

## DDCC MEETING, 1 FEBRUARY 2021 (by zoom)

Present: Constance Newbould, Helen McKay, Keith Burwell, Neil Johnston, Robin McBride, Ian Barr, Stuart Thomson, Ailsa Carlisle, Stuart Clark, Gareth Derbyshire, Elizabeth Junor, Jo Gillies, Steve North, Duncan Macuaslan, Pippa Thomson, John McLean, Catriona Umpleby, Anna Henley; Graham Buchanan

For item 1 only: Oliver Munden and Colin McLachlan  
In attendance: Cllr Pauline Winchester, Paul Johnstone (MLC)

1. **Welcome and apologies.**
2. **Planning and Development Guest Speakers:** Oli Munden (Avison Young Planning Consultant) and Colin McLachlan presented current plans for the West Straiton Mixed Use Development 20/00803/PAC <https://planning-applications.midlothian.gov.uk/OnlinePlanning/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QJXZKEKV08B00>  
Dedicated website <http://www.straitonwest.com/>  
Enquiries [Mail@straitonwest.com](mailto:Mail@straitonwest.com)

Colin McLachlan summarised the initial feedback they'd received during and after a consultation by Zoom which was attended by 20 members of the public and generated 50 questions.

The developers' responses to the main points were: the application is not for the whole area owned by West Straiton Park, just the triangle bounded by the new relief road, the A701 and an area to the south (between the bing and the development area under discussion). At the moment, this is generally farmland. The area is allocated for mixed use development e.g. retail and commercial units and housing. There are still two potential routes for the relief road; the plan is based on the more southerly route. They intend to apply for planning in principle this summer which will include access to site, the scale of development, masterplan of linkages, phasing, and developer contributions. At the moment the developers are waiting on an EIA assessment which will establish what is needed.

The developers' own assessment shows 5 possible access points:

- 1 through the Park & Ride
- 2 off the current A701 (one just north of the cottages although this limits the directions at which people can enter and leave, and one from the roundabout)
- 2 off the relief A701 if the southerly route goes ahead; but if northerly route is used they could also have access straight on to bypass.

The development within West Straiton Park will be commercial, hotel, retail and housing. The relief road will be delivered by the council and currently the developers assume the southerly route.

There had been 20 further respondents to the on-line questionnaire. Generally there was a preference to access via the new relief road. Additional uses suggested were community facilities, school, recording studio, and a leisure facility.

Before the next consultation, the developers will take account of the impact on adjacent properties and transport provision.

The following questions were raised and answers given:

- When asked whether the mine workings under the Park and Ride were being taken into account, the response was that the development is sited on the less problematic ground, also the council's road survey has not flagged any problems so the developers are not anticipating problems west of the P&R however intrusive surveys will show the true position. A further point by residents was that the embankments make the area a low point creating a high flood risk. The response was that a flood risk assessment will be needed but they do not anticipate problems.
- In relation to the timetable, the developers plan to submit an in-principle planning proposal in summer 2021 and hope to be given consent in late 2021 which would lead to a second phase application. If this was successful site work would start in 2023/4.
- A question was raised about how the development will affect the general traffic flows in the area, including with the proposed A701 realignment, and if the transport statement could be shared. The developers said that this traffic assessment wouldn't be shared in advance of the initial application being made, but will be made available on planning portal. The importance of a full traffic survey was highlighted, as opposed to simply modelling using old data. Residents also
- expressed a view that pre planning proposal could in effect give the developer a blank cheque regardless of what the community needs. The developers explained that the second detailed application will show what is needed in more detail and options will be narrowed down. In terms of operator interest, the response was that operators don't usually come forward until planning permission has been granted, even so some retail users, and car dealerships have expressed an interest.
- In relation to the phasing of road realignment relative to the development, the developers expect the two to run in parallel, though some development could perhaps go ahead before the road.
- It was confirmed that development funding is available from Straiton Park.
- When asked if any preliminary EIAs have been done, mentioning in particular the quite exceptional flora and fauna to the west, the developers stated that a desktop study and walk over have been done and a full survey will be completed. The developers are working to the southerly route so the wetland will not be affected, but if any ecological issues emerge they'll take them into account.
- The developers plan to run a 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation event in May.

### 3. **Ratification of minutes, December 2020, and update on actions not on agenda**

There were no comments on the minutes; Elizabeth Junor proposed and Duncan Macauslan seconded them.

Actions arising

- Active travel; CN passed on the news that there is only funding to do green paths (Bilson Garage to Roslin Piggery was given as an example), and it was uncertain whether or not we can still have meaningful input.
- It was also confirmed, that the spaces for people proposals for Midlothian were limited. They included cycle lanes on the A703, however it wasn't clear how this would be achieved unless it simply referred to a section of the existing road being identified by painted lines as being for cyclists.
- Phase 3 development at Seafield. SEPA had been sent the additional 56-page report on the impact on drainage to neighbouring areas but the report had not allayed their concerns.
- Helen McKay reported back on her efforts to swap banks in order to benefit from the offer of £1250 to switch. The Co-op Bank required us to be either a

registered charity or operating within the Financial Conduct Authority. Since neither applied to us, she investigated our second-choice option (the Metro Bank) but was told that the bank's strategy was not to accept our type of account. **ACTION:** HM to register for on-line banking with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

- JG hasn't yet created Group email for the DDCC so **ACTION** ongoing.

#### 4. **Police Report (appended Annex 1)**

- There had been no progress with the sheep stealing investigation.
- The police have added details of the car flipping on Old Pentland Road in November to their report.
- Another recent car accident (opposite the Steading early in January) had initially been recorded in police records for the Borders.
- Elizabeth Junor reported that when she was checking her sheep a German shepherd severely injured a deer and then turned on her. The dog then scrambled up the revetement, crossed Biggar Road and disappeared into Erraid Wood. 0931 is the incident number for calling 101 if anyone has information on the dog or wants to provide further information confidentially.
- Clearways to restrict parking during lockdown have been set up at the Ski Centre and along the A702 at the side of the Pentlands. Penalty notices are being handed out.

#### 5. **Traffic, roads and pavements:**

- A701 Relief Road and AMEY proposals for Hillend triple junction. CN reported that AMEY's proposal was not being considered at all, focussing instead on relief road and roundabout at Bush Loan. CN was sent the brief for the site survey; consultants and other land appraisal consultants have been appointed. The DDCC will be allowed to comment after the surveys have been completed. If the City Deal is to be signed off in March it seems unlikely that we'll have time to feed in our comments. CN still hasn't been sent Annex 4. **ACTION** CN to write to MP and MSP or email all councillors to emphasise the need to look at the bigger picture and a joined up approach encompassing the hillend junction, technopole access and the relief road. PW advised us to write to Russell Imrie MSP since he is chair of the planning committee.
- Wider traffic, roads and pavement issues, including repairs to Old Pentland Road (MTRaP update). See Colin Beattie's email (annex 2) which provided an update. He hoped that the pavements would be cleared by the end of January but this has been delayed because of snow and ice. Drainage repairs are to start at the beginning of March.
- Supply of grit to communities. In other areas grit was provided, but was stolen, so the latest proposal is to supply a large 1 ton bin (with padlock) which will be filled for local residents to collect grit as required.
- PW alerted us to the fact that Hillend proposals are considering options to make the three-road junction safer. [Post meeting note: no public information relating to the triple junction has yet been found].

#### 6. **Planning and Development Others: to be updated**

- **Secret Herb Garden 21/00027/DPP** Demolition of existing buildings and erection of distillery and associated visitor centre. Consultation deadline Tue 09 Feb 2021. There were concerns about the access - additional numbers increase the risk. CN and the attendees in general would prefer to have a 20 mph limit or chicanes along Old Pentland Road. **ACTION:** Catriona Umpleby to write to Lindsay Haddow and Derek Oliver and all three councillors insisting that it is essential to improve safety and suggest flashing signs (potentially from

Councillors' discretionary fund) even if they are just a temporary measure in the first instance. Bollards would also be useful on pavements to ensure pedestrian safety as lorries take a lax approach on corners resulting in the back tyres being on the pavement.

- potential housing north of Seafield Road - 19/01039/PPP - awaiting decision
- Snowsports Centre development 19/01018/PPP Outline planning has been granted. Swanston Farms proposal, which borders on the snowsport centre, has also been given planning permission for outdoor activities at Lothianburn Golf Course.
- Calderstones Hotel 20/00441/MS 20/00466/MS Awaiting decision (was supposed to be determined 9/9/2020). PW thinks this is on hold.
- 14 flats and 2 houses at former filling station at Hillend 20/00477/DPP. Application refused 5 January 2021.

## 7. Community:

- Community Funding Opportunity - elected member discretionary fund. As discussed earlier in the meeting, the DDCC attendees agreed that a 20 mph speed limit is our preference for the area, and the DDCC is also prepared to contribute funding towards speed-reducing warning signs in support of this. PW referred to wider bid for 20mph speed limits across Midlothian.
- Midlothian Covid response. Good progress being made on rolling out vaccinations. "My name is ANI" being rolled out to Lloyds pharmacies to support women suffering from or at risk of domestic abuse to get help - Sainsburys is closest option for Damhead **ACTION:** JG to send round information on domestic abuse and mental health support available.
- Broadband and superfast internet provision. The community bid currently covers 8 postcode areas across Damhead and district and there is still scope to add names, and to access financial support for this. Although some households eligible for financial support and/or roll out, not all area, however the initial cost of £32k that was quoted by BT Openreach would be covered by the voucher scheme. RM set out a number of options for progressing this, including a pressing for a community package with BT Openreach; a community funded and led leased line with BT Business; or a privately led service for the community. It was agreed that the first option (a community package with BT Openreach) should be progressed given that there are UK and Scottish Government commitments to rolling out fibre optic provision and grants available. This would encompass those who are currently not eligible due to their postcodes/existing connections. It was recognised that one of the challenges is that BT Openreach operates on postcode communities, whereas our community has a different boundary. **ACTION:** Any other residents who would like to be included should provide their names, addresses and postcode to either JG and/or Robin McBride.
- Litter pick equipment available from JG so litter picking can be done at a convenient time and within lockdown restrictions.

**8. Date of next meeting: DDCC AGM and Meeting 7.30pm, Monday 12 April (by zoom). NOTE, ON AN EXCEPTIONAL BASIS, THIS MEETING IS NOT BEING HELD ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MONDAY IN APRIL AS THAT WOULD CLASH WITH EASTER MONDAY.**

In general, meetings will take place at 7.30 by zoom on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in every second month.

## Annex 1 Police Report

### Damhead and District Community Council (MW02) Police Report

#### December 2020 and January 2021

##### Crimes & Incidents

- About 04:00 hours, 05/12/2020 at Boghall Cottages a male was seen on CCTV to be shining a torch onto vehicles there. Police officers including a dog handler attended and the area was searched but no person was traced.
- About 10:00 hours, 20/12/2020 in a field near to Castlelaw Farm a sheep was attacked by a spaniel type dog. The sheep was found with facial injuries and recovered following treatment. The dog was not traced.
- About 10:00 hours, 09/01/2021 in a field at Damhead, a German Shepherd dog was seen attacking a deer. The dog then ran in an aggressive manner towards the person working in the field then returned to attacking the deer. There were sheep in the field at the time but the dog did not chase or attack any of them. The dog was last seen to jump the wall to the field and run off in the direction of the A702 at Hillend. Enquiry carried out but the dog was not traced.
- About 20:40 hours, 21/01/2021, outside the steading Inn, Police issued two fixed penalty notices to persons failing to comply with Covid-19 regulations.
- About 15:25 hours, 24/01/2021 at Midlothian Ski Centre, Police issued a fixed penalty notice to a person not complying with Covid-19 regulations.
- About 14:20, 29/12/2020, Fire service, Mountain Rescue and Police were involved in an operation to remove an injured walker from Hillend Hill above the Midlothian Ski Centre.

##### Vehicle Collisions

- About 07:00 hours, 08/01/2021 a vehicle collided with a fence and went into the field. The vehicle drove off prior to the owner arriving at the field. Police have a positive line of enquiry and efforts are ongoing to trace the driver.
- About 08:40 hours, 30/01/2021, a car was seen in the woods at Seafield Moor Road. The vehicle had front end damage. The driver was later traced and it was established the car had slid on ice and collided with the trees. Driver was uninjured.

##### Further Information

Police have received numerous reports of parking issues and potential covid-19 regulation breaches in the Hillend area. Community Police are carrying out proactive patrols in response to this.

There is now a clearway in operation at on the A702 at Flotterstone. This extends from Mauricewood roundabout to the unclassified road leading to Glenburn, near to Castlelaw. Any vehicle found parked within this area can be uplifted and the driver can be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Over the weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Police attended along the A702 from Hillend to Silverburn on numerous occasions. A total of three vehicles were uplifted and 20 fixed penalty tickets were issued, not only in the clearway but in other areas where parking was causing an obstruction.

**If any person has any information about the incident(s) listed above or indeed any other issue please contact your Community Policing Officer PC 5177 Alan Forbes.**

**Police Scotland use social media to circulate the latest news, events and information to the public via Twitter (@policescotland) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/policescotland).**

**Hate crime incidents and domestic abuse incidents can now be reported online via the official Police Scotland website, [www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk). or by visiting a third Party Reporting Centre.**

**Information regarding crime can be passed to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or through an anonymous Online Form - both of these routes are completely anonymous and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

**E-mail : [LothianScotBordersPenicuikCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:LothianScotBordersPenicuikCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk)**

## **Annex 2 Old Pentland Road Repairs**

**From:** Colin Beattie MSP <colin.beattie.msp@parliament.scot>  
**Date:** 27 January 2021 at 16:58:30 GMT  
**To**  
**Subject:** Dangerous Pavement - Old Pentland Road., Damhead (Case Ref: CB4280)

Dear Catriona

I have now received a response from Midlothian Council as follows:-

*Please accept my apology that this issue has not yet been resolved and for the difficulties it has created for your constituents. In response to similar concerns raised with the Council last year, this section of footway was cleared of all debris and mud, however, an underlying issue with the adjacent road drainage has resulted in surface water and silt on the road being splashed onto the footway again. In November and December 2020, following further reports of mud on the footway, works orders were passed to our Operations Team for cleaning. However, by this time, available resources were being affected by Covid-19 priorities within the Council and these works were not undertaken. As the pandemic restrictions increased, the situation with resources did not improve and the focus was on delivery of essential services. This situation has continued into the new year, with the current lockdown restrictions. In addition, available resources are further limited due to the recent winter weather and attention on snow clearing and gritting. Unfortunately, at this location, the snow and below zero temperatures compounded the problem by freezing the mud solid, and preventing any attempts to clean the footway.*

*I understand that constituents have been advised that this section of footway will be included in our 2021/22 Capital Works programme for repairs and resurfacing, along with an investigation and rectification of the adjacent road drainage issues. This programme will commence at the end of March 2021. In the meantime, I have requested that urgent attention is given to the cleaning of the footway, whilst the snow has thawed, and before temperatures return to below zero. I have been assured that this will be done as soon as resources can be made available, and potentially before the end of this month. Once cleaned, we will monitor the condition of the footway, and carry out further cleaning as necessary, until permanent measures can be undertaken in our Capital Works programme to address the problem.*

*I trust the above response is to your satisfaction and will provide your constituents with some comfort that this problem will be addressed.*

I do hope this is of assistance, however please come back to me if the clearing of the pathway has not been carried out within the next few days.

Kind regards

Colin Beattie

**Colin Beattie MSP**  
Midlothian North and Musselburgh

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**Constituency Office**  
164 High Street  
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EH22 1AY  
Tel: 0131 454 0204

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From: Alan Heatley >  
Sent: 27 January 2021 15:59  
To: "Beattie C (Colin), MSP" >  
Subject: FW: Dangerous Pavement - Old Pentland Road., Damhead (Case Ref: CB4280)

Dear Colin,

Your message below has been passed for my attention and response.

Please accept my apology that this issue has not yet been resolved and for the difficulties it has created for your constituents. In response to similar concerns raised with the Council last year, this section of footway was cleared of all debris and mud, however, an underlying issue with the adjacent road drainage has resulted in surface water and silt on the road being splashed onto the footway again. In November and December 2020, following further reports of mud on the footway, works orders were passed to our Operations Team for cleaning. However, by this time, available resources were being affected by Covid-19 priorities within the Council and these works were not undertaken. As the pandemic restrictions increased, the situation with resources did not improve and the focus was on delivery of essential services. This situation has continued into the new year, with the current lockdown restrictions. In addition, available resources are further limited due to the recent winter weather and attention on snow clearing and gritting. Unfortunately, at this location, the snow and below zero temperatures compounded the problem by freezing the mud solid, and preventing any attempts to clean the footway.

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I trust the above response is to your satisfaction and will provide your constituents with some comfort that this problem will be addressed.

Kind Regards

Alan Heatley  
Network & Structures Manager  
Midlothian Council, Place Directorate, Road Services  
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