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| Moderator | Notetaker | Participants | Date | Time | Venue |
| Garry Sneddon | Davina Fereday | Local Residents (East of Site) | Sat 2nd Sept | 12 NOON – 1.30pm | Portobello Library |

[Introductions]

Mod - The reason we are here today is that land on Westbank Street, which is currently owned by the Council, is being sold. Portobello Community Council and Portobello Amenity Society have asked for the community to be involved in the decision about what criteria the Council should use to make the decision about who the land will be sold to. We’re conducting eight focus groups with local residents to help us understand how people feel about the various options. This is number three of the eight in total...

We’re obviously meeting with local residents to help us get an understanding of what local people are feeling about this particular sale. Now before I go on to the questions I’m going to ask the group I need to take you through what the Westbank Street site is and give you some background on what has happened so far... Ok so at the moment the site is used by two businesses; Powerleague runs the five-a-side football pitches next to Portobello High Street. Edinburgh Leisure runs Tumbles, a gymnastic and soft play centre, next to Portobello Beach.

Powerleague what they want to do is they actually want to close their business at Westbank street they see it as no longer financially viable and that’s why they have decided to sell. Powerleague has a long term lease with the Council and it’s actually expiring in 2088 but they were first in touch with the Council about selling the business way back in 2004 and developers were interested in the site but the sale couldn’t be completed at that point due to the downturn in the economy-the recession-financial crash that happened... Powerleage contacted the Council again in January 2015 to arrange sale of the site. Now, as Powerleague does not want to operate their business any longer on the site the five aside pitches will be removed and they will not be replaced.

The Tumbles centre which is operated by Edinburgh Leisure which is a wholly-owned arms-length management company-they run the city’s sports and leisure facilities – they actually operate Tumbles and there are two options for Tumbles.

The first option is that Tumbles will not be sold and would remain in its current location as is. The location of the Tumbles car park may change to another place on the site but the amount of spaces will remain the same which is 5o at the moment. They’ll be retained the second option for Tumbles is that the building will be sold and removed and a new facility will be created within the site. Now the new facility must completely replace all of the existing functionality of Tumbles and it will also need to provide the fifty car parking spaces exclusively, exclusively for Tumbles Customers. If this happens then there will be no loss of amenity.

The Tumbles site could possibly be relocated because the land next to Portobello beach is more valuable than the land near the high street.

Does that make sense? Is everything ok? (Agreement)

So what’s going to actually happen to the site-we’re getting there we’re almost there... any actual development of the land will be subject to planning approval and will still need to go through those processes. Developers have already submitted their bids and their intentions – Now I cannot share with you bids. I can’t talk about that because that is commercially sensitive so I don’t even have any information about that. I can tell you from another focus group I learned that there are at least twenty interested bidders and they also don’t know what each other are proposing, so there are a lot of different propositions and ideas for the site.

So what I’m going to do now is go through the different aspects o the development and following the feedback from all the community groups etc bidders will be invited to rebid and basically change or look at their submissions again taking into account the feedback from the community. And with the public’s points taken on board.

The appointed developer will then take part in what’s called a place making exercise and that’s where there will be another opportunity – an additional opportunity for the public to get involved so we’re really not at the end of the process here today-I just want to emphasise that that this is just part of a continuous process so there will be opportunities to pout in further opinion later on.

A lot of people are saying well what happens to the money made from the sale? The sale is going to be split between Powerleague and the Council. The Council’s share of the sale will go towards the development of the new Meadowbank stadium and that’s what they’ve decided to do.

Does anyone have any questions at this point?

FemaleP – See these developers are they all Scottish? Or are they from all over the UK?

Mod – I can’t answer that affirmatively – I can’t say yes or no but I think they’d predominantly be from the UK – I would certainly expect them to be procured from within the EU at least. Any other questions? (No responses)

Mod – Let’s talk now about the development’s height and volume. There are a number of proposals for the use of the site which range from entirely commercial to mostly housing-the total development on the site will actually determine the price. Higher bids generally means taller properties... plans received from developers range from 2 storeys to 8 storeys. For comparison existing buildings in Portobello are within this range. The Council’s affordable housing policy typically requires new developments to include 25% affordable.

Do you have any views on what kind of development should be on the site either residential or commercial?

Male P – I think if it’s commercial then it needs to be back in (for) the community because Tumbles is a really valuable part of the community – I can understand the football pitches – have done a bit of background research basically what you read, I read last night – to shore myself up for today - I’ve already had a bit of local gossip on it.. it appears to be that football pitches are basically ten a penny these days and are very competitive so the very fact that they tried it in 2004, they’ve been looking to leave – my issue would be that any development close to the beach area would be more valuable.. I think most people in Portobello care about something retained that’s more like minded (referring to value of Tumbles)

Female P – As a mum, with young kids eh – I know we are getting rid of the football pitches but I don’t want to see houses in there – I want to see something for the kids because there’s isn’t enough of it, I know people say you can always go to other pitches but we’re only a one car family and if you’ve no car and you need to go all the way to where the other football pitches are well, then I want to see something in here for my kids, whether that be a skatepark or a massive big play park, I’d like something that’ll replace that rather than houses. I use Tumbles quite a lot and I certainly would not want to see that go.

Female P – Where Tumbles currently is better for the kids

Female P \_ It’s just a new building as well – it’s just all been done up as well.. a couple of year a go or whatever. So I cannot see why you would want to move that or.. I know what you are saying about the front’s dearer than the back and there’s a proposal to move Tumbles but I’m surprised that that building would go because of how new it actually is..

Female P – And also the High street is a lot higher than those football pitches so... the thought of something eight storey’s high is just... it’s just awful and they’ll put all these houses looking out onto the see will be worth hundreds of thousands and all the affordable housing will be pitched at the back and I know that people need to get somewhere to live but when you think about it with all these people coming in and buying these houses it will be good for the high street I’m sure but people need to live somewhere but we need to make sure that the people who most need the affordable housing actually get them and not pitched at the back I mean can you imagine that eight storeys high and I certainly wouldn’t want a supermarket for goodness sake so I think one of the people that have been bred and brought up it is something that’s close to my heart and here I don’t want to apart from anything see anything eight storey’s high.

Mod – Ok, let’s take that a wee bit further shall we? How do you feel about having additional housing in the area?

(General utterances around ‘they’re already doing it anyway etc)

Male P –Some would say that the flats that were built a couple of years ago are nice but personally I think they are a bit of an eyesore. Eight high is a blot, a blot on the landscape.

Male P – They just keep throwing up flats and they’re not putting in extra spaces at schools and there are already loads.

Male P – The skate park’s a great idea because I work in Portobello and Cramond as well and there’s two completely different promenades-historically they are the two most historic promenades in Edinburgh. Cramond has got no development at all because of the beach and where it’s located, there’s one cafe that’s just reopened and it’s got a little tributary at the Almond side. Portobello is a real holidaymaker’s paradise, you’ve got the arcades and it’s famous for the baths etc and suchlike so historically on a promenade what does it bring – it brings walkers, cyclists, dog-walkers, it brings kids a variety of skateboards, cyclists so taking the kids and giving them a safe environment is an absolute must for me. An absolute must. You get conflicts on these promenades every day – a dog bolts and a cyclist’s throwing his arms up shouting get away (usually in a foreign language by the way) I’m not meaning to be racist when I say that... look you’re supposed to ring a bell – take them and give them a facility. They built a velodrome and it burnt down. I hope that they do make the Meadowbank a better facility because that would take the kids somewhere. Meadowbank’s vast... it’s huge. It was built for the 1970’s Commonwealth games but it’s deteriorated badly – it’s in dire need of refurbishment do we really need to sell a place..?

Male P –The site before was a swimming pool and has been a recreational site for at least fifty years or longer and it should remain as a recreational site- to me there’s plenty of new houses being built its just cashing in for developers – it should be a recreational site for the people of Portobello. I used the Pitz for over 15 years and younger kids won’t get that chance once its moved out and it’s going to be lost and strangely enough final bit on that because I’ve lived for almost twenty years looking over the site and have seen how the sea view has been eradicated in that twenty years. I found a photograph I took twenty years ago, nearly... (Shows photo round group) Tumbles was just built. You can see the skyline beside the sea and that’s now gone. I just dug it out and I randomly found it.. and that’s changed so much since we’ve lived in Bridge street and we are looking over the site and they’ve planted trees next to the Pitz and it’s not been controlled and basically the sea view is vanishing and if you put eight storey blocks up there...you’ll have - well it’ll be gone???

Female P (talks over previous as viewing photo) – And you can’t see it at all!

Male P – I partly agree with what you said but where my problem is with the Council is trying to maximise its receipt by putting it out. I think if you are going to do something yes you retain it for the people of Portobello. You can still get a receipt by doing affordable housing... you’re in control of the site, so don’t put it out to the highest bidder because we know with the more affordable it’ll be put in the bit away from the best views also as well the promenade is beginning to be used more and more by people in coming to Portobello and rightly or wrongly the car park down at Tumbles is used by people coming in and that’s why they push car parking to a premium for the people that are living there as well.

Mod- That’s a neat little segue as we are coming into the part about parking and transport around the site-transport and travel in general - Tumbles will have that 50 spaces dedicated to it’s facility. There’s 50 spaces but that’s for use exclusively for Tumbles customers.

Female P – It’s not really exclusive to Tumbles

Female P - Whose to say it’s for Tumbles?

Female P – They could do something like the Supermarkets by having a two hour time limit

Female P – But even that...

Male P – Put a warder in (Interruptions)

Female P – You would need a barrier before you got into Tumbles you get it stamped

Male p – The car park at Braes street gets choked and like the NCP’s it gets choked like today its’ just going to be heaving

Male P – The streets are heaving’ with cars it will just be a continuous... (Inaudible)

Female P – And people just come and most of the time they just park there and it’s shocking and I think something that nobody’s really mentioned as well is the elderly as well they should be able to.. They’ve been here a lot of years.. my neighbour she’s in her eighties and she just hates it now as there so many people.. Bikes and it’s just and I think that whatever is done it should be done for the people of Portobello.

Male P – Is there something written about the site being used for recreational purposes?

Mod – I’ve got that as part of my questions in the part about open space, recreation and so on...

Male P –It was my understanding that was the case that it was to be used for recreational purposes

Male P – I thought it was owned for houses in the local plan

Mod –I really wouldn’t be able to say you’ll probably no more than me about the local plan (inaudible) – In terms, I accept that its been a lido –I remember it was a swimming pool since I was a kid so that’s going back a while so it’s always been a sports and recreation site yes...

Mod – But what about public transport in that area? Any views on public transport?

Female P- there’s plenty buses but then you’ve got congestion... lights are not even working today and folk canny get across the road... so it and know and then ... and then when five o’clock hits it’s (almost nose to tail..) It’s shocking... shocking the traffic is terrible.

Male P – I agree that people need some where to live and there’s a lot of flats in the Baileyfield area and it’s going to bring a lot of people... and to built further properties just opposite the road is going to cause a lot more congestion..

Male P – Are you - aren’t putting in any more infrastructure, the fact that it was a recreation site if you want to change it it will change not just that – do you know what i mean? I mean is has implications wider than just for that site which haven’t - don’t seem to be been addressed.

Mod – Well I guess that’s why we are here in a sense is to get these things out in the open and find out exactly what people think eh there’s another question here about active travel. Walking, cycling and so on – what concerns does anyone have about that in this area?

Female P – When it’s a lovely day everybody comes to Portobello

Female P – And everybody brings dogs and scooters bikes a mean am a culprit I mean I’ve got the kids bikes scooters and it just seems to be a free for all

Male P – It’s great that there’s more people being active and there’s people coming from out of the area..

Male P - We need designated cycle paths

Male P – It is dangerous on the prom... and the route stops they say it’s all linked up but there’s bits missing (of the route) so you can use your cycle

Male P – It’s going to happen you’re going to get cycle routes on promenades it makes absolute sense you could end up with people carrying out boats from the boat club. You’ve got all manner of different vehicles at all times – I’ve seen horses down there you know what I mean it’s great as you say – it’s getting people out and about

Female P – It worries me that we are maybe not keeping that place for the kids as recreational place and just throwing up more housing right now you’re reading about the kids on the motorbikes cause they’ve got nothing to do and nowhere to go and stuff like that and even walking along Portobello they’ve got the park and stuff but.. Probably should be more like the meadows... I think we need to do something else for the kids.

Mod – Ok

Female P – I think as well just to throw in the mix I work for the health board-you’re building all those houses and then you need doctors. Know what I mean it’s just. It just gets bigger and it just grows and grows. There’s more you have to look at other than just building houses and putting people in them-they do need places to live of course they do but then you know the thing is if you’ve lived in Portobello all your life and you need a doctor’s appointment you’re going to wait longer aren’t you? Cause these people are away to your doctors... So they need to look at all of this.

Mod- What could the developer or the Council do about your concerns

Female P-People need to know this is a cycle route where it is all joined up, but in reality we’re not going to get everything, for me personally as long as it is all for the people of Portobello to make our lives better and generations coming up now, that’s a good thing no?

Male P – I think it sounds though as if the development will be about the few and the ones on the promenade... Overlooking the prom so they get a good view of the sea etc, and I don’t think the interest of other people are up for discussion.

Male P – But that’s what I was saying... rather than take the whole site and you’re looking at 25% affordable housing because it’s in the Council’s control they could determine, they could make it all affordable but not

(Interruptions)

Male P – No - But that’s why we are all here, to say the thing... that money is going out of the Portobello area to fund Meadowbank and that’s a whole discussion in itself, the money should going to go there and the money might be for something that’s going to be used once every 18 years. It’s a vanity project.

Female P – And they’re saying as well that the nation are getting fatter and fatter, you know kids are on the ipads. There’s no exercise they’re not getting out there to exercise and stuff like that but they are taking these things away... to build more houses

Male P – But that’s what I’m saying if they used that site for just purely affordable housing and recreational they’re still getting a receipt in but not as big and it’s not as many houses that are going in and it’s for people who live in Portobello, my kids are coming up, you know they’re not going to afford mortgages-they’re wanting to live in the area so by having the affordable housing there there’s a chance to remain in that area.

FemaleP-I would definitely like to see that-I’m actually working with someone just now who has just recently split up from their wife and he was saying now that he’s split up from his wife – he comes from this area as well and he had nowhere else to go and he went to the council to see if he could get a house and he’s basically living in a bed and breakfast now that must be really expensive- and he told me if I was a junkie or an alcoholic I’d be way down on the list but I’m not way down on the list because I’ve not got a disability, a non-alcoholic I’m just a single man on their own and I have to go through this process of living in a bed and breakfast with junkies and alcoholics and he says he’s paying about eighty pound a week for it but I just can’t get a Council house which is ridiculous, however the other point I wanted to make because I’ve got kids as well there’s a place that seems to be affordable housing that’s just happened because my brother’s got a house here actually-It’s city park-don’t know if any of you have heard of it.. That is amazing-if you are going to do anything do that- he (brother) went from a Council house into this affordable housing at City park and he moved in and he’d had all carpets, fridge freezer, cooker blinds all he had to do is take his bed and telly and he was able to afford that it was the same as the Council but not part of the Council – people had to have jobs.

Male P – dearer than Council but cheaper than private

FemaleP-I think he was just £20 to £30 more than his Council rent.. I’d like to see that- as a single man on his own he was able to afford that. It was beautiful.

Male P – There’s hundreds of properties being built in Baileyfield... this site will not be for people eh for affordable housing it will be about the cash.

(Interruptions) worth too much etc...

Male P – If you take what this is about it’s about getting the views and saying to the Council..

Male P – If it’s safeguarded for recreational use that then would put an end to what type of housing – there’s plenty housing built, not enough recreational space for kids

Mod- The next bit although we did touch on it before-thanks for that by the way - relocation of the Tumbles facility not all the developers are proposing to move the Tumbles- one possible option is closer to the High street – any preference to whether Tumbles is relocated or not?

FemaleP- Should be left where it is it’s environmentally its better for the Council ... to move it up here it would be closer to the traffic..

Female P-Not really got a problem with moving it to be honest as long as it is moved within Portobello- whether it’s along here or up here I’m not going to say I’m not going to use it.

Male P – If it gets moved there’s an opportunity for developers to put in...

Male P-Highly suspicious of reason to move it

Male P – if it’s not broke don’t fix it... just leave it where it is

Male P-It just gives you an idea of what that is worth if they are considering moving it and building something else

(lots of agreement)

MaleP – It almost sounds like (without being too cynical) like a done deal the fact as you say that they are considering moving it it’s a done deal it’s a prime location

Male P – For the price of ... If you’re going to knock it down and rebuild it you’re going to have to maximise that site at the front-so as soon as you talk about moving it you’re kind of implicitly saying you’re going to build massively on the front because the cost would just not make sense.

Female P-I think tomorrow if you woke up and BP or Shell had come along and found oil in front of there I think they wouldn’t be so interested in this because the views would be gone-the building near the sea as you say it’s all about the views and how many houses they can get on it and its all about the money and I just I don’t know how that’s gonna benefit Portobello and nobody from Portobello’s going to afford this Penthouse.

Male P- Back in the day, people used to come for miles-they’d come from holiday resorts down south to come and visit Portobello and the outside pool and the wave machine-they came for miles so Portobello was generating a tourist location for people to visit. People from leagues all over Edinburgh would come to play at the Pitz. All different types of people so you’ve got to get something-replaced like for like-if it’s not broke don’t fix it ok the Pitz haven’t been making money that’s due to the competition. Put something in that’s going to be beneficial for the children or indeed the children and the adults.

Male P-Powerleague might not be managing it well get another company in who can manage it better.

Female P-I remember the discussion about the pool as well – it was always always busy and here we are again

Mod – Ok, right this next question is about the open space and the Figgate burn which runs down the side and as you know the site includes some existing open space along that Figgate burn and the five a side football pitches are also designated at the moment as open space – while this space isn’t currently accessible the Council has requested that the developers have equivalent open space within the site now this could take several forms including the development of a walkway along the Figgate burn allowing pedestrian access to the promenade and there could also be other space on that site. If the developer were including open space from within the site what form would you like this to take?

Male P-This is pushing down the line of it’s going to be on the open market with the developer then the 25% affordable will kick in and that’s going to be as happens in all the sites the least desirable part...

Female P-(Interrupts) ...right at the back where it’s gets no sun

Male P-and the houses at the front will be the one’s that are sold for the highest price that generate the biggest receipt.

Male P – There’s lots of Brownfield sites in and around which are.. you’d think use the Brownfield site? Seafield? There’s lots of scope potentially for some development here as it’s a prime location-that’s why the developers they want the best sites.. you can understand that but I think it’s not going to be about affordable housing there..

MaleP-How much money are we going to be getting in from the site?

Mod-I really don’t know-it’ll be very variable no doubt as there are around twenty bids.

Female P-Even the money that does come in it’s going to Meadowbank.

Mod-That’s correct .

Male P –Is it all earmarked for Meadowbank? No scope for anything else?

Mod-That’s the information that I’ve been told.

Male P – It wasn’t that long ago that Meadowbank was earmarked for affordable housing.

(General agreement)

Male P-That money goes there and then it disappears.

Male P-We’ve had a huge argument about local leisure facilities throughout Edinburgh for a number of years... speculated

Male P-Even though Portobello is classed as Edinburgh seaside-it’s almost like Edinburgh’s gift. People enjoy living in Portobello and I think there’s so much potential for Portobello even more. It’s almost as Edinburgh see as a little cash cow.

Female P-The developers certainly do.

Male P-The only thing that I would say in favour of (and nobody enjoys their football more than me) but is with the new Portobello High School, the pitches that have been put there that’s great but that’s being used more than just the school-boys clubs are using it in the evening.

Female P-Most schools now have their own astraturf-you don’t need to take them to the Pitz.

MaleP-It’s like Leith academy like most schools now it’s not shut at 4, its used 24/7. I know there was a huge furore the high school going there but that area was just used for folk walking their dogs and that’s now a brand new school with these football pitches which are a benefit.

MaleP-Does the open pace thing is that if it’s sold commercially or residentially?

Mod-It’s for either. It’s stipulation that planning have put in... So there is the right spread of amenity.

MaleP-Well in that case my view I would like the open space – what did you say the percentage was?

Mod-There isn’t an actual percentage... Did I say a percentage? It’s more a question about if a developer wants to puts open space within that site how would you like that open space to look? What would it be like?

MaleP-I would like it to be together... if you had given it as a percentage-well people would be like there’s a path there, there’s a bit there... like that - If it’s going to have an open space have a natural area whether it’s residential or commercial.

FemaleP-Why does the council want to sell it?

(Need the money for Meadowbank, Cash cow etc utterances from group)

FemaleP-But you’re saying these waiting lists for Council properties are like years long and we all know someone that has been on the list and because of the right to buy a lot of people did buy their Council properties because they were getting them for pennies so I think it should be affordable housing or why doesn’t the Council just buy back into the area?

MaleP-You see the Council insisted on affordable housing on any development but they’re not in control of the site whereas they are in control of THIS site. So if they took the money aspect out and said we’ve got a shortage of affordable housing and we’ve got an opportunity here for us to minimise that...They’re wanting their cake and eat it, they’re wanting the money and housing but not supplying the affordable housing.

Male P-I feel if this decision is allowed to go ahead so Meadowbank benefits Portobello loses-once it’s done it’s done that’s it. Whether it’s a park or recreational space it’s gone. That will be another site gone. And the money would have been shifted and that’s the end of it.

Male P-and that’s two major concerns... maybe Tumbles may be going-you can kiss that goodbye...

Mod-It’s definitely not going I’ve confirmed that-it’s going to stay but it might be in a different position you know.

MaleP-Is it getting flattened if it’s going or is it getting replaced..?

Mod-at this stage we don’t know though I mean because there are all these bids...

Female P-That’s what scares me there are all these bids and the Council will start seeing the pound signs.

MaleP-But unless there’s an insistence within the planning requirement that Tumbles is built on the new part of the site before the other one is knocked down then it’s going to be out of commission then you’re going have it in a building site area that’s not going to be safe so whatever happens will have an impact regardless.

Mod-Ok I’m conscious of time thanks very much I now want to talk a bit about the high street frontage part some developers are planning to include active frontage on the development by that I’m meaning a commercial space or shops, small offices or access to the relocated Tumbles. In different bids this active frontage is on the high street or along the Figgate burn or on the promenade itself. What concerns if any do you have about active frontage on the site?

Male P-It can’t be on the promenade for all the reasons we’ve already stipulated that’s just a nonsense shop frontages is just going to generate more people, more access issues more problems more chaos. So that’s why it can’t go in, we can argue the Figgate burn , argue the high street but don’t argue the prime site at the promenade.

MaleP-Could it be shops and offices with limited parking on that site?

Mod-Well it would be under that same

Female P – (inaudible)

Mod-Any other views anyone?

Female P-If you’ve got new shops that are not the same as everything else then it is generating money coming into the area...

MaleP-In an ideal world If it was low level independent small shops in the high street then great but I can’t see that happening

Male P-It’ll be a Tesco express or something taking money away from the local shops

Female P – It’ll be a Tesco...

Male P-I think what makes the high street work is the small shops and its all independent and people enjoy it and to put in another supermarket it’ll putting pressure on the independent shops

MaleP-And there’s seems to be a bit of divide between our end of town and the rest and I don’t want to see the bit I live in just be a shopping centre and the nice bits up the road you know then a definite kind of split starts to happen.

Male P-And I think that’s improving as more people are supporting what we are seeing already and there’s scaremonger in Stockbridge and the small shops are thriving and it’s beginning to come in Portobello where people are shopping more local and you’re right if you could guarantee if it was an up and coming business it would be great but I have my fears.

Male P-Even the liberties if it’s a commercial property, nightmare...

Male P-Make it a lovely marketplace... (Laughs and agreement)

Mod-Ok the promenade itself as the Tumbles car park is included in the sale even if the building itself remains in its current location it’s very likely that there’ll be new development next to the promenade, what concerns do you have about (kind of repeating ourselves) having a new development along that promenade?

Female P – It just seems to me they trying to get the most into the are you know and the thing is as I mentioned earlier you know all these developments are bidding you know it just concerns me you know this it really honestly and then developers I know you can’t discuss it but then their plans well one might have well we’ll put forty there and the other one might have sixty so whichever one you go for as I said right at the beginning all the affordable housing will be right at the back of the site and it’s bringing no good to Portobello...

MaleP-High storey flats will cast a shadow over the prom, like the new flats that were built it’s not... it should really be open and out the vista to open it all out for everyone rather than block it off with huge buildings...

MaleP-Let’s not forget it’s north facing do you know-in winter the sun will be gone from it... (Agreement)

Mod-I was thinking more in terms of anyone got any ideas what you would ideally like to see there?

Male P-If it is flats they really need to try and keep the height down.

Mod-But it could possibly be a commercial arrangement along the promenade. So if you were thinking about a commercial...?

MaleP-You see it quite a lot in the town now is there’s a shop on the ground floor with flats above it just try and keep the height down if possible.

Male P-That’s what’ll it’ll be if they move it and they build the same shops there-it’s going to be shops that clash.

Mod-Does anyone have any idea about what they would like to see there?

FemaleP-Not a supermarket

Mod – Not another supermarket?

FemaleP- Right, not another supermarket.

Female P – Right are you saying then that if you sold it to developers you would still like going forward for me I’m thinking if you sell it to developers that’s when you lose control of it and they just do what they want.. So would you sell it to them right you can’t build this but can you do that?

Mod-No, it would go through a planning exercise-this is really just the start of it – this is informing the planning process. What would happen is you would be going back to the bidders and asking them to change their (what) they have proposed with in mind what the public have been saying. It’s really about feeding into the process then they would conduct a place making exercise to make sure that it was the way it was supposed to be to fit in with what people were asking.

MaleP-To ensure we get to see what they’re actually going to do before they actually do it before we sell it to them - in theory?

Mod-Planning will consult again to the public.

MaleP-In any case (inaudible) any recreational space you’ve sort of mentioned about walkways is there anything that planning will use it as recreational space...

Mod- well that’s kind of what we are here I’m trying to get you’re...(views on)

MaleP-The walkway should be a token gesture to link facilities as I said earlier on if they do put a commercial property in this is just a token gesture to local people to say look we’ve give you a walkway which gives you access from the..

Female P-Sweeties

Male P-I mean dress it up any way you want that’s what is going to happen.

FemaleP-I think what I’d like to see is a safe place for kids so kids can go about on their bikes while others are walking out in front of other users (partly inaudible) dog walkers because like you were saying you need to watch them like a hawk. Can’t just go... whereas it would be nice to have an enclosed area..

FemaleP – They’ve got a perfect thing at Saughton where they’ve got a skate park and a park and a wee football area, absolutely perfect they got it right there... in my eyes that’s what I’d like to see.

MaleP-The only thing I would say is that it could be stipulated is that the developers agree to eh upgrade the parks beyond the promenade and that just now well the council’s done them and my kids have enjoyed using them but they are nothing fantastic... It’s tired.

FemaleP-They’re not like Meadowbank or the Meadows

FemaleP-The one at Cramond it’s really nice (agreement)

Mod-You mean putting in stipulations that they have to do certain things as part of the deal.

MaleP-Either that or the Council plans what needs to be done there and they put a price to it and that’s a deduction just to same as asking for a (?) and maximise the open space wihin the development.

MaleP-Ironically, I think the Council should be devoting their attention to upgrading the promenade because the potential is great and there is a lot more people coming now-let’s make it an even better place to visit. It’s been left in a poor state for such a long time.

MaleP-There’s been no vision put in anything that’s done has been done in isolation-there’s been no thought of what’s been happening along here now I appreciate that’s difficult as you’ve got all your existing road layouts and that which if anyone was going to develop now we’re left with that there’s no vision – we talk about Tumbles it’s such a new building and it’s so badly designed and not maximised for the few days that are nice there should have been a bigger cafe facility for people sitting out there rather than a wee tokenistic wee bit there.

Male P-There’s also like you’ve got a bus depot –further along if you wanted to put in affordable housing put it by the bus depot or that’s seems a bit of a waste...

Mod-When new developments are created the developers are required to provide community benefit and this varies from site to site and it depends on the scale and the type of development-it could involve jobs and training, improvements to infrastructure, public realm.. for example you build a very large housing scheme basically put in a stipulation that a school is built as well. So what kind of community benefit would you like to see the developers actually provide for the local community?

(Pause)

Male P-I still go back to the point of recreation and that’s what it’s been used for years and years and you want people’s kids... my kids enjoyed it the next families who’ve got young kids - you want them to enjoy it for years to come rather than losing it for the sake of Meadowbank.

Male P-It’s been a recreational in many forms so you might as well keep as a recreational facility.

Mod-Anything else?

FemaleP-Recreation

Male P-What community benefit is there at the Baileyfield site?

Mod-I really couldn’t answer that.. Is that the new flats just opposite?

Male P-Yes just opposite...

Mod-Does there appear to be nothing...?

Male P-They’re there for the elderly as gifts-yes some of them..

Male P-If they hadn’t had community benefit..

Male P-(background comment about the brick colour choice)The design is shocking it’s like something.. (inaudible) and that’s you coming into Portobello and there was a real opportunity to make the housing look (?) – They just went for that option it was just about cashing in... it wasn’t about how it looked it was about as many properties can you get into that space

Femalep-Are they affordable?-I think my mum couldn’t afford one of them

Male P-That was for sale, the difference there was that the Council didn’t own that land so they could determine the percentage so I don’t even know if it’s affordable but I’m taking it there will be on the site, there must be, must be

Femalep-well it depends what they think is affordable and what we thinks affordable..

MaleP-no, no they have to...just the same as you said, it’s either going to be mid-market, social housing or discounted to sell at the very least..

Mod-Are there any other concerns or issues that you would like to raise with us at all today? Anything at all? Or have you exhausted them all (laughs)

FemaleP-I’m walking away thinking it’s going to be houses they’re putting up there-

Female P-We’ve lost that space.

MaleP-How quickly is this likely to happen?

Mod-I wouldn’t want to put... There are loads of things that have to be done-I know that we’ve got to conclude all our participation request, I’m trying to remember what David said the other night... You would probably be looking at something happening next year.. but not maybe until at least the end of the year before you would actually see actually something happening.. There’s a lot of process to go through there’s certainly nothing going to happen in the next few months.. but there will be -we will make our findings clear and it’s been an excellent group it’s been great to hear everyone’s point of view-I’m sorry you feel kind of the way that you do but if you’ve got anything to say this is the day to say it.

FemaleP-I am actually surprised that you’re actually having something like this because normally-well I’ve done anything like this before... (Some laughs) I would hope these focus groups do have an impact.

Mod – I think they will, I think they will yes.

Femalep-(partly inaudible) ...other ways to get involved via community council..

MaleP-Local MP’s will have surgeries generally you can go to...

Mod-because they are there to represent your views

Male P-I think people will kick up as usual when these things happen too late

Femalep-too late aye when it’s all done and dusted

Male P-When it’s a done deal sadly

Mod-I would emphasise again the bit at the beginning... we’re in the middle of a process here so if you are thinking along the lines of it’s not a done deal and there are still things that have got to be considered...

Femalep-But everything at the end of the day is all down to money and you are talking about how you are going to spend the money at Meadowbank so for me I’m now expecting that money so it’s seems aye..

MaleP-The whole thing it seems completely flawed

Femalep-if you had said to me just there what we’re we going to do with the money? And we’ve not got any plans for that... but you have got plans for it. So that’s telling me you need that money in

Malep-there’s a reliance on that money from that sale and that’s the worry and a lot of people in Portobello have been talking about it and that’s why they think it’s a done deal because it’s been spoken about that the money is going to Meadowbank, and even in the questionnaires and everything that’s gone out...

Femalep-I know, I know

Male p-See I don’t think we were being asked for that-that rightly or wrongly let’s minimise, you see the Council own the site and they can determine what goes onto that... just because it says you are 25% affordable you are in control of the site and we’ll take whatever receipt comes in..

Femalep-well for me it’s already a done deal because you’re not going to say to a developer build a skate park, build a park and them not make any money from it, they’re not going to buy that... with no having any money... and Meadowbank needs the money to get off the developers-the developers going to build houses..

Malep-It’s refreshing to be part of the process-because generally in Edinburgh when we’re not made part of the process-the trams debacle was the classic example of that-the 20mper hour speed limit was another classic example-people don’t have a lot of faith in the Councillors-power corrupts and unfortunately as I say I’m cynical-worked for the Council-worked for the fire brigade-worked for Lothian regional council-absolute classic example go and look at the speed bumps down in Boswell park and I was based in the west of the city at the time-well it is going to severely impact on PDA or times to attend house fires, it’s going to slow up the process and by the way the speed bumps you have created are damaging the snow chains on fire engines aw well thanks it’s already done. That, and sorry for being so cynical is the Council way of doing things-they do something, they knee-jerk, it’s done the damage is done the trams is an absolute shambles my brother has a business in Leith Walk and they are going to go ahead with it now, ruining and putting people out of business-they are going ahead with it so you are thanking us for participating-thank you for inviting us down as important to be part of the process but when you look at the prime site at Baileyfield it’s not the same value as the promenade.

Female P- Can I go back to the Pitz-they’re obviously going to pick the one that’s going to put the most on that site and that really concerns me is that honestly you know people do need places to live I understand that but if it came to a push for me it would be half recreational for the use of the Council and the elderly and affordable housing. It worries me that somebody could come along and to the first bit and say well we’re going to put 40 in there and maybe actually come along and say we’re going to squash 200 and we’ll give you these sweeteners and you’re in control of that- so we don’t know...

MaleP-The precedent’s already been set by allowing high rise on the prom already and I think that’s the gauge-well they are already there what your argument- is and because there existing buildings at that height then you’ve set precedence...

MaleP-It’s up the planners as they’ll determine what height they can go up to.

MaleP-They’ll be used as a gauge because they’ve been allowed to be built.

Mod-Well ok... Any last minute thoughts any of you anything you need to get off your chest? Can I just express our thanks from Davina and I for you being so expressive and we hope you enjoyed the experience...

Femalep-I just hope that in five years time I’m not going to walk along that part and think I knew that was going to happen.

(laughter across whole group)

Mod-Thanks to each of you and enjoy the rest of your weekend.

END OF FOCUS GROUP