

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Monday 17 February 2020

Held in Blackhall St Columba's Church Small Hall

Present : Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Martin Riddell (Treasurer), James McLennan, Duncan Osler, Grant Roger, Michael Cockburn, Darlene Jeffrey; Inverleith Ward Councillor - Hal Osler; Sgt Aaron Chadha (Police Scotland); 6 members of the public.

Apologies : Inverleith Ward Councillors Max Mitchell, Iain Whyte, Deidre Brock MP, Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP.

Police Scotland

Sgt Aaron Chadha reported on the measures being taken at Craigleith Retail Centre to reduce shop lifting. Police Scotland is working closely with shopkeepers, particularly the security staff in individual stores so there is a clear message which discourages shop lifting.

There has been a spate of shed break-ins in the Ravelston area, targeting bicycles. No major issues with Ravelston Woods although patrolled regularly .

A new call handling system is to be introduced in Edinburgh in April following its successful roll out in Glasgow. There will be more officers in the contact centre who will judge and rate calls from both 999 and 101 numbers in terms of seriousness and immediacy. Police Scotland are holding a workshop for community councils on 28 February.

Speeding issues - more officers now trained on speed cameras and increased surveillance will be stepped up on Craigmillar Road and Strachan Road. Speeding on Orchard Road also noted as being a problem.

Meeting of 20 January 2020 - minutes approved.

Matters arising :- Community Garden - now confirmed by the resident proposing it that it would focus on allotments.

Choices for City Plan 2030 - consultation by City Council. The report addresses 16 issues for inclusion in the forthcoming update of the local development plan - City Plan 2030 - and provides choices for the status quo. During discussion the following points were aired.

There was general support for the report in terms of building as many as houses as possible on brown field sites supported by an efficient bus service and possibly extended transport network. The proposal to support up to 42000 proposed new houses or flats which will be at higher densities of up to 100 units per hectare, and which will have up to 5 hectares of open space, was noted. It was also noted that within the Craigleith/

Blackhall built up area there is limited open space - what would be the implications of the policy ?

There would also be an increase from 25% to 35% in affordable housing. Delivery of some of the housing will be dependent on a successful compulsory purchase order (CPO). With so many schools at capacity, it was not clear how the housing will be delivered without new schools or extensions to accommodation. For example, Flora Stevenson School does not have the space to extend and it is unclear how the sites identified at Royal Victoria Hospital and adjacent to former Police HQ could be developed in the absence of educational and other infrastructure.

In focusing on new developments and change, little is said about established communities such as Blackhall and Craigleith. With more developments in to the west of the city including Kirkliston and South Queensferry, main impact on the CC area will be transport related and increased congestion on Queensferry Road. Likewise the implications for the open space and green belt sites in the current local development plan is not clear.

Discussion suggested the report is in some ways aspirational and not forthcoming on how it would be funded.

Draft City Mobility Plan - consultation by City Council

The draft City Mobility Plan is intended to support the transport elements of the City Plan 2030. It was noted that it had some strong themes - city centre transformation, extending the tram network including to Granton and the Royal Infirmary, increase in bus lanes and cycle routes, and an aspiration for most journeys to provide for a 20 minute accessibility.

Discussion noted the high level of transport intentions but the view was that a lot of questions were not answered.

Limiting through bus services in the city centre was seen as being counter intuitive if the intention was to increase the use of buses and limit car parking both in the city centre and at new developments. This works against the City Plan 2030.

Queensferry Road was seen by City Engineers as an arterial route connecting to major routes to and from the city. But such a view does not take account of existing communities along the road. With increased congestion on Queensferry Road in the future, for Blackhall it was not a City Mobility Plan but more a City Congestion Plan.

In both consultations it was agreed that there were many complicated issues, but comments should focus on local issues or the impact on Craigleith and Blackhall. It was also agreed that draft responses would be prepared by the Chair and the Secretary for consideration at the next meeting.

Chair Report

Stuart Pinkerton said that he would link in with Blackhall School as a potential group for inclusion on the community council. Blackhall Sports was also suggested by Darlene Jeffrey.

Other Community Council Matters

Alan Denham referred to the seminar on the Police Scotland CAM system for assessing 999 and 101 calls on 28 February. There was to be a Scottish Government seminar on Community Right to Buy on 7 April.

City Councillors Reports

Councillor Hal Osler said that the City Council's budget is to be considered on 20 February. £35 million of savings have to be found. Each party publishes their proposals on 18 February. Initial proposals from the SNP/Labour Administration include cuts to community policing, £0.5million cut to Edinburgh Leisure, 1% cut to education budget - equivalent to £10k per school which will impact on, say, employment of temporary teachers, equipment for pupils.

Any Barnett formula increases in Scotland arising from the forthcoming Westminster budget will not necessarily flow to local councils.

Discussion referred to the forthcoming tourist tax - but Councillor Osler said that it is at least 2 years away.

AOCB

Orchard Park - local residents were holding a meeting at the same time as the community council meeting. Agreed more information would be sought.

Lidl - recent refusal of planning permission was based on policies RET 1 and 4. The applicant is likely to resubmit. The view during discussion was that an occupied shop was preferable to an empty shop.

Strachan Garden/Strachan Road junction - a blocked gully drain and flooded road was raised by a local resident - it has been problematic for many years and despite efforts to clear the blockage, the problem returns. Continued reporting of the problem was recommended.

Next meeting : Monday 16 March 2020 at 7.30pm Blackhall St Columba's Church

Alan Denham, Secretary
18 February 2020