

MINUTES

Monday 25 September 2023, 6:30 pm, online

LLCC Members Present: Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Angus Hardie, Barbara Kerr, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Jim Scanlon (Chair)

From Leith Harbour & Newhaven CC – Douglas Tharby (Chair), Neil Tulloch

Councillors: Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Susan Rae

MP - Deidre Brock MP

Three members of the public

Minute Takers: Gail Clapton & Sally Millar

1. **Welcome and Apologies** –Chair welcomed attendees. Apologies were received from Amy Fairbairn, Eileen Simpson, Teresa Perchard, Councillor Katrina Faccenda

2. **Adoption of Minutes** Adoption of Minutes of August 2023 meeting proposed by Gail Clapton and seconded by Abigail Cunningham. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

3. **Police Scotland Report** - No officers present, no report sent

4. **A presentation was delivered by Alex Orr, Orbit Communications; Paul Scott of Scott Hobbs Planning; and Kirsty Jeffrey, 56three Architects re proposed redevelopment of Daltons metal recycling yard at 52/66 Salamander Street.**

There was a lively discussion about various elements of the designs, which are currently at the PAN stage. A public consultation had been held on 20 September, with a further one planned for 18th October, at Leith Library. A formal Planning Application will be submitted in late October, potentially to be decided by Spring/ Summer 2024.

Kirsty led the presentation with a PowerPoint – covering building layout and height, design features etc. Top of buildings will be set back. Details available of their website <https://www.daltonregen.co.uk/>

Many questions were asked - a few examples / summary below:

Why is only 25% of the housing planned as ‘affordable housing’, when new City Plan will require 35%? No satisfactory answer to this – developers hoping to slide application in before the City Plan becomes official policy? Strong feeling from the community that application should be based on an assumption of 35% affordable housing.

What is the meaning of “intermediate rent”? Answer - not determined yet – this is a new term used by the build- to-rent sector - one of the various wording alternatives for mid-market rent? Does this equate with ‘affordable housing’? -No

Query about the Salamander Place side of the building – are the developers aware of the Leith Connections Phase 3 plan to run a cycle path along here – how will there be room for the trees shown in the design? How will the pavement be wide enough for pedestrians? Should the building not be set back further from the road? Answer - this is just at ‘concept planning’ stage and details are not available at this stage.

Comments on height and massing – too much. - 8 storeys is too high – the local standard varies between 5-7 storeys – it is not acceptable to ‘up the ante’ like this.

Salamander Street is known to be badly polluted, building high like this will create a narrow ‘canyon effect’ that will funnel pollution.

Maintenance of public realm around the buildings will lie with whoever ends up developing and owning the two blocks.

Query re no car parking spaces – it is just assumed that no residents will have one. But that can't be enforced – residents will use the free parking in the nearby RopeWorks to the detriment of existing residents. Community felt there should at least be disabled parking spaces and spaces for works / maintenance vans, deliveries etc.

Question about what account has been taken of City goals for net zero or flood risk / flood plain planning Answer – at the time of the application, a full flood risk assessment will be undertaken and floor levels will take the results into account.

Comments raised about general housing crisis, and an objection to the plans for purpose-built student accommodation. Students do not necessarily want (and cannot afford) PBSA. There is a huge need for residential accommodation - including for students – but why is it assumed that they have to be in specialised accommodation (divisive), why not build 'ordinary accommodation' which both students and other people and families can access, which would integrate the community better. Answer – there is very little student accommodation in this part of the city, compared to other parts of the city. This was disputed by the community, especially in the light of the new plans coming forward for the Baltic Street site. Student accommodation is problematical because there is no Uni anywhere near Leith (nearest is Queen Margaret in Musselburgh, but tram does not go there nor do any of the local buses). There is a serious lack of infrastructure in the area - doctors, dentists etc. Told that students could drive new prosperity in the area.

Deirdre Brock MP mentioned that the current design is 60% student & 40% other housing which does not comply with council policy - guidance is for 50/50 floor space. Developers say this was accepted by council, so far but there are ongoing talks with planning department.

Talk of commercial units and a café on the sunny side (? What sun?) and other professional units on the ground floor. Ben MacPherson MSP has been told there is interest from smaller artisan businesses – these units will be rented out by the building owner – still talks underway.

Discussion about building materials - details not available at this stage.

Bike storage raised – only within buildings for residents but potentially some in courtyard areas again for residents but could consider incorporating public storage along Salamander Street frontage.

Question - clarification needed on the two slides showing a building overlaying an access area – told this was an error.

Question raised about stakeholder engagement? Told consultation had taken place with SEPA, Scottish Water and technical aspects and also happy to speak to anyone else. No contact with Living Rents as such or any other community groups but have engaged with MSPs, Leith Chamber of Commerce (?) and CCs and if Living Rent wanted to forward details, they would be happy to talk.

Question raised re heating of buildings – eco-friendly, heat pumps? Told not gas and will be looking at ways to heat within sustainability aspect.

ACTION: LLCC will send in a written response from the CC

5. Update from Elected Representatives as available.

Councillor Chas Booth reported that in spite of recommendations for rejection, planning permission had in fact been granted for and extension and building of residential flats at the rear of the Bullfinch pub. He had opposed it because SEPA had had opposed as too great a flood risk, but had been outvoted.

He has set up a working group re the impact of construction on communities to try and encourage developers to be considerate re noise etc. Covered energy efficiency in Conservation Areas – will report next month.

He reminded everyone to complete the consultation about the Leith Links Activity Hub – open until 21 October.

Deidre Brock MP raised the issue of a worrying increase in shoplifting and abusive behaviour from youths in shops. She had met with staff in Morrisons Ferry Road who had been traumatised by a recent event She has also been meeting with Police Scotland and staff of other retail outlets, and with local high schools - social media an issue – flash mobs in some cases. Mentioned Romanes & Paterson in Princes Street essentially being looted. She hopes to meet again with police etc to gauge effects of measures being taken.

6. Open Floor – no additional issues raised by members of the public

7. No other **Planning** matters raised in addition to the Salamander Place discussion earlier.

8. Transport, Travel & Mobility

Miles Wilkinson has been invited to next meeting. There will be a live consultation on the latest ETRO which gives an opportunity to feedback on the latest changes, including partial closure of Tolbooth Wynd, bus gate on Links Place, contraflow of cyclists. Consultation is open from 9 October until 8 April 2024 – all should comment, see <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cycling-walking-projects-1/leith-connections/5>

As well as Council collecting comments, and also collecting ‘hard data’ from monitoring exercises (yet to be enumerated in detail), the Community Council wishes to collect the views of local people by means of an online survey on how the LTN and the CPZ are affecting people. Barbara and Sally have been working on latest refinements and final version is nearly ready to go out. It was suggested sharing the draft questionnaire with Miles so that he is aware of it. The results ultimately will of course be shared with CEC.

ACTION: Barbara and Sally to finalise and share final version with Miles Wilkinson.

9. Leith Links Park

£12K to spend for Community Benefit – updated Deirdre Brock MP on current ideas and plans relating to Proclaimers money– already had lots of imaginative seating suggestions and also potential for seeking match funding or joint fundraising for something larger such as a bandstand or modern equivalent of a performance space – needs landscape architects but there is a lack of money for a large project. We may make application to the Sustrans ‘Art Roots’ funding stream. A meeting will take place soon between LLCC and CEC to discuss.

Public Toilets - Chair asked Cllr Chas Booth about the fire-raising incident at the toilets – what happened, what damage has occurred, did Police Scotland catch anyone, will the toilets re-open?

ACTION: Chas will check out and report.

Arboretum -There are still no paths, seating or interpretive boards as promised in the original designs. Chair advised he had had a reply from Scott Thomson of Parks Dept. to his enquiry on this topic and will forward this on – apparently, they plan to put medallions on tree identifying their genus, but the educational materials and other planned features seem to have disappeared off the radar....

ACTION: Chair to follow this up further.

10. AOCB

Leith Chooses – The theme for 2023/2024 is ‘People Make Leith’. Applications are open until 10 October 2023 (extended to 24 October 2023). A support session for applicants took place 20 September, and other support is available as requested.

11. Next meeting: Monday 30 October 2023, 6:30pm, online

