

We are grateful for all the feedback received via the community council's website and note a number of recurring themes.

1. Artists' Colony

During our public consultation event we spoke to a number of the artists working within the Out of the Blue facility including Rob Hoon. We have been able to introduce Rob to David Rule at City of Edinburgh Council Economic Development team to explore alternative premises for their use. Although the council does have a number of premises e.g. Leith and Meadowbank used by other artists, it became clear that Out of the Blue would prefer to keep their artists together as a group and preferably in Portobello where many of them live. As a result we understand that they have identified potential premises at the vacant Phoenix House in Portobello and that they hope to have discussions with the owner with a view to seeking short-term tenancy until such time as the owner brings forward plans for the building's redevelopment.

2. Traffic congestion/parking

These comments are also noted and will be addressed fully in the Transport Assessment which will accompany the masterplan application. While traffic counts have already been undertaken which will help inform this report, the data is still being analysed prior to completion of the study. The scope of the assessment was scoped with The City of Edinburgh Council and will assess the potential impact of the development on the surrounding road network.

3. Design/architecture of both the residential proposal and the Aldi store

This has been the subject of a presentation to the City of Edinburgh Council's Urban Design Review Panel whose comments and suggestions have been discussed further with the council planners. A number of points suggested by the panel have been incorporated within the overall site layout. In general, the Panel welcomed the development proposals and its regeneration potential, offering specific praise for the efforts by Aldi and Cruden to work together and deliver a coherent and coordinated masterplan for the whole site. Following the Panel discussions and also in response to comments received from our consultation event, further changes to the scheme have been introduced including the creation of an additional pedestrian route through the site to improve local permeability and the use of brick materials on the Aldi store, to match the proposed materials of the wider site and better reflect the industrial heritage of this part of Portobello.

4. Impact on schools/doctors surgeries

The project team is currently involved in discussions with CEC in respect of the contributions that might be necessary towards school places based on need within the local area.

These discussions will not be completed until after the application has been formally lodged because the scale of requirement is still unclear. We understand CEC is involved in a wider exercise looking at such issues across South East Edinburgh in light of the educational infrastructure needs that will be generated by the significant growth in population projected for the city in future years. This comprehensive piece of work includes consideration of catchment zones and school capacities across the city.

Following the outcome of this process, any contributions that are necessary to address capacity constraints will be concluded through a formal legal agreement between the applicants and CEC.

5. No need for another supermarket/impact on the High Street

The planning history of the site, including specifically the Reporter's comments from the Public Local Inquiry in 2005, concluded that the area would benefit from additional convenience shopping provision, to deliver greater choice and improve the sustainability of food shopping trips in Portobello. Furthermore, the Committee report for the refusal of the Lidl scheme at Inchview Terrace also recognised that the Baileyfield site offered the most sequentially suitable location for a new foodstore that could benefit the wider town centre.

We are therefore confident that our proposals are of an appropriate scale and quality to complement the range and diversity of retailers within Portobello, whilst assisting to retain a greater level of expenditure within the catchment, with opportunities to benefit the wider town centre, through the generation of additional linked trips with these businesses.

In terms of other community engagement - I have had an introductory meeting with Towerbank Playspace Group to understand their plans and aspirations.

Also, the project team was able to brief Sheila Gilmore MP on the project.

I hope we have addressed the principal points which will be fully addressed in the application detail. Meanwhile we continue to have the general support of the Portobello community. Feedback from our public consultation event shows 71% supportive of our plans and a further 18% neutral with only 11% stating they were not supportive. This will be included in the consultation report accompanying the application.

We have targeted Friday 5th September to lodge a Planning Permission in Principle application for both Cruden and Aldi. The Aldi plans will be in detail while the Cruden application will be in outline.

Finally, we appreciate your interest in these plans and do hope that we can continue our consultations throughout the planning process.

Kind regards
James

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