

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Monday 13 December 2021 Held online using Teams

Present - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Martin Riddell (Treasurer), Grant Roger, Darlene Jeffrey, Susie Ross, Duncan Osler, Jim McLennan, Michael Cockburn; Inverleith Ward Councillors Hal Osler, Gavin Barrie; 3 members of the local community

Apologies - Paul Moran, Councillor Max Mitchell

Minutes of 15 November meeting - approved.

City Plan 2030 - Alan Denham had circulated a paper setting out in draft the suggested comments on the consultative draft of the Plan to be submitted on behalf of the Community Council. The paper is attached at Annex A. The comments were approved for submission without amendments.

In discussion it was noted that the reservation of the tram route on Roseburn Cycle and Walkway may be incompatible with its use by pedestrians and cyclists, but given parliamentary approval it was considered this issue would best be addressed when if and when the tram route is extended.

Susie Ross commented on the difficulty in following and understanding the Plan. Councillor Hal Osler said that she totally understood why residents find it hard to follow and comment on as there was very little actual detail in the plan. It was however a significant improvement on previous versions of the Local Development Plan.

Community Council Meetings - in the light of the recent and increasing spread of the Covid-19 Omicron variant, it was agreed to continue meeting online.

Anti-social behaviour - there had been a recent incident of anti social behaviour in Maidencraig Crescent leading to damage to cars and stones being thrown at dwelling windows. Police Scotland had been notified.

Fox Issue in Maidencraig Crescent area - Martin Riddell noted that there had been recent problems with foxes. These animals are becoming an increasing menace for residents. Items are regularly getting stolen from properties and parents of young children are now reluctant to let their kids play unsupervised in gardens. Significantly a 10 year old child had been chased along Maidencraig Crescent by a fox.

Councillor Hal Osler noted that foxes are protected species and are therefore not treated as vermin. But given her concern about the report of a child being chased and the impact on children playing in their own gardens, she would seek advice from Council officials on what can be done to address the problems.

In discussion it was noted that some residents in the local area were feeding foxes, aggravating the problem.

McDonalds Telford Road - it was noted that McDonalds have submitted a planning appeal to the Scottish Government appealing against the refusal of permission by the City

Council to extend drive-thru hours. Following discussion it was noted that although all the original comments were forwarded to the Scottish Government, it was agreed that there was merit in the Community Council submitting additional comments. Alan Denham agreed to follow this up.

City Councillors' Reports

Ravelston Park Nursery - Councillor Gavin Barrie reported back on the Council official's response to a formal complaint regarding the legal procedures. The Council acknowledged the process was at fault and the complainant had accepted that the changes now proposed means the complaint does not need to be taken further.*

* Subsequent to the meeting, the complainant did not accept the accuracy of the Council's statement and further information is awaited from the Council.

Craigeleith Shopping Centre - Councillor Hal Osler said that following the removal of trees providing a screen between the service area and adjacent houses, the centre owner has agreed to some planting to offset the severe pruning. Likewise they accept the brightness of the lights needs to be addressed.

Active travel - the poor access for cyclists was a continuing problem that needed to be addressed.

Sainsbury's deliveries - nearby local residents continue to be affected and disturbed by deliveries during the night. It was noted that the shortage of delivery drivers resulted in Sainsbury's receiving deliveries as and when they can. Susie Ross asked whether there was a narrow band of time when there could be no deliveries. Councillor Barrie agreed to discuss with the local Sainsbury store but if a satisfactory solution cannot be found, it could be addressed as an enforcement issue.

Craigeleith Road closure - Councillor Hal Osler said that the continuing speed of traffic in the Craigeleith Hill area and Orchard Road was matter of concern. Likewise the increasing congestion on Queensferry Road east of the Craigeleith Road junction was now a problem. She said that the Council was open to suggestions to address the problem but they were not prepared to change or remove the Spaces for People dividing bollards.

Ravelston Dykes Road Zebra Crossing - despite frequent reminders to Council officials, Councillor Hal Osler was disappointed that no progress had been made on the repainting and the reinstatement of the white crossing lines.

AOCB - Jim McLennan expressed concern about the slow replacement of a street light in his street following an accident. While the post had been replaced speedily by the Council, the electrical connections had not been made, being the responsibility of Scottish Power

Next meeting - to be held online at 7.30 pm on Monday 17 January 2022 using Teams.

Alan Denham
Secretary
14 December 2021

Annex A - Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council - Draft Comments on City Plan 2030 for Submission to Council before 20 December

Place policies 5 and 6 - Royal Victoria Hospital and Crewe Road South

Place 5 - Royal Victoria Hospital - The Community Council is supportive of the proposed policy framework provided the development principle set out para. a "Deliver a housing led mixed use development in line with density requirements in part 4, table 2" does not lead to an inappropriate scale of development adjacent to existing single and one and half storey housing in Craigleith Hill Gardens and Craigleith Hill Loan which would have a negative impact on existing residential amenity.

The policy should be strengthened to ensure that new development does not become a bad neighbour adjacent to existing housing.

We understand from local residents that the site is also important for wildlife including the presence of badgers and a number of bird species - curlews, oyster catchers, redshanks and godwits. Bats are also present. Some of these are the subject of protection and others are decreasing in numbers. It is notable that they are absent from the list of considerations to be addressed in the Development Principles for the Royal Victoria Hospital site in para 3.34. An explicit reference to the protection of biodiversity (policy Env 21) should be added to the list. Additionally the reference to mature trees should acknowledge their safeguarding through a Tree Preservation Order.

Place 6 - The local community in Craigleith Hill Avenue has suffered from flooding in recent years in periods of very heavy rain when the culverted watercourse under Crewe Road South and the Crewe Road South site (Police Scotland Fettes site) is not able to manage the significant and sudden increases in the volume of rain water. The proposal for Crewe Road South is a huge and welcome improvement compared to that set out in the Choices report with the water course now to be accommodated in a new open river channel.

We note that the policy states that "the developer shall upgrade any remaining length of culvert.....under Crewe Road South.." We recommend the policy wording be strengthened further to say "the developer shall upgrade **and increase the capacity** of any remaining length of culvert....."

Other unnamed locations on the Proposals Map

Hillhouse Road Woods and Site at Craigcrook Road/Queensferry Raod Junction

The Community Council welcomes the continued protection as open space for both sites but questions the main policy support being policies Env 23 and 24 as shown on the Proposals Map. Hillhouse Road Woods (Queensferry Road) opposite Blackhall Library has been identified as a tree covered site on Ordnance Survey maps since 1852. The trees are mature safeguarded by a tree preservation order and with no public access means that the site is also important for biodiversity, albeit not recognised by the City Council. While there is a passing reference to policies Env 20 - Protection of Trees and Woodlands and Env 21 - Protection of Biodiversity, these policies are significantly more important for the continued safeguarding of Hillhouse Road Woods than policy Env 24 and this should be recognised in the City Plan 2030.

Past experience with regard to this site has shown that developers will seek to expose loopholes, arguing that open space which is not accessible to the public has little status or value.

It is therefore notable that a previous developer's aspiration for a care home development on the Hillhouse Road Wood site was dismissed in a planning appeal in 2019 by a Scottish Government Reporter (Planning appeal reference: PPA-230-2250). There has been no change in circumstances since 2019 to overturn that decision in order to justify the clearance of many of the trees on the site and permit development to meet developer's wishes. Tree protection and biodiversity should continue to underpin the continued protection of the open space on this site.

Likewise policy Env 24 has little relevance to the site at the Craigcrook Road/Queensferry Road junction. The maintenance of the remaining trees is important and policy Env 20 is far more relevant. Again the Plan should be adjusted to reflect the local circumstances.

Both sites form part of the wider tree cover along Queensferry Road (including Corstorphine Hill and Davidson's Mains Park) and are important not only aesthetically in providing an impressive entrance to Edinburgh but also in reducing traffic pollution. The continued long term protection of both sites is therefore important including tree cover.

Craigcrook Road 'Horse Field'

Again the Community Council welcomes and supports the continued open space protection of the site including part of the Corstorphine Hill Special Landscape Area and also green belt and the recognition that the site is not appropriate for development.

AWD
7 December 2021

