviser to CCs)
- Cllr Joan Griffiths (ward councillor)
- Angus Hardie (Leith Links CC)
- Justin Lamb (adviser to Manse)
- Lee Kindness (Portobello CC)
- Iain McFarlane (Planning, CEC)
- Craig McIntyre (Portobello CC)
- Ewan McIntyre (architect, adviser to Manse)
- Andrew Mackenzie (Leith Links CC)
- Cllr John McLellan (ward councillor)
- Frazer McNaughton (Portobello CC)
- Sally Miller (Leith Links CC)
- David Mitchell (Manse)
- Alex Orr (Orbit Communications, adviser to Manse)
- Cllr Alex Staniforth (ward councillor)
- Andrew Statham (adviser to Peter Vardy)
- Neil Tulloch (Leith Harbour/Newhaven CC)
- Cllr Mandy Watt (Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work vice convener)
- Nick Waugh (Buccleuch Property)

1) Welcome and Introductions

- Cllr Kate Campbell welcomed everyone to the discussion

2) Sounding Board – Remit and Appointment of Chair

- Cllr Campbell noted that the chair could be a councillor or independent.
- Alex Orr suggested Cllr Campbell act as chair. Malcolm Fraser seconded this.
- Cllr Griffiths and Cllr McLellan agreed with Cllr Campbell acting as chair for this meeting but suggested that an independent chair be appointed in the longer-term.
- David Cooper invited suggestions as to a chair.

3) Community Aspirations for Seafield

- Andrew Fournet and Malcolm Fraser gave a presentation on community aspirations for Seafield.
- Seafield is regarded as having high potential. The principle of multiple uses is supported, but these need to work together. The community aims to create a special purpose vehicle to get involved in the development. The SPV would ideally work with housing associations on affordable housing. There are opportunities around self-build that could be developed. There are opportunities to make use of the railway infrastructure. The community would like to work with the Council on a masterplan to benefit everyone

4) Planning Position

- David Cooper gave an update on the planning position. A statement has been circulated to the community on the planning process. The LDP “Choices” document identifies Seafield as a brownfield site with redevelopment potential. The community and developer interest is recognised. The Council as planning authority would like to prepare a Place Brief, to be followed by a masterplan. Infrastructure would be looked at simultaneously.
- The Council must accept and process valid applications. David Cooper noted that prior engagement makes for a smoother process.

- Iain McFarlane noted that more information on infrastructure/natural environment is needed before any significant decisions could be taken. Iain suggested that parcels of ownership are not the best way of planning development.
- Angus Hardie queried the value of a Place Brief as a precursor to a masterplan. Iain McFarlane noted that a Place Brief embedded in City Plan would have a statutory status and more weight than a masterplan.

5) Developer Position

- Justin Lamb has spoken to landowners on the waterfront side at the west end of Seafield Road. There are a relatively small number of landowners. The northwest end of the stretch in question (Peter Vardy, etc) is likely to come forward quickest as it is the “shallowest”.
- Andrew Fournet noted community concerns around piecemeal development. Ewan McIntyre stressed the difference between piecemeal development and phased development and suggested that a big site will invariably take time to be fully developed out and that early developments can help stimulate further development.

6) Objectives and Next Steps

- ACTION: David Cooper to think about a candidate to be the independent chair.
- ACTION: David Cooper to recirculate the statement on the planning process.
- ACTION: David Cooper to engage with Scottish Water about the proposals.
- ACTION: David Cooper to engage with housing officers about community SPV involvement.
- ACTION: David Cooper to circulate information on landowners.
- ACTION: Iain McFarlane to prepare a presentation on constraints (infrastructure, education, etc).
- ACTION: Iain McFarlane to provide info on timescales (LDP, place brief, masterplan, etc).
- ACTION: David Cooper to speak to Lothian Buses / Transport officers / Environmental Health officers about joining the project.
- ACTION: Malcolm Fraser to circulate his presentation.

7) AOB

- Frazer McNaughton noted infrastructure as a major concern for local communities with the busy road and poor bus connections. Benefits from collective effort on other infrastructure issues such as heat networks, drainage infrastructure and blue/green infrastructure could be realised, with the emerging National Infrastructure Plan presenting new opportunities for infrastructure funding.
- Malcolm Fraser suggested a bigger picture is needed to inform phasing, e.g. how educational infrastructure etc planned. Cllr Campbell noted that infrastructure can constraint development.
- Lee Kindness suggested involving Scottish Water, e.g. sewage works improvements. Iain McFarlane agreed that the sewage works was a big issue and that it sterilises some land (based on advice from Environmental Health).
- Cllr Griffiths noted the development needs to tie into the ward.
- Justin Lamb noted that developers would like to help drive forward the process.

8) DONM

- It was agreed that the next meeting should take place in mid-December 2020.
- David Cooper noted he was happy to take emails regarding any matters arising between now and mid-December 2020.