



PCC Community Consultation

1st February 2014, Scotmid, Portobello.

Portobello Community Council hosted a consultation exercise at Scotmid, Portobello on Saturday 1st of February 2014. The consultation ran from 10:30 am until 12:30pm, traditionally a busy time in the store when local people do their shopping. During the two hours over 100 local residents were consulted.

The vast majority of participants lived in the area, while four people had travelled from elsewhere (three from Leith and one from further afield).

The aim of the morning was to gain some insight into what people valued about living in the PCC area and what would they hope to change or improve if they could.

People entering the store were asked to think about two things they liked about living in the Portobello area and what two things they would change or improve. Answers were collected on post it notes and later arranged into themes.

A fairly even spread of men and women were engaged and provided responses. A variety of ages took part in the consultation, from a small number (7) of young children to adults aged over 65 (approx. 20).

When asked what they liked about living in the area four main themes participants identified were:

Community Spirit

Almost everyone who took part spoke about the community spirit that they believe to be present in Portobello. This included friendly and supportive neighbours and social groups, a diverse population, and a feeling of “being in the country” or a “small village”. Portobello residents liked the fact that the community seemed interested in local issues and were passionate / enthusiastic about where they lived, with a number of local initiatives.

Parks / Prom and Open Spaces

People recognised that the PCC area has plenty of outdoor spaces that on the whole are well looked after and provide great assets for the local community. Parks were mentioned as well as the Promenade and other open spaces. People stated that they enjoy using these areas all year round.

Location

Respondents spoke about the pleasure of coastal living and the proximity to the sea. They liked that Portobello was near enough to the city for an easy visit, for example to leisure and cultural opportunities (e.g. the Theatre), or

active travel but also close enough to East Lothian to “get away” in a short time.

Local Shops / High Street

Having a local high street / town centre and market were mentioned frequently, as people appreciated being able to shop locally and not having to go elsewhere. Alongside this local services (leisure centre, pools) and local primary schools were also mentioned, as well as “lots to do with children” generally.

It was noted that in general people were very positive about living in the PCC area and were glad to engage with the consultation. As part of the research local residents were then asked to think about what could be changed to improve living in the area.

Again four main themes were identified, as follows:

Outdoors

Local residents would like to see tidier streets in general. This includes less dog mess and less litter.

Alongside this people would like to see improvements in what is available outdoors. For example more to do at the beach / Promenade area, including more shops/ cafes etc. More infrastructure to encourage activity and play for all ages and specifically teenagers. The need for environmental improvements such as planting and better street lighting were also mentioned, as was an upgrade to the park in front of Towerbank (locally known as the Fish Park) and improved public toilets. One person complained about begging.

Traffic

Many people spoke about traffic problems in the area. This included slow moving traffic at peak times and generally too much traffic on Portobello High Street. Specific reference was made to Brighton Place as being particularly busy (and the cobbles being an issue for both noise and cyclists) and also there was support for a pedestrian crossing at Abercorn Terrace by St Philips Church. Better parking was also suggested as something that would improve the area.

Some commented that Portobello was not pedestrian friendly enough and not cycle friendly. Suggestions included a cycle lane on the Prom and a Portobello cycle map. Others wanted to see the train station re-opened and a bus service from the Christians to the High Street.

High School

The need for a new High School for Portobello was also raised with some supporting it to be built on Portobello Park and some saying that it should not be built there and the park should be left as it is. Others stated that they

believed the community had become split over this issue and it would be good to see this improved.

Local Shops

It was recognised that although Portobello has its own high street, which is a positive thing, the shops could be improved. Many mentioned the demise of Woodwares as a loss to the community and the fact there are less specialist shops than there were before. Respondents claimed that there are too many charity shops in the area and too many empty shops. Some suggested doing more with the empty shops e.g. low rental for community use etc.

A Portobello music festival and Portobello beer festival were also mentioned as things that people would like to see happen.

Three people said they wanted no change to how Portobello is currently.