

## **DDCC MEETING, 3 APRIL 2023 (by zoom)**

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: Constance Newbould, Helen McKay, Jo Gillies, Ailsa Carlisle, Stewart Clark, Pippa Thomson, Graeme Buchanan, Gaetan Richards, Victor and Jenny Delima,

In attendance: Paul Johnson, Midlothian Council.

Guests for Item 2: Colin McLachlan, Alex Orr, Rob Newton.

Apologies: Julian Holbrook, Mark Hartree, Tim and Sheree MacKay

2. Plans for residential-led development at Straiton North (land on the opposite side of A701 from the retail park). Guest speakers include Alex Orr (Managing Director Orbit Communications), Robert Newton (Planning Consultant Avison Young), and Colin McLachlan (Straiton Estates).

A Planning Advice Note (PAN) was developed 3 years ago but Straiton Estates have decided to start again. Their proposals are still at an early stage and they haven't submitted a PAN. Once the PAN has been approved they will go through formal consultation. The purpose of the meeting was to get views from DDCC residents.

The area is classified as EC3 mixed use zoning in the most recent development plan (MLDP 2017). There have been delays because the A701 relief road line has not been approved. Although the more northerly line of the A701 seems most likely it may yet be adjusted. The full extent of the development will be confirmed once the route of the realigned A701 is known. The Park & Ride would be entry point to the site.

Circumstances have changed over the past 3 years. It is very unlikely that the original nature and scale of office use is now justified by market conditions, so the focus is now a homes-led plus mixed use which is consistent with the 20-min neighbourhood approach emphasised in the recent NPF4. The developers see this as a Gateway to the South. A Master Plan will be required. So far, the site and context have been appraised and note constraints due to mine shafts, high pressure gas main and electricity lines.

From East going West the proposal has 2.5 hectares for employment; the Park & Ride will be combined with an active travel hub; 400 new homes; mixed use neighbourhood pod centre; central open space; biodiversity park and wetland. There is possibly another point of access from further north on existing A701 or a roundabout on the new relief road. Midlothian Council would like to bring priority to public transport and improvement to the A701. The purported economic benefits are from construction; the employment zone; and rates and revenues.

During the Q&A the following issues were covered:

- Housing. Social housing is expected to be 25% of the total number of houses. The proposal would be mainly semi-detached and larger detached houses but there may be flats above the hub. The developers are confident that they could sell 400 houses. DDCC noted that this area was not zoned for housing originally and Midlothian has already exceeded housing targets.

- Other uses may be a retail store (more industrial developments more likely on the east of the A701 where the developers also own land). They are open to suggestions of including a doctors or dentists in the neighbourhood centre.
- Financial aspects. The developers expect to be asked to contribute to the Relief Road. They can develop up to the road line even if road goes ahead.
- Park and Ride. The developers own the Park and Ride. It is underused and the building has been damaged by storms. It may be reduced in size.
- Active travel. Images show linkages, which could be footpaths and/or cycle paths, going across the Bing to join Old Pentland Road.
- We were sceptical of the proposal's sustainability and biodiversity value (because of disturbance and proximity to the by-pass, and the A701). The developers indicated that their plans are at an outline stage so it is too early to be specific about biodiversity and sustainability.

### 3. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes were ratified by Ailsa Carlisle and seconded by Constance Newbould.

Actions arising:

- CN has spoken to Bear re the impact of Snowsports developments on road safety.
- Midlothian has definitely exceeded its housing target. The 2026-2036 target is for 8800 houses.

### 4. Police Report.

Because of another change in staff the report is minimal, and only specifically mentions that on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, a motorbike collided with a vehicle on the A702 near to Hillend. Both drivers were fine, however, the biker failed to provide details and left the scene. The bike held no valid insurance or MOT. Roads policing are dealing with the incident and have submitted crime reports for the offences. Police Scotland community policing officers are also aware of the recent accidents on the A702 Biggar Road, including the fatality, and are arranging speed checks on this road.

### 5. Boghall Bridge rebuild.

Tim McKay was quoted £900 for materials but potentially some savings could be made. All present were willing to part fund its repair by providing £200-300 from DDCC funds providing other stakeholders gave approx. equivalent support. **ACTION:** Jo and Constance to liaise with Tim.

### 6. AOB

There is a proposal to install traffic lights at the triple junction. Transport Scotland have asked if it will be used by horses. **ACTION:** All residents to inform Jo of any equestrian needs.

Date of next meeting: 7.30pm, Monday 5 June 2023 – **in person at Steading.**

In general, meetings will take place at 7.30 on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in every second month for 2023. For the coming period these will alternate between zoom and in person meetings: 7 August (zoom); 2 October (in person); 4 December (zoom).