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| Moderator | Notetaker | Participants | Date | Time | Venue |
| David Porteous | Saty Kaur | Local Residents | Sat 9th Sept | 12 NOON – 1.30pm | Portobello Town Hall |

DP: So, I’ve got a fair amount of information to go through with you first, I’ll just pass out these maps so you’ve got them, if you can just take one and pass them round please. So, a little bit of background. As we mentioned two organisations have asked us to do this, we’re doing eight focus groups in total, with various different local people and representatives. I’m going to take you through the map just so we’re clear on what we’re talking about here. So, the area highlighted in red is the area that may be being sold. There are a couple of different scenarios for it here. If you see this area here which is still listed as being ‘indoor bowling centre’ although it’s not, that’s the Tumbles centre now. Some of the proposals which we’ve had from developers cover everything except the Tumbles centre, but it does include the Tumbles Centre car park. And some of the proposals include the whole site, including Tumbles. So we’ll talk you through what happens with the various different ones. This is Portobello High Street along here and this is Portobello promenade along here. Are you all reasonably familiar with where that is?

Group: Agreement

DP: Ok

P: Used to swim in there (inaudible)

DP: Absolutely, the lido. So, at the moment the site is used by two businesses, Powerleague runs the five-a-side football pitches next to Portobello High Street and Edinburgh Leisure runs Tumbles, a gymnastic and soft play centre, next to Portobello Beach. So, the reason we’re here is that Powerleague want to close their business at Westbank Street because they say it is no longer financially viable – this is why the site is being sold. Powerleague has a long-term lease on the site which will expire in 2088. They first contacted the Council about selling the site in 2004 for the same reason and there were developers were interested in the site, we progressed to the point of actually getting bids from developers for it but then there was the financial crash and there was a downturn in the property market so all of that went away basically.

They contacted us again in January 2015 to arrange sale of the site. And because Powerleague do not wish to operate their business on the site anymore, the five-a-side pitches will be removed and will not be replaced with five-a-side football pitches.

In terms of Tumbles, Edinburgh Leisure is a wholly-owned arms-length management company of The City of Edinburgh Council that runs the city’s public sport and leisure facilities and they operate Tumbles as well. There are two things that may happen to Tumbles.

So, option one is that Tumbles won’t be sold and will remain in its current position on the promenade but that the car parking space will almost certainly be moved some place else. But at the moment it has a capacity of 50 spaces and the arrangement with the developer is that those 50 spaces would have to be replaced somewhere within that red line so within the existing site. The reason it wouldn’t be on the promenade is because that’s basically the most valuable area of the site and any developer is very likely to want to move that car park.

Option two is that Tumbles would be sold and the current building will be removed, but any developer that was removing the current building would have to replace the facility, again, somewhere within that red line of the site. And that would have to be completed with all of the existing functionality of Tumbles and the car parking spaces that we’re talking and the same reason that that land is considerably more valuable than other land on the site and that’s why there would be a motivation for them to do that.

[Another participant enters and is signed in and offered a seat and cup of tea or coffee]

DP: So, I will just go over that again cos it is information that you need to know. I’m David by the way, this is Saty, we’re both from City of Edinburgh Council. So, are you familiar with this area that is highlighted on the map?

P: Yes

DP: So, I was just explaining there are two options for what will happen to the land that’s there. This area (points to map) is Tumbles the soft play centre and some developers have put in proposals for this land which cover everything excluding Tumbles and some have put in proposals for everything including Tumbles. Now the area of the five-a-side football pitches which is currently run by Powerleague, Powerleague have a long term lease on it which expires in 2088, that land is… because they don’t feel it is financially viable to run their company from that site anymore because it requires additional investment, they want to sell the land and they don’t want to run their business there anymore so that will mean that those five-a-side football pitches won’t be replaced with other five-a-side football pitches.

In the event that the land excluding Tumbles is sold then this area where which is the car park, that will be moved somewhere else on the site, almost certainly because the land next to the promenade is the most valuable land on the site but it currently has a capacity of about 50 spaces and those 50 spaces for use by Tumbles customers have to be preserved and will be somewhere else within that red line area.

The other option is what’ll happen if the Tumbles site is also sold and the reason that might happen again, is because the land on the promenade is the most valuable on the site. In the event that Tumbles is sold then the developer will have to replace Tumbles with a like for like facility somewhere else within that red area on the site. So in the event that Tumbles gets sold the car park and Tumbles are likely to move somewhere else on the site basically.

There’s a bit more to go through with this as well. So, any actual development on the land will still be subject to planning permission, whatever that is. Developers who are interested have already submitted their intentions for how they would use the site and how much they’re prepared to pay. We can’t share with you today what any one developer has said that they would do with the site and we can’t share how much developers have said they are willing to pay for the site, but what we can tell you is some details about the range of things that are potential for what might happen to the site and what you should generally assume for this is that the more developed the site, the more money the Council will receive for the site. What I should say is that the money that is received from the sale is split between Powerleague and the Council. All of the Council’s share of that has already been allocated to the redevelopment of the Meadowbank sports facility. So if you like we already know what we’re going to spend that money on whatever it is we get from the sale of the site.

P: Is that a guaranteed?

DP: Yes, it has already been decided everything that comes from it will go to that and that won’t incidentally… the sale of this land won’t cover the full development of the cost of Meadowbank

[Another participant enters and is seated and signed in]

P: Was caught in a massive traffic jam

DP: That’s ok, absolutely fine, sorry but it does mean that we have to give a bit of introduction again. Ok, so are you reasonably familiar with where this red line area is?

P: Yes

DP: Two main things for it, first one is that this is the Pitz site, developers have put in bids for land which covers the Pitz site and the car parking area of Tumbles, that’s option one and some developers have put in bids that includes the whole of the site including the Tumbles soft play centre as well.

In the event that option one which is all of this land excluding Tumbles goes ahead then this car parking site which is about 50 spaces needs to be replaced somewhere else on the site, the reason it almost certainly won’t be here is that the land next to the promenade is the most valuable land on the site, so, these 50 spaces will stay but they won’t stay here. The other option is that the Tumbles centre will also be sold. In the event that the Tumbles centre is sold that has to be replaced somewhere else within that red line area as well so the car park and Tumbles both get replaced somewhere else. So the reason again that would happen is because again this land much more valuable than this land up here in terms of development. Now, the company that owns this site, Powerleague, have a long-term lease on it, it expires in 2088, they’ve contacted the Council a couple of times now to say that they want to sell their interest in the land therefore it is being sold and there won’t be a replacement set of five-a-side football pitches here regardless of what happens with the land so that’s pretty much where we are. The sale of the land, the Council’s share of the land is going to go to the redevelopment of Meadowbank Stadium so that moneys already allocated. I think that’s everyone up to speed on that so.

The long-term process for this, once we get feedback from the community will go to form a report, a set of recommendations which will go back to the developers and all of the developers who have already expressed an interest, I think there are 19 of them will have an opportunity to revise their bids again and then it is those bids that will be considered by a small group which will be made up of representatives from the Council’s property team and representatives of Portobello Amenity Society and Portobello Community Council as well and that group will make a recommendation of one bid to take forward and Council will either approve the sale or not, like as not they will approve that particular sale. Following on from that, the developer that is selected to be sold the land will enter into a place making process so they’ll come back to the community again and they’ll seek view on more concrete plans for what is actually planned for the site. And then following that there would be a planning application and it’s at that point again, as we said at the beginning which you may have missed that the planning application would still be necessary for any development on the site. So this isn’t the only opportunity that the community has for engagement for what’s actually going to happen on this particular site.

So, after all of that does anyone have any questions?

P: There’s no developers house developers?

DP: Yes, housing is definitely some of it. Essentially there’s a range of things, some mostly housing, some entirely commercial I think so that would be a combination of things and obviously, there’s a spread in between which would have retail on the ground floor and residential higher up in there. We don’t have a huge amount of detail in terms of all of the proposals but a mix of things is possible for the site.

P: Would it be sold to developers for private housing not for social housing?

DP: Any new housing in Edinburgh, actually it’s any new housing above a certain number of units but this would apply would need to provide 25% of what is called affordable housing. Now affordable housing isn’t an absolutely iron clad definition of what that is. That may include council, that may include housing association housing for rent or that may include more affordable housing to buy it can be some combination of those things that are included there.

P: If they sell the land and Tumbles is [inaudible] by the developer, who then owns Tumbles?

DP: It would still be the City of Edinburgh Council and it would still be run by Edinburgh Leisure

P: So they’d still be receiving the money for that cos I was thinking if a developers going to own it they could just get whatever entrance fee they want or whatever, so that’s good.

DP: Yes, it would still be ours, very much so. Anything else before we go onto some of the questions?

Group: No

DP: Ok so, as I said a number of proposals for the site which range from entirely commercial to mostly housing, the total development of the site will substantially determine the price the Council receives from the sale and more development generally means taller properties on the site as well. Plans from developers vary between two-storey buildings and eight-storey buildings. And in order to put that into context nearby buildings in Portobello ranges from single-storey to eight-storey blocks which are just next to the library along there.

As we said the Council’s Affordable Housing Policy typically requires new developments to include 25% of all units to be affordable housing.

So do you have any views about what kind of development would be on the site?

P: Low level…

P: Something in keeping with the area

P: cos what you’re doing is if you go up to eight you’re starting to spoil that frontage completely, you see it all the way right along Leith with all the development right along there, the whole frontage spoiled and that would be an absolute travesty along there to have something higher than the flats that are already existing next to them

DP: Ok, and how does everyone else feel about that

Group: general agreement

P: In terms of access for residents to a large development like that the roads are already chock-a -block out there, to cram more in…

DP: Ok, we’ll maybe come back to the roads cos obviously with that particular junction it is definitely an issue we’re particularly aware of. You said keeping in line with buildings that already on the front there, the highest, now those are about four storeys…

P: Is that the flats on the front already?

DP: Yes, how do people feel about that, do you think that’s about right given that’s what’s there or…

P: I’d still like to see lower, however, it’s never going to happen, you’re always going to have them trying to push the boundaries to go higher all the time

P: I think to provide housing for people in an area like this I think four storeys could create that possibility without going too high, I think eight’s terrible, I agree lower, but it’s not going to happen because there’s such a demand for housing

DP: Ok, and your concerns about height are those… why are you particularly concerned about height?

P: Views, if you go into town and up to the top of Arthurs Seat and you look right along here, there’s nothing really that high right along the edge of the water all the way right along other than Leith and that sticks out like a sore thumb and I think it would just spoil the whole look cos once you let the first lot go up to eight then the next lots gone up to eight, you’ve got the arcade next to it, it’s just getting bigger and bigger

P: Everybody’s going to want to sell and go up that’s my fear

P: It’s a nice community Portobello and you want to try keep within how it is at the moment if you’re having development

DP: Ok, in terms of how that development is actually used, do you have any views on commercial versus residential? Or what sort of commercial you’d want to see?

P: I think it should be more leisure things, the promenade although they’re trying to improve it, I think it needs [inaudible] all the way along

P: My view is a lot of these commercial properties are too expensive for people to operate from them and it just won’t happen and you don’t want a whole load of empty shops or charity shops going in, some are really nice, don’t get me wrong but they bring the place down and I think that’s the trouble, you see so many that have built flats all round Edinburgh and there’s commercial properties underneath empty and then when they do start up cos obviously they’re charging too much rent and that could be somebody’s home so my view is I’d rather residential and it would bring more people into the High Street or the local shops

P: There still need to be more for people to do, Portobellos a thriving place, I can remember when the power station was there

P: I agree, there would

P: I was just going to say, talking about leisure facilities the Council for young people and teenagers, Edinburgh Council shut down Leith Water World which was fabulous for us to go to, there’s nothing like that in Edinburgh now, it seems to be selling off things and putting commercial and housing on it without any… so you know there’s not enough locally for kids, young kids and kids that are older to go to…

P: And affordable

P: And affordable as well at the same time and I think it’s a big loss to Edinburgh seen as we’re a capital city, I mean we have to go through to Glasgow to take the kids or up to Dundee to take the kids where there’s proper flumes and stuff so I think maybe affordable housing and maybe something leisury, you know something that’s affordable that parents can take the kids to, keep them off the streets as well

P: We generally don’t have 30 degrees so it’s got to be things they can do on a rainy day, I like looking with my granddaughter, I was thinking is Tumbles going to go cos I take her there but you know on a rainy day you want somewhere where they can go and they can enjoy and she can progress there cos she likes it so she knows that she would go as she gets older.

DP: So, Tumbles and the soft play may be moved but will stay on that site. Now, you were talking about things for kids to do as well. Given that we’d have the soft play area there and you’d have the gymnastic centre next to it what sort of other things might you be thinking about in that context that you’d like to see?

P: I think it’s a shame that the football pitches are going, I know the school has them but I don’t know how much kids get access to play on them, and I suppose it was the same with the football pitches there, kids have to pay to go and play, even adults and stuff and I know they’ve got to run a business but if they just keep taking all this away no wonder like…

P: The greenspace is just disappearing

P: [inaudible] obesity epidemic

P: There’s no greenspace in any of the developments that you see nowadays, it’s get as many on that land as possible and that’s part and parcel of the problem is that there is no greenspace for kids to go out and kick a football about or do anything and that’s my concern is that the greenspace is just limited, it is disappearing

P: And then they charge to play

P: I was just recently on holiday in Spain and every where’s got a little like area with parks in it and everywhere you walk you can come across a play area and they’re all a little bit different and you think what a difference that makes you know

P: I was in Spain and I noticed that, it was literally everywhere you turned... [inaudible]

P: Yep, just random things, even exercise things they can stand on and you know work out… sorry

DP: No, no this is good. If we’re thinking about then open space and what I wanted to point out is the Figgate burn, it’s just along this part of the site there (points to map). So, the site includes some open space which is at the moment currently fenced off and pretty hilly and forested next to the five-a-side football pitches. Now, the five-a-side football pitches are currently designated as open space in local planning essentially so any developer would need to take account of that when they were developing the site and would need to show how they have made reference to that or developed an equivalent open space within the site, so that could take several forms, including the development of a walkway along the Figgate burn which would be pedestrian access from the High Street down to the promenade and there might also be other space within the development so if the developer were including open space within the site what form would you want that to take?

P: A greenplay area

P: A nice play area I suppose

P: A nice walkway, if it’s a nice walkway fine, the other ones you’ve got to walk down through the streets to get to the promenade

P: I like the walkway but definitely some sort of play park or something

DP: So, green are we talking about a grassed area?

P: Or astro turf nowadays they can play any kind of sports on that really

DP: Ok…

P: An all weather surface a sort of spongey kids play area that sort of idea

DP: Ok, so we’ve got a couple of different things there, are you thinking of something that could be used as a sort of multi sports pitch facility which would sort of look like a sports facility basically or are you thinking about a play area for children which would again look somewhat different…

P: You get some areas some parks where you’ve got a wee bit area of a play park for children and at the other end you’ve got a basketball hoop and an area for playing football within that area sort of catering for younger kids and older kids

P: I mean how many kids play basketball?

[Chatter]

P: No, there’s not…

P: That’s a good point actually

P: It’s either a couple of pals going down playing either two or three aside with a football or they just don’t play now…[inaudible]…basketball hoops…

P: But my point is that it’s an area for younger kids and there’s an area earmarked for older kids…

P: If the trend changed for basketball you know you would have a group of teenagers all competing against one another you’d only have to have someone organise it really wouldn’t you to keep the momentum going

P: It really depends how big the area is if you can have the playpark, cos I think they’re great, cos it brings… in the summer and stuff families can go down

P: That’s the other thing, would the development have a caretaker as such?

DP: We couldn’t answer that question one way or another

P: Because then they could be sort of the caretaker of this area as well because they have to stop the glass building up and stuff from the kids going down at night and using it a s social/recreational area that would be my concerns that the area…

P: It would need to be supervised

P: And I think that’s where grass comes in as well, if its allowed to overgrow

P: Especially with the Council cutbacks, they’re cutting partial bits of grass and leaving the rest wild and that sort of thing

DP: Ok, thinking about that development then along the Figgate burn, we’re talking about the development of a walkway along there, how do you feel about that and what do you think the positive and negative impacts might be?

P: Well, it’s a walkway down to the promenade, still need to be improvements to the promenade whatever they do, they need to improve the promenade

DP: Ok…

P: The promenade is mobbed in the middle of the summer on a good day, absolutely heaving but there’s nothing there for people, I mean really the thousands and thousands of people are there and you maybe get the odd ice cream van or that sort of thing, you’ve got the rubbish, there’s not many bins along the front things like that so the actual appearance of the place is just really run down and its needing something just to bring it back.

DP: Ok, I’ll maybe touch on then, as part of this when a new development is created developers are usually required to provide community benefit, now community benefit is not a completely defined phrase and it varies from site to site depending on how much development is actually there and on the nature of the site and it can include jobs and training for people who are involved in building that, it can include improvements to infrastructure and public realm and it can include the creation of public assets so it’s probably too small for us to be talking about the development of a new school but in the event that you were building a large housing development you would expect the developer to build a school alongside that. So, and we were also talking about the promenade there and changes to the promenade so in that sort of wider context what sort of things would you like to see as community benefit from the site actually being developed?

P: I don’t know what the school registers like at the moment, how full is the school?

DP: I’ve no idea

P: Right because again, and you need to know the demographics for the site is it going to be one bedroom, two bedrooms, three is going to be family accommodation that sort of thing because if you’re looking at accommodations then you have to look at the school and the capacity of the school because at the moment they’re all bursting

DP: So in the event that we were talking about lots of new children coming in you’d expect something to be added to local schools?

P: Yes, definitely

P: Let’s not beat about the bush

P: [inaudible] grabs a fortune out of this, the building, every developer does and putting something back in the community isn’t a big hardship for them really on the big scale of things

DP: Ok so we were talking about school improvements as being one potential community benefit anything else you want to see come out of that?

P: I think if they’re keeping Scrambles it would be good to update it a bit you know

[Chatter]

P: You know that’s one of the good things, you’ve got an opportunity then I think as well with your green space you’ve got an opportunity to do something unique that isn’t happening everywhere else in the city maybe look what other places are doing, something a bit different, you know that you’d say ‘let’s go there because this is unique there’s nowhere else like it in the east of Scotland’. Like you said people travel across to Glasgow, why do people want to travel to Portobello you know so I think it’d be good to get some ideas from that

DP: Ok, thinking about the promenade then, as I said Tumbles car park, regardless of what happens to Tumbles the car park is very likely to be moved from its current location, what concerns, if any, do you have about development on the promenade side of the site?

P: No car parking, you wouldn’t have a car park at the promenade side?

DP: Oh no, I mean it is almost certainly the case that that car park will be moved

P: Up to the top here?

DP: I couldn’t say where it would move to

P: The problem you’ve got is when you start construction at height then you’ve got restrictions on passage ways along the prom

DP: I don’t understand what that means

P: So if you’re going up to four storeys high you’ll have restricted access coming past on the promenade if they’re building right up to the promenade so you would eventually have closures at the promenade going along there…

P: Would they be allowed to do that?

P: It would possibly be even halved

P: I’m sure when they were building those ones it was halved

P: Do you mean just during the time of the building?

P: Yes, but even at that if you’re building right up to the promenade you don’t want people walking right past your window and that sort of stuff. You should just set off the promenade itself, give the promenade its own space

P: You’d have chaos [inaudible] I remember when [inaudible] was there, a great wee shop, it’s away now

P: As well if people have got garden space at the front and then the promenade not everybody’s keen on upkeep so you don’t want it to look a bit grotty along with the promenade you know you want it to bring it up…

P: Cos you’ve got just now haven’t you when you go along to the new build houses you’ve got gardens at the front

P: Yes, you just think, everyone isn’t interested in gardening and things but I think it should be made to look nice, if you’re going to have buildings there you want it to enhance the promenade and think everyone should have something written in that they have to do something or pay towards keeping it

DP: Ok, so the visuals look of those buildings have got to be good…?

P: The visuals got to be [inaudible] cos you could be having something that looks like a ghetto type of thing you know so it would make it that people wouldn’t go along there, regardless of what people pay for property don’t mean to say they’re going to keep them nice

P: They can turn into holiday lets and all that especially (inaudible)

P: Yes, exactly

DP: Ok, you mentioned kiosks things, that sort of thing. We’ve heard some concerns about having more retail units on the site anyway, how would you feel about retail on that promenade side? And when I say retail I mean commercial I mean lots of different things at that side

P: If it was affordable and for local businesses coming rather than chains, I’d like to see affordable space for local businesses

P: It’s be nice to see a small café

P: An ice cream shop

P: You’re not wanting a McDonalds or Kentucky Fried or anything like that

P: If you do have retail units going in there, like I said earlier if you do have retail units going down there, eateries and that sort of thing you want bins within that area cos you go past some of the places like Tescos and there’s maybe one bin filled that’s it, it’s overflowing all the time

P: It’s be nice, I know cos I sometimes walk along, I sometimes take the children along to Cramond, there’s the Cramond Falls Café and that looks right over the water, that’s packed all the time

P: People go there for that, you don’t go to Cramond cos you hear they’ve got a brilliant Costa, you go because they’ve got that amazing unique place

P: Unique local café and you can sit outside in the summer with your dogs and things like that…

P: Have your soup in the winter

P: And it looks right over the water, it’s a lovely view so something like that would be nice at that area and I think it would get a lot of business, a lot of people would go down

P: Yes, nicely designed units not just sort of basic looking, something that looks nice for the promenade

P: And that’s like when you were saying local businesses like people making jewellery and things like that, something a little bit different that people could come and buy, you know have a coffee

P: Absolutely, you’ve got local artists and stuff like that as well

P: I don’t know if anybody seen the BBC this morning and they’re showing some photographer that’s going round Britain, Morecombe and all these places, filming wee places where people come and sit you know how overlooked all these old buildings…

P: That might be something people could do, learn about art have painting classes something like that

P: I suppose the difficulty with that is in Scotland, in Edinburgh, in cafes would be great during the summer but they would be tucked away from most people going past if you know what I mean

[talking over each other, inaudible]

P: If you turned it around then to winter things, just takes a bit of innovation doesn’t it \*

P: What’s to stop them just keeping the retail back off the front and just having a café or something central if there’s parking on both sides if there’s trees there you know the canopies, the tarpaulins the canopies you know they do all fancy now, make a real show of it, you know it would add to the promenade, it would bring people it would be a real focal point on the promenade

P: Right in the centre, you’ve got all the houses round about, if you’ve got a sort of internet café for people to go to in the winter you’re opening up a whole load of different people…

P: Any residential can step back, it’ll be overlooking it won’t ruin their view, it would add so much to the promenade but also to the new residents behind it, it would be a space for them

DP: Ok, can I ask, some of the feedback that we’ve got from other focus groups on this has, not necessarily on this specific thing that you were talking about here, has been about creative space and artistic space and how that’s been lost in recent development are you conscious of that happening?

[Mumbles]

P: Not especially, it has been probably lost but I think if you asked the majority of people what would they rather there the art space I think it would probably be a small percentage, I think so anyway, it’s not interest of mine as such, or having an area there but I know people are passionate about it but probably not enough…

P: I think there’s enough arts within Edinburgh specially during the festival time, it’s only 10 minutes up the road and you’re in the centre where you’ve got all the arts

P: It’s a lot of community arts/crafts dotted around Edinburgh that are run by the community and it’s cheap food and they put on mum and toddler groups bits and bobs and things and it’s quite nice

P: The area there’s built, nice wee cafes n that artists can go down there and sit have a coffee and draw what used to be Cockenzie power station

DP: Ok, that’s interesting, so the other major issue around this is obviously, traffic, transport and travel in the area so we said that the 50 spaces in the car park for Tumbles customers, which is really supposed to be exclusively for Tumbles customers but we understand that is not the reality of how it gets used that will still be there otherwise what the Council has said to developers is that parking is to be kept to a minimum so what concerns, if any do you have about parking in that area of Portobello?

P: If you’re bringing in loads more houses but there’s not enough parking for everybody that lives there you’re just going to…

P: Chaos

P: Yes, so much busier

P: Do you not think if you remove the Tumbles parking allocation then every space is going to be a fight down there

DP: Oh no, the parking, the 50 space allocation for Tumbles definitely stays

[Talking over each other]

P: It doesn’t work, I’ve seen it in other locations where they say that residents won’t have cars. If you show me anybody in Edinburgh who’s not got a car for running about somewhere in…

P: Plus how many in the household…

P: If you allocate one to each flat yet there’s three people that drive…

P: Just the surrounding streets start getting clogged up

P: Unless there was underground parking

DP: How would you feel about underground parking if that was one of the options?

P: Well for the houses it would have to be eh?

P: I’m a big fan of it just cos it keeps the parking out of the way and it’s safer as well…

P: You would then have a pass key to get in underground, you wouldn’t have anyone parking in your space you wouldn’t need to park in a Tumbles space, your car would be undercover

P: Better for people with motorbikes as well with the motorbike crime in Edinburgh at the moment, you know that might help the people with motorbikes if there was a secure parking area for them

P: You’ve got the flats that are along the Granton Harbour have got underground parking there and it is fantastic, I had a friend that stayed in there and it was great, you went straight into the car park, pushed a button for the lift and then straight up to your floor

P: Again, as long as you can’t get access in….

P: Really safe for the residents, especially if it’s single ladies going into their house, it’s brilliant, really is

P: It would be one hell of a project though…

P: It didn’t take much more than the actual flats going up…

P: Really? The excavations….

P: you’ve still got to go down for the foundations anyway

P: You’re only talking four storeys maximum, you’re no talking about a great deal of parking space

P: I’m all in favour of it, I work for a concrete (inaudible)

P: I think parking is the big problem with anything and I think it’s because it’s never thought out right when they build something

P: I think cos it stops being their problem once they build it

P: The transport links coming through Portobello are actually quite good for public transport and I think that side of things would be fine it’s the actual private transport and parking within there that’s the big issue

P: Undergrounds [inaudible]

DP: You mentioned earlier on the level of traffic that we have at that sort of particular junction there, I suppose I’m sort of asking you to balance this up, I mean you’re saying an adequate amount of parking is necessary for that site, that has obviously an impact on the number of cars visiting it. What sort of concerns do you have about that?

P: The thing is if the parking is private for those houses, if it was underground with a pass key then I don’t think it’s going to increase the number of cars that are there when you’re building it anyway, it would just mean they would be parked in a private car park rather than being parked on the street cos people aren’t going to buy the flat and then get rid of their car because there isn’t any car parking, it’s just being realistic. I don’t think that by not providing parking you’re solving the problem with the cars. There won’t be any traffic cos there isn’t any parking so people won’t come. People own cars and when you buy a new house or new flat you don’t get rid of your car, you just find somewhere to stick it. So I think the traffic’s going to be a problem whatever you do but you’ll make it worse if you don’t put parking.

P: Yes, I think it’s something for the road planners to revise if they’re expecting an extra so many cars in the area then they’ll have to revise…

P: It’s people’s minds really, cos a mean the chips is there public transport from Portobello to the town is superb, superb transport, so peoples got to get it in their mind - I’ve got a car for going away at the weekends park it in my underground car park get the bus up the town. Simple as that.

P: I suppose it’s getting that balance cos people will come to Portobello which will build the shops up if they can drive as well, there’s a lot of people who think if I can’t park the car im just not going to bother getting the kids on the bus or whatever so there needs to be parking to bring people in but not too much

P: What about access to the industrial estate? Why can we not look at rerouting that? And taking that traffic away from that area, so where at the moment they all come in from the traffic lights into Baileyfield why can we not turn them and put them onto the other road? And deadending this, and that takes all that busy traffic away allowing you for this development, site traffic and all the rest of it whilst it’s being developed and then later on the actual housing traffic by actually segregating the industrial estate side of it and then that takes it away from Portobello high street completely and puts it all onto… is it Harry Lauder Road?

P: How many of these industrial units are actually in operation?

DP: I’ve no idea, when we run focus groups we’re…

P: We don’t use ours I work for Standard Life and we’ve stopped using ours

DP: When we run focus groups we’re not supposed to say that’s a good idea, I agree with that but actually that seems like a good idea and I agree with that but I actually I don’t know if there are restrictions or what those restrictions would be or whatever but I think that’s a good idea so it’s definitely something we’ll feedback on. We have this concept, it is a bit jargon, we call it active travel, basically it means cycling, walking, skateboarding, roller blading all that sort of stuff, how do you feel about active travel in Portobello and around this area just now?

P: I think the front gives you a lot of access to cycling and skateboarding and all the rest of it and it goes right the way along to Leith and you jump back out the way again and then jump back in and it goes all the way along to Cramond cos that’s where they run the marathon walk and the half marathon and things like that so I think that sort of access right along the waterfront is generally ok, maybe heading toward the centre of town that’s when you get the access problems with cycling and things like that cos they’ve not got the actual cycleways that are away from traffic, that’s where you’ve got the issues where the cross over between the cycling and the accidents with cars and trams and all the rest of it further into town and there’s no dedicated space for cycling.

P: I think Portobello as well. There’s enough there for them

P: There is along the prom, it’s great cos even in the summer you just take it a bit easier so its fine getting along into Leith and then you’ve got the problems of getting up Leith Walk or whatever going up from there. Generally I think it’s alright.

DP: Ok, do any of you cycle along the promenade?

P: You’re joking wi a stomach like this

Group: laughter

P: Have done in the past with the kids yeah

P: Well I like to stroll but I don’t like to be in the danger of being hit by anything

P: Correct, that’s where you need the segregation side of things where there’s a designated cycle lane

P: They’ve got that at the Meadows

DP: Is that… I don’t even know if that actually exits on Portobello a designated cycling route

Group: No

P: But it exists in the Meadows, it is really good

DP: Is that something that you might want to see developed along the promenade?

P: It would alleviate people’s fears like you were saying…

P: Well when you’ve got a little one with you as well, you just think I could’ve just turned to do that and I could’ve been hit by a bike

P: My work colleague was cycling along there and he seen a dog at that side and the person at that side kept on going no light, didn’t see the lead that was going in between them and it ended up that the dog went flying, he went flying his bike was all broken up and all the rest of it cos there was no defined area for cycling it was just a free for all.

P: I think it’s a bit like the parking, driving, it is a contentious one because who gives way and why shouldn’t your friend have stopped and thought that could be a lead, you’ve got to be thinking of the people who are in front of you and anticipating, cos it’s like when you’re driving you’ve got to anticipate….

P: What do they do in places like Miami where they’ve got all those cyclists and roller skaters, why not look at other places that have got a front like that?

P: It’s pretty bad, when I was in Australia they have loads of people going along at Melbourne but it’s not segregated just a free for all

P: Why not use other countries work to benefit us?

P: Aye, there’s no point in reinventing the wheel

P: Find out what they actually do instead of, like you say, try reinventing the wheel

P: I think if you make the area user friendly people will use it, do you know, that’s the bottom line

P: I mean the proms a long, long place. It’s not just the beach.

P: And everybody’s got a right to be there so you’ve got to all appreciate each other and I think that’s where it is all going wrong, people think – it’s mine, I am the cyclist or I am the pedestrian, you’ve got to appreciate one another haven’t you and think that’s what’s being lost

P: There’s a lot of runners go on the promenade as well they use it as a …

P: Well we’re getting running rage now aren’t we so you know this is the trouble

DP: Ok… I think

P: Another thing you could put on that walkway down that front towards the burn is a dog wlaking area rather than them fouling along the promenade

DP: Ok so are we talking about a dog park, dog toilet something like that?

P: Yeah, don’t know how many people would use however you’re giving them the chance

P: It might cut down on the fouling, especially, I don’t like taking the kids down the beach because it’s full of dog poo

P: I don’t know how many we’ve actually got in Edinburgh, there’s no many

DP: Dog parks?

P: Specific dog walking areas

DP: I only know of one that definitely is but other than that…

P: Where’s that about?

DP: I’ll be damned if I can remember now…

P: I don’t know if Victoria Parks got something

DP: I can’t remember off the top of my head

P: It would be interesting

P: But there you go, you put in a block of flats, some people will have dogs

DP: Ok, so were there any other concerns that, based on our discussion, or based on other thoughts that you had anything that you wanted to raise about the development? Any concerns you had?

P: Construction traffic coming in whilst it’s on-going, there’s obviously a lot of houses down there, routes to schools, things like that, the actual developer has to take control of these construction works because you could have likes of the tipper trucks and all the rest of it running about there whilst it’s time for kids going to school so you have to take that into consideration as well, deliveries after going in time for school, no deliveries when they’re going in

P: I think that’s down to the developer though eh?

P: You see it all the time though, you see seven o’clock in the morning trucks turning up

P: That’s the trouble, they take the risk, try to beat the traffic

P: But it needs managed properly because a lot of construction sites aren’t managed properly, they put everything on paper in place but actually on site it’s completely different

P: If they had a layby area just out of town and any deliveries of they’re coming from afar they can pull over and they can stop there

P: I think there’s plenty areas along Seafield Road

P: There’s a lorry park as well at Harry Lauder

DP: Ok, and just sort of connected that, I suppose the issue for Tumbles and the relocation of Tumbles if it were sold within the site is whether Tumbles closes and then the new site is built or whether there is a new property developed before…

P: I think if it closes you’ll lose the clientele that it’s got and regular customers

DP: So, my question is, is it more important for that new site to be opened first so that there is a continuation of service…

Group: Yes

DP: Even though what you have is a children’s facility there and potentially a lot of development next door

P: You’ve potentially got the walkway down the side here so if Tumbles was going to be dropped in mid plot so it’s not taking up the residential view of the sea or the commercials next to the high street drop it in here, they’ve got the access so that can be safe access for the children and their families to go in and out

P: I think you’d probably see more people going to a new building, everyone gets excited – have you seen that new place

P: Generate income

P: But if you close it down and then they have to wait people just get out the habit, you’d have to start from scratch again

P: People would find alternative places and I think it’s be more difficult to start up again

DP: So, that seems pretty clear, you’re saying the new site must be open first. So, that’s really everything that I had to cover with you today. Sorry, so any other concerns or thoughts about the site, or questions indeed as well

P: I think obviously that it’s a nice area, you know, it’s family friendly and I’m just a bit concerned about, I don’t know how to say this, that they put in loads of Council houses and put in as we know Councils go on points it’s not maybe families that can’t afford to buy, I know a lot of families are stuck in private lets and they can’t get a social house you know and it goes on how many points, drug, alcohol dependents they always bump you up the list and I just wouldn’t like to see a lot of one bedroom flats with social problems being housed there…

P: Just trying to keep the front clean…

P: Trying to keep it clean and I’m not meaning it in a negative way there’s plenty other areas where these people live and things but it’s just it’s a nice area, if you’re going to have a children’s play centre next to it keep it clean, keep the junkies and the alcoholics away from it if possible, just cos you’re going to end up with social issues maybe congregating, and I’m not meaning that in a bad way please don’t take it the wrong way but it’s just it would be nice to see families in there, d’you know

P: If they put a new park in, kids wouldn’t want to go down because there’s…

P: Needles and bottles and all the rest of it….

P: There’s a lack of housing for single people isn’t there, albeit not youngsters older people as well

P: Yeah… and even allowing more elderly in there but just trying to… and I know it’s difficult you know in today’s day but I just think it would be nice to see it as a vibrant area you know, is that bad, did anybody take that offencively no?

DP: Everything you’ve said is anonymous and as we said at the beginning everyone is allowed to have views there’s no right or wrong answers to any of these things

P: See how you said about bringing jobs to the local community and stuff like that does this actually bring that much cos I don’t know, I don’t know much about the building trade but whenever you past new builds it’s quite often English accents you hear even if they go to the pubs and stuff so they must bring up people to work, so does it actually bring in that much? That’s probably nothing to do with this but…

DP: That’s an interesting question, I suppose what I would say, because I don’t have the answer, what I would say back is, is it important that the site would be bringing in a certain amount of local people to work on it rather than just anyone

P: It would be good to see local trades benefit from it

P: From my experience in the construction industry they for all the subbys, they’re on at us constantly – do you have any apprentices, you know brought in locally and we wouldn’t put them on site because of the risk factor involved, heavy lifting would be dangerous for an inexperienced work but even if we have them in a factory in Nottingham or Northern Ireland they will get that information and they will put that down against the area so usually it’s just a paperwork exercise they’ll put a number against it and it’s not actually…

P: Even sub-contracting to local firms, firms that are based within the area, electrical sub-contractors and things like that why not develop their side of things? Let their businesses grow cos that’s always going to be good cos they’ll take on from the local schools later on and use the apprenticeship schemes and things like that, why not use them to harness the development that would be my preferred option

[chatter]

P: It could be part and parcel of the process for the Council putting stipulations in you must use Edinburgh based companies, that sort of thing

P: The architect and engineer behind it would have to dictate it. To dictate construction methods that are from Scotland based companies rather than…

P: Well look at the new bridge, new bride all the steel was from China

P: How many steel contractors do we have…

[chatter]

DP: I understood the Chinese were going to do it much cheaper than we could

Group: General agreement

P: That’s what it all comes down to…the one thing I was going to bring up and it’s nothing to do with construction or anything like that it was back to the play area sort of thing, further down at Musselburgh I take my granddaughter there as well and there’s a enclosed sandpit that they have all different toys and climbing things on there and it is absolutely jammed on a day like this, you know really, there’s a little ice cream van along there, so you could do something off the promenade like that further along

P: Good idea yeah… you ever been to digger land, they’re at it for hours

P: Yeah it is really good, it looks nice

DP: Ok, Saty any questions that you wanted to ask the group?

DP: No, ok so, my last question to everybody, taking everything we’ve discussed into account how do you feel about the sale of the Westbank Street site?

P: As long as it’s done quick, reasonably priced and done correctly, fine

P: In keeping with the local area

P: As long as it looks nice

P: None of these out of place weird architectural designs

P: No the same architects as the St James Centre

P: The turd totem that’s going in its place, sorry…laughter

P: Portobello has its own image and it should be in keeping with that

P: I think quicks right cos if Powerleague stops and it becomes run down it just becomes an eyesore cos these places can lie closed for two years before anything’s done with it

SK: Do you mean quick in terms of once we allocate the developer in terms of them developing that land?

P: In terms of getting them in or even keeping the stuff running while they’re sort of… I don’t know how long these things take, they probably do take…

P: If they did that with Tumbles though that would keep it, they’d have to keep it clear wouldn’t they. And I think you know it doesn’t matter where Tumbles is cos you’re not going for the view, you’re going for what’s inside

P: It could be underground as well…

P: [laughter] it could be on stilts

DP: OK, well that’s everything, thank you very much for coming along.