

Seafield Sounding Board (Thursday 25th April 2024)

Attendees:

- Councillor Danny Aston, City of Edinburgh Council (ward councillor)
- Dave Bisset, Scottish Water
- Lisa Blyth, 7N Architects
- David Cooper, City of Edinburgh Council (Sustainable Development)
- Kyle Drummond, City of Edinburgh Council (Sustainable Development)
- James Fraser, EMA Architects
- Malcolm Fraser, Fraser/Livingston Architects
- Angus Hardie, Leith Links Community Council
- Councillor Joan Griffiths, City of Edinburgh Council (ward councillor) [in the chair]
- Susan Horner, City of Edinburgh Council (Planning)
- Jane Iannarelli, City of Edinburgh Council (Planning)
- Justin Kenrick, Action Party
- Stephen Lovejoy, City of Edinburgh Council (Planning)
- Iain McFarlane, City of Edinburgh Council (Planning)
- Lesley McGrath, Holder Planning
- Craig McIntyre, Portobello Community Council
- Frazer McNaughton, Portobello Community Council
- Councillor Alex Staniforth, City of Edinburgh Council (ward councillor)
- Nick Waugh, Buccleuch Property

1) Welcome

- Councillor Griffiths welcomed the attendees.

2) Note of last meeting

- The note was agreed.

3) Update on Seafield Masterplan

a) SEPA and flood risk

- The specifics of flood risk are still to be determined due to the need for a specialist, specific coastal modelling exercise. The flood risk will continue to change in future.
- David Cooper confirmed that consultants were now in place to deliver the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan, and discussions were ongoing around the wave action study.
- Nick Waugh asked about the timing/duration of the wave action study. David Cooper noted that the wider Adaptation Plan was expected to take 18-24 months, and that it has been requested that the wave action study come towards the start of this. David noted that much of the modelling is Forth-wide.
- **ACTION: David Cooper to advise once timescales are clearer.**
- David Cooper confirmed that the wave action study forms part of the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan. Coastal erosion work is separate but related.
- David noted that without the wave action study, planning applications are likely to be objected to by SEPA.

- Malcolm Fraser queried whether coastal erosion studies were needed. Iain McFarlane thought that the “Dynamic Coast” study would provide the necessary evidence.¹ There is an existing sea defence; if this was removed without an alternative solution being implemented, this would increase the risk of erosion.
- Councillor Danny Aston noted the potential for activities at Musselburgh to impact upon Seafield and queried if collaboration with East Lothian Council was ongoing.
- **ACTION: David Cooper to raise this with the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan team.**
- Changes to the beach at Seafield/Portobello with implications for higher and faster waves were noted.

b) Place Brief

- Iain McFarlane noted that the City Plan examination had been completed and the City Plan was generally well received.
- A report will go to the Council’s Planning Committee in June 2024 asking members to agree to adopt the City Plan, after which it will go to the Scottish Government.
- The designation of Seafield has been upheld and will remain so unless the Scottish Government overrules this.
- Dave Bissett queried the “opportunity site” designation. Iain McFarlane noted it was a novel term. The reporters have given this designation in light of the constraints on Seafield (and 43 other brownfield sites). The expectation from the reporter is that the sites may not come forward in the plan period, albeit the Council may not agree with this. Iain did not see this as a legal impediment to adoption. Dave noted that utility providers need to understand timescales for planning purposes. Iain suggested that follow-on discussions between the Council and utility providers might be useful. Iain noted that there is live interest in Seafield and that it could come forward more quickly than reporters envisage. Iain noted the shift in development planning towards a short-term to long-term pipeline approach with sites coming forward at different times and the potential for long-term sites to come forward more quickly than envisaged.
- **ACTION: Iain McFarlane to pick up with Dave Bissett as helpful.**
- Angus Hardie queried if there was precedent for sites being designated constrained due to flood risk. David Cooper thought there was precedent for sites required action to unlock them, but less precedent specific to coastal flooding.
- Iain McFarlane noted that a Place Brief was required by the City Plan. Work on the Place Brief is underway.

c) Masterplan approach

- Lisa Blyth provided an update on the masterplan. Since consultation in summer 2023, work has been ongoing. The coastal location of the masterplan area has been a key factor.
- 7N Architects are developing a masterplan but the specifics will need to be informed by the wave action study. Any masterplan needs to be resilient and adaptive. This will mean the level of detail will need to be reduced.
- The proposal is to carry out stage two consultation in June 2024 with a masterplan report being produced in July 2024. This will be caveated on a wave action study.

¹ https://www.dynamiccoast.com/files/ccapg_2023feb.pdf

- Angus Hardie queried if consultation would reference flood risks. Lisa Blyth noted that Seafield is inherently more resilient due to site levels. The risk is not principally due to sea level rises but rather wave action. David Cooper noted that people at lower levels will inevitably have queries. The Coastal Change Adaptation Plan will look at this.
- **ACTION: David Cooper to look at how the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan is communicated.**

4) Update from landowners/developers

- Lesley McGrath noted queried how the Council would respond to planning applications concerning alteration/extension of existing industrial properties. David Cooper suggested a separate conversation would be helpful. David thought improvements would be fine but that redevelopment into commercial premises might be contrary to the plan.
- **ACTION: David Cooper/Iain McFarlane to speak to Lesley McGrath.**
- Dave Bissett invited anyone with queries about Scottish Water assets to speak to him. Kyle Drummond queried if Scottish Water had looked at the impact of sea levels on the Seafield wastewater treatment plant. Dave noted that Scottish Water has a climate change team that looks at implications for Scottish Water assets.
- Dave Bissett noted that Scottish Water is modelling the impact of the City Plan on its network. Scottish Water is in lockstep with the Council and is in discussions with developers.
- Nick Waugh welcomed progress in City Plan.

5) AOB

- N/A

6) DONM

- The next meeting will take place after the consultation has been carried out.