

A straw poll on a proposal put to Portobello Community Council

The following sets out the circumstances and results of a straw poll I conducted on a proposal put to Portobello Community Council concerning the re-development of the Scottish Power site. The nature of that proposal is outlined later in the e-mail that invited responses.

The reasons for the straw poll were straightforward. It is the duty of a Community Council to reflect the views of the community it serves, and the role of a Community Councillor is to establish and reflect the views of the community as a whole, on any issue, irrespective of personal opinion. However, that's much easier said than done. Community Councils are faced with a constant stream of proposals, planning applications, consultations etc. that demand a response. That presents practical difficulties when it comes to ascertaining what the views of the community are. At the moment there may be a deficiency of mechanisms by which the community can make its views known to the Community Council and now may be a good time to review how this could be improved i.e. a website, suggestion boxes, more frequent surveys etc. In this instance the Community Council was being asked to respond to a particular proposal when most of the community were completely unaware of the proposal.

And so, in an attempt to ascertain what people's views might be, I decided to consult a sample of local people on the very question being put to the PCC itself, using e-mail addresses in my contact lists.

The issue of consultation is genuinely difficult, and I recognise all kinds of limitations in what I've done. For one thing the e-mail addresses in my contact lists are unlikely to be representative of the Portobello demographic as a whole; it will be slanted towards people with primary school aged children for example. However, if not representative in that sense, it is at least fairly random. None of the people are in my contact lists due to any previous connection with the Scottish Power site or its development. I had no reason to assume any particular bias on this issue and genuinely did not know what the balance of opinion would be.

I also recognise that the framing of the original question can have a considerable influence on the answers received. If you look through the responses you will see that this was indeed raised as an objection; that my presentation of the issue was not balanced. People will simply have to come to their own judgement on that. To allow them to do so this document includes the original e-mail sent, a subsequent e-mail in response to the objection, and all comments received in chronological order.

In any event the exercise was only intended as a straw poll; it was not a referendum and it was not a vote. My intention was not to use any result to force any particular position. There are complex considerations to take into account and, as the responses indicate, some people do not feel sufficiently informed about the issues. Also the strength of response varied, with some very much in favour or against, others more marginally falling one way or another, and some taking a position but only with important caveats. So any interpretation of the results can only be provisional. This exercise was only intended to get a snapshot of where the balance of opinion might lie within the community, on this particular question, at this time.

In that regard, in this straw poll, people were more in favour than against; by a factor of about 2 to 1. You can make your own judgement of how fairly I've characterised responses; some I classified as 'other' just to be on the safe side. But by my reckoning about 60% were in favour (to varying degrees) and about 30% against (to varying degrees).

Since the duty of the PCC is to represent the broad spectrum of opinion within the community, including diverse and divergent views, all the comments received are of value and I thank all who have responded. As to judging where the balance of opinion lies within the community, people must form their own view as to whether the exercise has been of any value.

Sean Watters

E-mail No 1 - sent to approximately 250 addresses. I tried to avoid duplication but there was some overlap in the distribution lists used, so the actual number of individuals contacted would've been less, but not by much. I also received one unsolicited response that is included.

Sorry for this, feel free to ignore me, and I promise this is a one off.

I'm on the Portobello Community Council and an 'issue' has recently come up that requires a decision. The Community Council exists to represent the views of the Community, but in reality it's two dozen people in a church hall deciding what they think about things. On this particular issue I, personally, would like some idea of what other people think.

And you're one of the 150 or so people in my contact list who I think live in Portobello. To be honest I don't know who half of you are but you're in my contact list somehow. If I'm sending this to the complaints department at John Lewis then apologies.

Anyway; a planning application for a residential mixed use development on the old Scottish Power site was recently rejected. Although the planners recommended approval Portobello Community Council strongly opposed the application, principally on the grounds that the buildings were too high, density was too high, and it would've generated traffic problems. This appeared to sway the Committee and permission was refused on a split vote.

The developers have now come back with a suggestion for a revised proposal; to take a storey off the entire development reducing heights, density and traffic issues. However, for the scheme to stack up financially they now need an increased retail element and are proposing a Waitrose slightly larger than Scot-mid. And since the only significant planning risk identified is the local opposition, they are asking the Community Council to support the proposal BEFORE spending up to £150,000 on a new planning application. If the PCC don't commit to supporting the proposal by their next meeting, at the end of the month, the funders will most likely pull the plug and walk away from the site.

The proposal has received, to say the least, a very mixed reaction from the PCC.

The principal objection to the proposal appears to be the same as the earlier superstore proposal; that a large chain food retailer will draw custom away from the High Street and specialist shops (Findlays, Williamsons, Kitcheners etc.), and the overall effect on the High Street will be damaging.

The principal arguments in favour appear to be that an additional 1,000 local residents will strengthen the High Street, and that a Waitrose would attract more people to Portobello as a shopping destination in general without being a threat to existing independent retailers.

There are other issues, but it's the difference of opinion on the above that's really at the core of the issue.

In strict planning terms the new proposal is unlikely to face much difficulty. When the superstore was rejected at inquiry, the retail effect on the High Street was not accepted as a reason for refusal. The reporter concluded that a superstore could be located in that location without damaging the High Street, subject to other conditions being met. So the Planners are unlikely to have a problem with a Waitrose less than a quarter of the size.

So, as the developers have identified, it really comes down to the decision of the Community Council. If we decide to support it, it should happen. If we don't, it won't.

And since the Community Council is supposed to represent the views of the community, I would like some idea what people in the community think. No need to give me reasons unless you want to. I'm not looking to be persuaded either way. I just want to know what the balance of opinion is.

There's some more background and differing views in a couple of threads on the TalkPorty forum if that's of use.

<http://forum.talkporty.org/viewforum.php?f=9>

But the basic question is this;

Should the Community Council support the revised proposals for a residential mixed use development including a modestly sized retail unit (Waitrose)?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not bothered either way
- d) Don't know

Thanks to anyone who replies.

RESPONSES	CATEGORY
<p>yes please (would have done the poll on talk party but haven't got round to thinking up a name for myself)</p> <p>really hope john lewis don't reply to you - conflict of interest and all that</p>	YES
<p>Hi Sean, another avenue for getting additional feedback might be to contact one our friendly Evening News reporters to run a small story...</p> <p>Maybe.</p> <p>Oh, and put me down as a yes.</p>	YES
<p>Hi Sean</p> <p>Don't mind your email at all. In fact I think it's really important that the community council does consult the community!</p> <p>Personally, I was opposed to a supermarket on the site, being concerned about the effect on our current shops, many of which as you know have closed down in the last year or two. However, perhaps naively I hadn't thought about the fact that new houses equals new residents equals more shoppers!</p> <p>If there is to be a supermarket of some kind then I would think that Waitrose is perhaps a good choice since I don't think it would have quite the same effect on the High Street. It would attract a different, more affluent shopper - perhaps the people buying the houses!</p> <p>I think it is very important that this site is developed in a way that is beneficial to our community. My main concern now, as before, is that there appears to be no thought about the children of new residents who will be in Towerbank catchment area. I don't need to tell you the difficulties that will cause!</p>	YES
<p>That's a yes from us Sean. I reckon Scotmid will suffer most from Waitrose competition, not the quality specialist food retailers.</p> <p>Great you took the trouble to do this.</p> <p>All the best</p>	YES *
<p>Hmm interesting one Sean, thank you for canvassing views.</p> <p>On balance I think I would support the new Waitrose proposal if that means taking a storey off the 'high flats'.</p> <p>I suspect it may adversely affect some specialist retailers but I would welcome a bit of competition to Scotmid, as I frequently feel I have little choice there .</p> <p>as a local shopper, and do not see Waitrose as one of the big baddies of the supermarket world.</p> <p>So its a 'yes.'</p>	YES
<p>I think it is important that this brownfield site is not left as wasteland for the next 20 years. The CC ought to be supporting something to happen and realistically this will be mostly residential and not in some unrealistic aspirational form that will never happen.</p>	YES
<p>Yes</p>	YES
<p>Summary of my views:</p> <p>This gap site is an absolute eyesore and definitely needs something doing to it. A refusal now could leave it derelict for years and ultimately mean that something may be built on it that everyone is opposed to in the first place. This on its own however is perhaps not enough just to say 'Yes'.</p> <p>There is no doubt in my mind that the extra people living on this site will benefit the High Street - even if they only did 10% of their shopping there, although God knows what will happen to Towerbank with even more people in it's catchment! With regard to a mini superstore - then I cannot believe that that the demographics fit for Waitrose so when I am weighing this up I think, "any mini superstore and probably not a Waitrose" will occupy the large retail unit. I am not fussed either way whether there is a store there or not but I see nothing wrong with the proposal to put one there. PCATS aka the PCC cannot have their cake and eat it - they are divorced from reality and it was them that refused the density of housing in the first place. I am loving the irony of the situation - refused superstore, refused housing and now they have a mixture. If the PCC say No to this option I hope we end up with biggest Lidl in the UK on this site.</p> <p>So I'm going to yes to the current proposal on the table even although I thought the original was fine.</p>	YES
<p>hoi sean, well it's up our end that we are talking about, yes pro's and con's, that is will spread portobello out so there is more life up our end, give us alternatives, but it may mean my local corner shop will go out of business, Waitrose is expensive so can't imagine I'll be using it, I guess I don't know is my answer</p>	OTHER
<p>In short my answer is YES.</p> <p>Coming from Hawick I have experienced first-hand what lack of investment in a community can do to a place. A once-</p>	YES

<p>thriving town reduced to a shell, mainly due to lack of foresight by the elders of the town council. Consequently all investment went to Galashiels and Selkirk, leaving Hawick as a very poor relation. However, saying that a new Sainsbury's is due to open later this year but it could be too late.</p> <p>I strongly believe that a Waitrose-type of outlet would encourage more shoppers to Porty, extend the High Street footfall and it is to be hoped that this might succeed in halting the march of the charity shops. I also believe that Scotmid needs competition - was in there last night and half of the freezers were completely empty - again!!!</p> <p>Can I also say well done for taking the initiative and canvassing opinion - I hope you get a good response. Will encourage husband (he who falls in the water) to reply too.</p>	
<p>Sean, I'd say yes to the development. The site is a hazard and an eyesore as it is. It is also not significantly near other residential properties. The development represents a far more practical outcome than say, a medium scale retail park, which is the only other use I can see for something that size. The one concern might be the traffic through put at the Harry Lauder junction, but this would be less with the housing rather than the retail option.</p> <p>I'm tired of the 'Community Council' apparently 'representing' my views when I am never actually asked what those are.</p> <p>There, that's my opinion. Thank you for asking.</p>	YES
<p>My opinion is no to everything - it's all butt ugly and innapropriate. We can see crappy flats like this all over Leith where they are horrible and cheap and nasty and kill the community. We can have housing at this density without it all being flats (although I get the problem with that is the number of school places then required)...</p> <p>I feel sorry for the developers but they need to raise their game. I mean come on they've got gable ends to the high street with parks spaces between - what is this the 1970's? Fuckin' load of garbage. The flats next to the pits are as bad as this.</p> <p>Portobello is an innovative and interesting place and we should be having the same in architecture / urban design. Lets look to Denmark or SSCI projects in Scotland. Have you seen Gehl / Tindall's An Camus Mor project: http://www.ancasmor.com/Pages/Vision.html</p> <p>We do need that horrible wasteground developed and soon but with something decent not any old developer schlock.</p>	NO
<p>Good for you Sean, taking it seriously and putting a bit of time and effort in where I and many others merely moan.</p> <p>There is absolutely no good reason not to support the proposed development. It makes sense, makes good use of the land and offers opportunities to all other than vested interests.</p> <p>I vote yes</p>	YES
<p>Yes - it should be supported. The argument you make about the extra 1000 people would support the high st and I don't think people would go to Waitrose instead of Scotmid or the local shops - it's too expensive. They'd go to Waitrose instead of going to M&S at the Fort or across town to the other Waitroses so it's reasonably environmentally friendly!?! </p>	YES
<p>Hi Sean, I appreciate your email because I do live in Portobello, and would like to say I am inclined to support this revised plan. I think it's very easy to get a reputation for saying no to everything, even though in the long run they will be good for the Portobello area. Hope this helps in your quest to get more locals to have an opinion. Good luck</p>	YES
<p>Sean I am a life-long resident of Portobello bringing up my own family now. I supported the previous campaign and attended the public enquiry. My view would remain opposed to the idea of another superstore no matter how small. I fear the monopolies that continue to dominate the retail trade and the surrounding of the high street. I do think housing is a good idea but it would appear that the current offer is co-dependent on the store. I would therefore still say no to the superstore.</p>	NO
<p>I too have mixed views. I do think that a Waitrose would bring people into Portobello because the ones in Comely bank and Morningside have lured me and then I used other shops nearby. It would also be nice to have something in that space and not just derelict land. However given that Towerbank is already bursting at the seams a thousand new residents (some of whom would presumably have children) would surely tip it over the edge. I think on the whole I am in favour just nervous that all the implications for Portobello have been thought through.</p> <p>Hope this helps</p>	OTHER
<p>Hi Sean - I'm very much in favour of the revised proposal with Waitrose included. It would increase the number of people coming to shop in Porty, add to the variety of the shopping experience and introduce some healthy competition. We could do with an upmarket supermarket at this end of town. Not sure how Waitrose would react to being included in a residential development, as I've never seen this before, but that's their decision!</p>	YES

there is no option for: d) when the fuck are we going to get a Fortnums? Ideally, we'd get waitrose to take over scotmid, no? Its the usual dilemna of wanting to retain the local shops, yet knowing that they are a bit shit, too. Findlays being the exception, obv. In principle I'm against the development, as I think we'd get more soul-less low quality rubbish like the beach-house building, so I say no.	NO
Both of us here vote a) yes to the proposal Cheers	YES *
not fussed - cant afford to shop in waitrose anyway!! ps I'm getting well pssed off with the PCC - do you have the list of voters and which group they claim to represent?	OTHER
Hi sean I am opposed to the idea. The infrastructure of portobello is stretched as it is, schools bursting at the seams, doctors surgery reaching capacity etc. I see the effects retail have on local shops and don't believe that a waitrose will bring more shoppers into the high street, there objective is to park the car, shop in a retail environment, get back in their car and leave! Just my tupence worth.	NO
No	NO
Hi Sean I feel that the community council should support this proposal. At present I feel this area, the first that meets you as you enter portobello, is a complete eyesore and needs redeveloped. I have also heard that if this proposal does not get support the person who owns the land will sell it on then who knows what may be proposed at this site! I also feel that a small store such as waitrose would be unlikely to greatly affect local shops, I like many others I know top up my weekly shopping at the local shops and would continue to use the butchers etc. for this purpose. Ultimately for me it would be more likely to affect where I do my large shop ie Asda or Tesco. I would be more concerned about how the development would look, how new residents will be accomodated in Towerbank , increased traffic etc but ultimately feel this proposal may be the best we get for this site!	YES
Hi Sean, I obviously haven't experienced the inner workings of the Comm Council, but I think this is a really well articulated call for objectivity - well done. I hadn't remembered why the previous application was turned down, or (more importantly) what the implications were when it was. It feels like we missed the boat in letting a purely residential development slip away. So on one hand, I can appreciate the 'devil you know' argument which probably says that a mainly residential development with a small Waitrose would be better than a new owner coming in and starting over again with something bigger and more awful. However, because I can't really visualize the size of what is being proposed and its hard for me to imagine a small Waitrose, or one that wouldn't have a negative impact on the High Street , I think I would probably fall on the side of opposing it. But that view is not based on a lot of information, and I am trying to reconcile the feeling of 'you can't oppose everything' with 'don't get worn down in a war of attrition by corporations that have time to wait it out.' I guess I would just like to see Portobello retain its character as much as possible and would look to wiser heads such as yourself to guide me!	NO
Hi Sean, I vote B- no it shouldn't get planning. That's just my instinct.	NO
YES. Its a disgrace having a brown field site available for development which due to so many nimbies, has instead become a tipping place for all sorts of crap. More people in Porty might mean a viable high st, whereas its on its knees at the moment. I suspect that some of the hard core nimbies would have objected to their own homes been built in Porty in the 1850's, we can not allow a handful of professionally objectionable folk to oppose everything that is proposed in Porty and dictate what the rest of us would like. Why can't these folk actually do something positive, do something for the rest of society instead of moaning the whole time! Thanks Sean, I fell much better now!!	YES
No, still think it would damage the High St trade	NO
I fully support this proposal Sean. I think that a mixed use development on this site can only be a good thing for the High Street which is dying on its feet and we are looking a gift horse in the mouth by opposing this. We will end up with an empty and underused eyesore for the next 20 years and even more empty shops on the high street. A Waitrose would be good I personally think (they tend to have a positive effect on local high streets see PDF attached). But see what has happened to Stockbridge High Street which 10 years ago was a mass of charity shops. It's actually gone	YES

up market since Waitrose arrived	
I think the CC would be mad to oppose	
Hi Sean - I would probably opt for yes since it's a moderately sized retail unit. I suppose the only other concern would be if extra families come into the area as Towerbank would be the closest school and as you know it's already bursting at the seams!	YES
For what it's worth I'm in favour of the development; it's pretty much a dumping ground just now and obviously something's going to go there at some point. A small supermarket isn't so terrible - Waitrose could be rather pleasant and offer an alternative to the monopoly of Scotmid (not that I have anything against Scotmid, I'm there every day!). The High Street is struggling anyway apart from the few obvious shops and the charity shops. More people living locally might help that decline. Strain on local schools is more difficult but that would be something to keep us occupied in future years!!	YES
Thanks for this email . I think it is a good compromise so I would stay yes	YES
Hi Sean I was at the meeting myself and to a large degree agree with you. I just feel that I'm not in a position to judge the application on its merits. I haven't spent much time looking at the plans. I doubt I'm alone in this. Are you sure that your judgement of the people involved has nothing to do with your disagreement with them over the school site? They are the same people who blocked the building of the waste transfer site. Without them Viridor would be with us now. I've lived in Portobello all my life and am indebted to people like them who, over the years have fought for the area. The majority of people appear to be apathetic for one reason or another and depend on a minority to do their talking for them. Good luck with galvanising the community into a bit more involvement! That was a very long winded "don't know"	OTHER
Yes, but should have accepted the first proposal,	YES
Thanks for the opportunity to input. It's a big yes from this household. That end of party needs a lift. I'd like to do all my shopping locally (in a mix of supermarket & local) but it's not practical and cannot park (we need a lot of stuff!). Therefore if there was a decent little supermarket with parking, I would get my basics there then top up at local shops instead of getting the whole lot delivered as I do now. Scotmid does not fit this bill because you can never park. Also think new flats and residents are bound to give local businesses a boost. I think this is exactly what party has been waiting for.	YES
Hi very strongly- NO, the Community Council should not support the revised proposals. And thanks for passing on the information, which I was not aware of. Regards	NO
Sean, I'm not sure. The site does need to be developed but the impact on the Kings Road junction needs to be better understood. Do we face more roadworks and another change? Waitrose customers, on my understanding, tend to be higher income shoppers who are likely to be passing by without the time to use the smaller shops in the High Street. The impact of that cannot be fully assessed. It will extend the town Westwards which may actually help. If there was parking then it may help the High Street by reducing the choke of cars parked on both sides of the road. It will change the town. We just can't know how or why. These developers are at least prepared to change their view and listen to local opinion. Many wouldn't so I'd be more inclined to go with it because what is the alternative? Like I've said, I don't know but I'd be looking for more information and engagement.	OTHER
Emphatic YES.	YES
I think you already know my views but I applaud your attempts at garnering local opinion. This is something all members could and should be doing. There is no doubt that people like Diana Cairns will have an extensive dist list. Ideally, Maureen Child should be using her list to ask these questions and passing responses back to CC for evaluation. The difficulty is in describing the background to the situation without inadvertently pushing people one way or another. For example, I think that it is wrong to suggest that what we will get is a Waitrose. There is no way that BL or anyone else can guarantee this and the application will be simply for a retail supermarket of a certain size. The lure of a Waitrose may well result in people voting for the plan who otherwise would reject it if they thought it was going to be a Lidl, which is a possibility. And I think we all need more time to consider this. BL will just have to wait. And they will.	NO
Hi Sean. Since I live on the very margins of Portobello (strictly outside of it - Willowbrae) I am not sure if I can express a view. However for someone who is frequently visiting Portobello I think that any mixed development that improves the amenity of that end of the community, brings extra people to live in the community and enhances its attractiveness for visitors should be welcomed. My one concern is that the Waitrose store, although relatively small, is at the upper end of the	OTHER

market and may well compete with the specialist independent food shops on high street which, arguably, also occupy that niche. Finally, will private parking be limited for the new housing, if so this would increase the likelihood that the new residents will walk into Porty as opposed to driving somewhere else to do their 'local' shopping.	
So, for what it's worth - Yes.	
I am sorry Sean but I don't think this is a balanced presentation of the issue. It also misses out the option many of us favour which is gives us more housing rather than a further retail outlet. That is a choice we have never been offered. Whatever weight of answer you get is simply going to reflect the way you have presented the issue.	NO
I think the community council should support the proposed development with reduced size blocks and small supermarket. get back if you need more. Good luck	YES
No. Should be residential only.	NO
Hi Sean My vote would be yes in support, but: I would support the community council pressing Edinburgh city council for a full environmental, economic and social impact assessment of the proposal to build a Waitrose I would be interested to hear the views of the retailers in Morningside and Stockbridge on what impact Waitrose had on their business (eg the cheese shop in both and Herbies in Stockbridge). Stockbridge is probably more comparable as the Waitrose is a similar distance from Stockbridge high street and the impact tends to be less if the store is actually in close proximity whereas if it's 'edge of town' people drive there and don't go anywhere else I would support the community council engaging directly with Waitrose to negotiate various measures that would mitigate against a detrimental impact on the independent high street retailers (eg in terms of what they may or may not stock, eg actually stocking Kitcheners produce rather than, say, Whitmuir) I think the bottom line is that if we don't get Waitrose we'll get something much worse; worse in the sense that any other supermarket will price out local retailers and will have much worse labour relations Friends of the Earth have a well evidenced paper on the topic: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/good_neighbours_community.pdf Cheers	YES
Ok not sure how this will go down but here are my views. I dont see waitrose as a negative thing. yes it will be another supermarket but you will find that local people will still stick to Kitcheners etc but maybe do a large shop in waitrose rather than going to Asda or Morrisons. Also people might come to Portobello specifically to go to waitrose and in turn visit local stores therefore bringing more people to the area. What we really need at this end of town is not more flats but somewhere for local kids would go. Wonder if Waitrose would create something like a small skatepark in return for some local support????	YES
Thank you for being so inclusive - surely what a council should strive for! I would support a high end retailer like Waitrose, who are sensitive to customer/community needs and would reinforce Portobello as an attractive locale. The site is far enough from the main High Street not to directly effect their trade in my opinion.	YES
Hi Sean, No	NO
Hi The best thing about the retail experience of Portobello is the unique shops and lack of supermarket. Normally I would be against any supermarket but a Waitrose is a speciality shop that would bring a different range of products to this end of the city. It may bring competition to the local shops but it will also bring new people to Porty, they in turn may visit the main street. In short I would support a small Waitrose in the area and any new homes are welcome as long as traffic is controlled from the outset.	YES

E-mail No 2 - sent to everyone previously contacted concerning the complaint that I had not presented the issue in a balanced way.

Sorry to bother you again. There has been an objection that the way I have presented the issue is unbalanced;

"I am sorry Sean but I don't think this is a balanced presentation of the issue. It also misses out the option many of us favour which is gives us more housing rather than a further retail outlet. That is a choice we have never been offered. Whatever weight of answer you get is simply going to reflect the way you have presented the issue."

There are a number of uncertainties surrounding the proposal.

For instance, there is no guarantee that Waitrose will be the occupier of the retail unit, and it could turn out to be a different operator. And, as suggested above, there may be another viable option between the previous rejected scheme and the new proposal.

These are certainly things to consider and if you go to <http://forum.talkporty.org/viewforum.php?f=9> you can see some of these very issues discussed.

However, I framed the question the way I did because that is the way it has been put to us. The developer has said that the proposal outlined is the only option on the table. They are asking the PCC to come to a decision whether or not the current proposal is acceptable, in principle and subject to detailed design, the Traffic Impact Assessment, the Air Quality Assessment and the Retail Impact Assessment. If it's not, or if the PCC can't come to a decision, the suggestion is that they will walk away rather than incur the costs of another application at risk. They could of course be bluffing, but there's only one sure way to find out.

I'm not going to use the feedback as a way of ignoring such issues; it's not a referendum, and it's not a vote. I just wanted some idea what people thought of the question as put to us.

However, if people feel my presentation of the issue has been unfair, feel free to comment as such.

In the interest of transparency I'll collate all responses received (names removed) and make them publicly available. That way people can decide for themselves if the exercise is of any value.

Sean

Now you wish you'd never asked!	COMMENT
Sean, I do not have an issue with your original post	COMMENT
Hi Sean I don't envy you being in the position you're in. Good luck! Our answer is a reserved yes to support the plan. Some development has to happen, so if it's a smaller retail unit rather than a supermarket, that's a good thing.	YES
Hi Sean I think it's outrageous that you've not presented the option that's not been offered. How very dare you. Democracy eh.	COMMENT
I personally am very grateful to you for taking the time to try to inform such a widespread group of what is happening the importance that the Community council has now as a forum and consultation body - and will consider the matters carefully. This is very democratic and those who have comments to add which are welcome should appreciate your efforts to be so. Thanks	COMMENT
Hi there, Thanks for the emails. Personally we don't favour the idea of any supermarket or food outlet at the ScottishPower site. We favour housing and mixed small business units (offices etc). We already have a Scotmid in the centre of Portobello, and others within a couple of miles. Hope that helps.	NO
Hi Sean, Thanks for taking the time to ask a wider range of people what we think. I wish I could give a more helpful answer, but I honestly don't know. It does sound as if the developers are trying to take account of local views, and in the current climate I can understand they have to take a pragmatic decision on balance at some point as to how far they continue discussions. I don't think anybody really knows what the impact on the High Street would be. I do favour mixed housing and retail - I'd prefer smaller units in keeping with the character of Portobello, but realistically the smaller ones we have aren't even fully	OTHER

occupied, so a modest unit for a retailer might help, (NOT a massive unit as there are already plenty of supermarkets around) because it might tie that end of the High street up with the rest, and provide parking for Porty. At least the developer is trying to engage with folk - if they walk away there is no guarantee the next one will! Thanks again for at least trying to make some sense out of all this!	
Hi Sean, I can't give a one word answer to your question but would briefly like to tell you about my experience with the company who want to build on the power site. I went to their presentation at Porty town hall back in July where Phil Myerscough (I think that's his name) specifically told me that they planned to have up to 5 retail units (he indicated the size of each unit) at the site and would be inviting 'quality companies such as Waitrose' (quote) to have a 'metro style' type outlet occupying 1 or 2 units, definitely not a supermarket in the light of the experience with Duddingston House properties. There would be other shops too and maybe a cafe. I was at their presentation at the community council meeting last week where I said this to him and he said he was sorry if I had been misled! I filled in a questionnaire based on the conversation with him in July but I wonder how has that information been interpreted. He was using the questionnaire replies to argue his case last week. I have since heard that other people had a similar experience. On this basis how can we trust the company to do what they say they are going to do. I am inclined to say no to the supermarket even if it means pulling them pulling the plug. I know however that we can't leave the site derelict. The new height of the buildings will not have a stepped roofline like the original plan so not so pleasing a skyline. I also asked Phil in July how up to a couple of hundred of school age children living on that site may affect the new High school roll. There are plans to build at the back of Gilberston too - more children for Porty HS. I am told that the school roll is capped at 1400 and Phil said planners would have taken any new build into account when planning the new school. At present there are no plans to expand the new school in the future if it gets built. Also there is the possibility of Castlebrae closing, adding more to the school roll.	NO
Hi Sean, Tricky one. I had a chat with Andrew about this. I think for both of us the answer is yes, but I do think it will affect the use of the fishmongers and Kitcheners. Also I'd be worried about the traffic - this would have to be realistically approached for solutions to the increase.	YES
Sean, for me you should stick to your guns here, as you say this is the option presented. An all housing no retail option isn't particularly attractive to start with but more importantly it isn't on offer, and, as far as I know, never has been. There are good commercial, and for that matter, planning reasons for that. It is a pie in the sky 'non choice' - we deal with the realities - the reality is that this is an achievable and, for me, reasonably desirable option. The lack of 'balance' is on the other side which has a fixed but I think non viable idea of what constitutes the right option and below which sits, I think, a fair old mix of retail self interest mixed with nimbyism	COMMENT
We've got to live in the real world, responding to options as we Face them, as well as creating our own options . I think you've presented the current options fairly. If we can guarantee a quality retailer, particularly an employee share owning enterprise that champions local producers such as waitrose, as well as new residents to the area through the new housing that would be great. On the housing front, we need that spending power on the high street, but I'm not sure Towerbank can cope with more pupils. Are the homes for families or singles/ couples? Either way , more housing and a quality retailer would get my vote. Thanks for asking.	YES
Sean - I'd be happy to support the Waitrose possibility. This would be an added attraction for Porty, and would not impact on normal high street shopping as Waitrose tends to be niched at luxury grocery shopping. Thanks for the chance to offer views,	YES
Sean. - my view is yes, the Community Council support the revised proposals (residential mixed use development including a Waitrose)	YES
Sorry Sean --- thought I would give you my quick answer to this but had been pretty busy -- I would prefer if a new development does not include a retail unit.	NO
Sean we are inclined to a 'yes' answer to your question, but on the basis of ignorance, so we are really a 'don't know but lets have something, please' does that help? ;-) We have some figures at work somewhere that relate housing units and retail outlets, and its true that a developer 'needs' a supermarket-type store to make it worthwhile displacing houses to make way for retail - I'm not so sure about the expressed need for retail to replace missing housing as I don't know how the comparative returns stack up. I shall try and find out	OTHER*
I stand by my reply. It would be good to have more flats and another supermarket with parking to attract people to the area. Thanks for the opportunity to input.	COMMENT

Yes -34 No- 16 Other- 8

*In some instances I received a joint response on behalf of couples who had been e-mailed separately; these have been counted as a single response for the sake of simplicity.