

Westbank Street Development

Discussion Guide

<p>Welcome 5 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus group moderator introduces themselves.• Housekeeping instructions: fire safety; toilets; finish time; remuneration.• Rules for behaviour: anonymous; hear everyone’s views; respect for others.• Ask group to introduce themselves.
<p>Background and introduction 15 minutes</p>	<p><i>Reason for focus groups</i></p> <p>The reason we are here today is that land on Westbank Street, which is currently owned by the Council, is being sold. Portobello Community Council and Portobello Amenity Society have asked for the community to be involved in the decision about what criteria the Council should use to make the decision about who the land will be sold to. We’re conducting EIGHT focus groups with local residents to help us understand how people feel about the various options.</p> <p>Before I ask any questions, I need to take you through what the Westbank Street site is and give you some background on what has happened so far.</p> <p><i>Background</i></p> <p><i>How the site is currently used</i></p> <p>[Show map of site]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the location and prominent landmarks, such as the supermarket opposite, the Figgate Burn, and the beach. <p>At the moment the site is used by two businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Powerleague runs the five-a-side football pitches next to Portobello High Street.• Edinburgh Leisure runs Tumbles, a gymnastic and soft play centre, next to Portobello Beach. <p><i>What will happen to Powerleague</i></p> <p>Powerleague want to close their business at Westbank Street because it is no longer financially viable – this is why the site is being sold. Powerleague has a long-term lease with the Council which will expire in 2088. They first contacted the Council about selling the site in 2004 and developers were interested in the site, but the sale could not be competed due to the downturn in the housing market that accompanied the financial crash.</p> <p>Powerleague contacted the Council again in January 2015 to arrange sale of the site.</p> <p>As Powerleague do not wish to operate their business on the site anymore, the five-a-side pitches will be removed and will not be replaced.</p> <p><i>What will happen to Tumbles</i></p> <p>Edinburgh Leisure – which is a wholly-owned arms-length management company that runs the city’s public sport and leisure facilities – operates Tumbles.</p>

	<p>There are two options for what will happen to Tumbles.</p> <p>One – Tumbles will not be sold and will remain in its current location. The location of the Tumbles car park may change to another location on the site, but the same capacity (50 spaces) will be retained.</p> <p>Two – Tumbles will be sold and the current building will be removed, but a new facility will be created within the existing site. This new facility must completely replace all of the existing functionality of Tumbles, and will also need to provide 50 car parking spaces for exclusive use by Tumbles customers. If Tumbles were relocated, there would be no loss of amenity.</p> <p>Tumbles may be relocated on the site in this way because the land next to Portobello Beach is considerably more valuable than the land elsewhere on the site.</p> <p><i>What is going to happen to the site</i> Any actual development on the land will still be subject to planning permission.</p> <p>However, developers who are interested have submitted their intentions for how they would use the site and how much they are prepared to pay. We cannot share with you what any one developer has said, but we will go through the different aspects of the site and say what developers have said for each of these. We also cannot share how much money developers have bid for the site, but generally you should assume that the more developed the site, the more developers are prepared to pay.</p> <p>Following your feedback, all developers will be invited to revise their proposals again to take into account community views. The appointed developer will take part in a place-making exercise, where there will be an additional opportunity for the community to input into the planned development.</p> <p><i>What will happen to the money raised from the sale</i> The sale will be split between Powerleague and the Council. All of the Council’s share of the money from the sale will go towards the development of the new Meadowbank Stadium.</p> <p>Does anyone have any questions?</p>
<p>Areas for discussion</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>[In this section we would try to deal with “more important” issues first. What I’ve suggested below is a general running order, and should be mostly adhered to; however moderators would have flexibility to use a different order.]</p> <p>Development type, volume and height There are a number of proposals for use of the site, which range from entirely commercial to mostly housing.</p>

<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>The total development on the site will substantially determine the price the Council receives from the sale. More development generally mean taller properties.</p> <p>Plans received from developers vary between two-storey buildings and eight-storey buildings. For comparison, nearby buildings in Portobello ranges from single-storey to eight-storey.</p> <p>The Council’s Affordable Housing Policy typically requires new developments to include 25% of all units to be affordable housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any views about what kind of development would be on the site – residential or commercial? • What concerns, if any, do you have about additional homes being built in Portobello? • What impact, if any, would the different building heights have on you personally? • What impact, if any, would the different building heights have on the community? • Do you have any other comments you want to make about development type, property heights or housing development on the Westbank Street site. <p>Parking within the site, transport and travel</p> <p>Tumbles will have a dedicated parking facility of 50 spaces for use by its customers. Otherwise, the Council has requested that parking within the new development be kept to a minimum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What concerns, if any, do you have about parking in that area of Portobello? • What concerns, if any, do you have about public transport in that area of Portobello? • What concerns, if any, do you have about active travel e.g. (walking and cycling) in that area of Portobello? • What could the developer or the Council do about your concerns?
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Relocation of Tumbles</p> <p>Not all developers are bidding to move Tumbles. One possible option for where the facility might go is closer to Portobello High Street, with pedestrian access from the High Street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any preference for whether Tumbles is relocated or not? • What concerns, if any, do you have about the relocation of Tumbles?

10 minutes	<p>Open space and Figgate Burn</p> <p>The site includes some existing open space along the Figgate Burn. The five-a-side football pitches are also designated as open space. While this space is currently not accessible, the Council has requested that developers have equivalent open space within the site. This could take several forms, including the development of a walkway alongside the Figgate Burn, providing additional pedestrian access to the promenade. There may also be other space within the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the developer were including open space within the site, what form would you want this to take? • What positive impacts do you think there would be to developing a pedestrian route along the Figgate Burn? • What negative impacts do you think there would be?
5 minutes	<p>High Street frontage</p> <p>Some developers plan to include active frontage on the development. By active frontage we mean either commercial space such as shops, or small offices, or access to a relocated Tumbles. In different submissions this active frontage is either on the High Street, a new pedestrian route along the Figgate Burn, or along the promenade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What concerns, if any, do you have about the development of new active frontage on the site?
5 minutes	<p>Promenade</p> <p>As the Tumbles car park is included in the sale even if the building itself remains in its current location, it is very likely that there will be new development next to the promenade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What concerns, if any, do you have about new development along the promenade?
10 minutes	<p>Community Benefit</p> <p>When new developments are created, the developer is required to provide community benefit. This varies from site to site, and depends on the scale and type of development. This typically includes jobs and training, improvements to infrastructure and public realm, and the creation of public assets – for example, very large housing developments are sometimes required to build new schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of community benefit would you like to see this development provide?

5 minutes	Other concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any other concerns or issues about the development you want to raise today?• Taking everything we've discussed into account, how do you feel about the sale of the Westbank Street site?
Next steps and thanks 5 minutes	Any final questions. Ask participants to complete bank details and review form. Thank participants for their involvement.