

COCKENZIE COMMUNITY FORUM

MEETING – Wednesday 30 October 2019, 1900-2045 hrs, Cockenzie House

ACTION NOTE

Present: Ferhan Ashiq, Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership (Chair)
Susan Smith, Economic Development, East Lothian Council
David Ostler, Coastal Regeneration Forum
Cllr Neil Gilbert, East Lothian Council
Cllr Fiona O'Donnell, East Lothian Council
Brian Weddell, Chair, Prestonpans Community Council
Ray Montgomery, Cockenzie Project Manager, East Lothian Council
Keith Dingwall, Service Manager Planning, East Lothian Council
Calum Miller, Prestonpans Community Council
Gillian Stewart, Cockenzie West Tenants' & Residents' Association
Liz Clark, Cockenzie & Port Seton Community Council
Cllr Lachlan Bruce, East Lothian Council
Isobel Robertson, Cockenzie & Port Seton Community Council

1. Apologies

Apologies from Bryan Hickman, Sheila Chambers, Sandra King, Arran Johnston, Cllr McMillan, Gareth Jones, Philippa Barber, Philip Wark, Cllr Innes.

2. Action note of previous meeting

Page 2, 2nd para – should be attributed to BH not BW. Otherwise approved by all.

3. Matters arising

DO asked that his comment on the possible environmental impact from a port development not recorded on the note of the meeting be added, namely that when ships of size powered by electricity touch the water, they are powered by lateral thrusters and azipods generating 45k of horsepower meaning excoriating effects on the seabed from vessels traversing it.

BW commented on ongoing discussions with Forth Ports and lack of detail on the nature of these discussions.

4. Planning update

KD was introduced and provided an update. With regard to NPF4, the Scottish Government has started to prepare this, a long-term spatial plan for Scotland that will ensure sustainable economic growth and that will encompass Scottish Planning Policy. The Scottish Government is aiming to undertake initial engagement between January and April 2020 before a consultation draft is laid before the Scottish Parliament in September 2020. There will be a public consultation around the same time and the final version is hoped to be laid before the Scottish Parliament in 2021.

DP added that this week's report to East Lothian Council – add link – on the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESES CRD) and the Regional Growth Framework to be developed provides the local context for KD's comments. The Council is seeking to influence thinking around NPF4 and also in respect of the adjacency of the new settlement. Technical work to be undertaken will prove the concept and ensure the supporting infrastructure is in

place. As the Strategic Development Plan was rejected by Scottish Ministers, the Regional Spatial Strategy will be key.

BW asked about the scope of Greater Blindwells – DP referred to SDP2, namely up to 6000 properties and a site of regional significance. It requires significant infrastructure. With no approved SDP2, reference is made to the previous plan of 1600 units plus eastward expansion with greater number.

CM asked about Planning approval for the units there and DP was able to confirm that Planning Permission in Principle has been approved for 1600 homes. Detailed applications are required to cover temporary infrastructure use and housing. CM said that Prestonpans Community Council has concerns about pressures on public transport and roads in Prestonpans from the increased population. Consultation under the 2008 LDP was undertaken with a rail halt referenced – add link. DP was also able to confirm that the scope of Greater Blindwells is between Bankton and Gladsmuir roundabouts.

FOD asked about the recent planning application for housing on employment land and the decision not to grant permission by East Lothian Council that was overturned by the Scottish Government. DP said that an up-to-date LDP with an effective housing supply is the best way of responding to such appeals – improving job density by protecting employment land is important.

CM asked about demand and comments from developers that there is insufficient demand/land for employment sites in East Lothian. DP said that ensuring housing land supply is a statutory obligation on local authorities and referred to significant opportunities offered by Cockenzie, QMU, Blindwells. CM concluded on the importance of having premises for business growth.

BW referred to a previous comment about resources within the Planning Service and commented that one reason for RedRock being granted Planning Permission by the Reporter was the lack of identified use by East Lothian Council. DP commented that the Masterplan was an important consideration and that the Council needs to determine site uses. Ambition and vision will be demonstrated through LDP2. DP also referred to the ESESCRD project that will bring 35 acres of land at QMU for jobs and business. CM commented on City Deal and perceived impact on East Lothian.

RM added that NPF4 presents the opportunity to link Blindwells, Cockenzie, St Joe's. DP referred to City Deal monies outlined in the council report and that Blindwells is a key strategic site.

KD turned to relevant Planning applications. The Skyrora application has received a number of representations, mainly objections. There has been a revision to the proposed frequency that has meant a re-consultation, the advert ended on 4 October. A report to Members will be prepared who can determine if the application should be called-off for debate at the Planning Committee.

With regard to the RedRock substation application, the company's intention is to submit a Planning application during November and KD added that the condition discharge work is ongoing.

CM is concerned about any delay in decision-making and how this could deter investment. FOD said that the reason why the Skyrora application is not going to Planning Committee by 5 November has nothing to do with Planning Service resources and it is hoped that it will be presented at December Planning Committee. LB referred to improving Planning Service performance as chair of PPRC.

5. Community benefits

NG referred to onshore and offshore wind community benefits and to his Motion to East Lothian Council. This covers all of East Lothian but this could be adjusted. Community benefit support from RedRock is not a statutory requirement rather is voluntary. East Lothian Council could facilitate with RedRock. RM added that RedRock was unsuccessful for Contract for Difference funding and is looking at other ways of funding the project meaning a delay to timescale. CM sought and got confirmation that there is a date in place for expiration of option. NG asked if RedRock could set up its own energy company and RM confirmed.

6. Site update

Technical work

RM spoke to this item. There is continuing interest in the site and mentioned several examples as well as interest from the consular corps and for filming purposes.

RM said that there is ongoing engagement with Forth Ports but the Council has decided to progress with an independent port study with a report expected by Christmas 2019. This will be an initial technical study focussing on engineering options.

BW thanked RM for update and asked about market analysis that will not be considered to any great extent. FOD is of the understanding that the detailed market study will be undertaken after the technical study. CM asked about environmental factors. RM said that an overall cruise/port feasibility study would require three components, namely technical/engineering; environmental; commercial. The current commission is a high level technical/engineering one providing options, modelling and costs, it will touch on environmental and commercial elements and following consideration of the study, the Council will need to determine if further comprehensive studies need to be undertaken.

LB asked if there have been any further security issues and RM said that there had been none. For ease, FA suggested that communication and queries be addressed him as chair.

7. Engagement with interested parties

Creative Scotland

SS was able to say, as RM had commented earlier, that there remains interest in filming on the Cockenzie site and she remains in touch with Film Edinburgh and others who can assist. RM had mentioned earlier the diversity of interest shown.

8. AOB

FOD's reiterated FA's suggestion about contacting ELC officials through FA as chair. FA thanked officials and referred to competing visions. LB asked if he could advise those interested on the schedule for the technical study and it was noted that this timescale had been highlighted in the Council Chamber. DP concluded that the Cockenzie Community Forum's purpose is keeping community stakeholders informed and up-to-date.

Date of 2020 meetings: Wednesdays 29 January, 29 April and 26 August, in Cockenzie House.

DRAFT