

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 3 August 2021

## Seafield Sounding Board

|                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Executive/routine   | Executive                    |
| Wards               | 14, 17 and 13                |
| Council Commitments | <a href="#">4, 10 and 13</a> |

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee agrees elected member representation on the Seafield Sounding Board as ward Councillors from Craigentenny/Duddingston ward, and the Convener and Vice Convener from Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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## Seafield Sounding Board

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on the establishment of a Sounding Board to assist with engagement between the community, developers and Council representatives in relation to development proposals in the Seafield area.
- 2.2 It also seeks agreement on the elected member representation at the Sounding Board.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The City Plan 2030 Choices document was agreed in January 2020. This is the main issues report for the next local development plan for Edinburgh. It identifies Seafield as a potential Urban Area Housing Led Mixed Use Site.
- 3.2 This has prompted the local community and developers to start thinking about how the area could be redeveloped. Representatives from the Craighentiny/Meadowbank Community Council and neighbouring Community Council's Leith Harbour and Newhaven and Portobello have contacted Council officials and have requested that a collaborative approach be taken in developing proposals for the area.
- 3.3 A number of meetings involving community representatives, developer interests, local business interests, council officials and ward members have taken place. The parties have agreed that a 'Sounding Board' approach similar to those in place at Fountainbridge and Meadowbank would be a useful means of sharing information and establishing positive relationships between interested parties. Two meetings of the Seafield Sounding Board have taken place with Councillor Kate Campbell as the interim chair. At the most recent meeting Ewan Aitken chaired the meeting having been agreed by the Seafield Sounding Board as the independent chair.

## 4. Main report

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### Terms of Engagement

- 4.1 The Council has participated in sounding boards at Fountainbridge and at Meadowbank where the Council has been one of many developers in an area. The purpose of a sounding board is primarily to share information and to seek feedback in relation to development proposals. It is not a decision making forum and this is important as it allows participants to understand and explore the issues surrounding a particular development site, to exchange views as proposals are being developed, to build relationships and in some cases identify more collaborative models for delivering projects, It is not a Council meeting as such but sounding boards are generally facilitated by the Council and attended by both officers and elected members.
- 4.2 In the case of Seafield, the Council does not have an interest as a developer at this time, but the area is large and there are a number of land-owning interests. Some of these parties are developing proposals for their sites and others are just keen to understand what might be happening and how it might affect their business. The local community and surrounding communities are also very interested in what might be planned and want to be kept informed. They have expressed an interest in being proactively involved in the planning of the area. As such, a sounding board is considered to be a good central point for sharing information in an area that might see considerable development taking place over the next 10 years.

### Council Representation

- 4.3 As set out above, the Seafield Sounding Board has accepted Ewan Aitken's offer to be the independent chair of the group, but the Council still needs to formalise attendance from elected members. In Fountainbridge and Meadowbank it has been agreed that attendance would be restricted to ward councillors and the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work. In the Seafield context, it is proposed that this is also the situation.
- 4.4 Ward members from Leith and Portobello/Craigmillar have attended some of the meetings to date. It is not proposed that this continues for all future meetings, but it may be appropriate in some instances. Where there are matters that are of direct relevance to these wards then a wider invite will be made. Elected members may, however, have different views on who should attend and this is ultimately a matter for Committee to decide upon.
- 4.5 Attendance by officers will be provided as appropriate depending on areas of discussion at any given meeting. The Place Development service will lead in this regard and provide the secretarial support to the Seafield Sounding Board.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Upon agreement of this report, meetings of the Seafeld Sounding Board will be set up on a quarterly basis. Reports will be provided to the Policy and Sustainability Committee setting out progress and feedback and seeking further approvals should they be required.
- 5.2 It is envisaged that the Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committee, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, and Transport and Environment Committee will have to consider proposals relating to Seafeld in due course.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The administrative costs associated with the Seafeld Sounding Board will be met from existing budgets.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The estimated stakeholder and community impact will be provided in relation to individual projects as and when reports seeking funding approvals are provided.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [City Plan 2030 Choices document.](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.