

**CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL COMMITTEE
CONSIDERATION STAGE - ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE**

Group 2 Response to Promoter's Questions on Mitigation

Portobello Park Private Bill - Group 2 Evidence - Response to CEC's question regarding potential mitigation options

At each of the evidence sessions to date CEC have been keen to highlight that objectors had not come up with mitigation options for the development of Portobello Park and the Convenor of the Bills committee implied that this was not constructive.

In response to this, I would firstly like to highlight that that was the first time that I or those I have spoken to in my group, had ever been asked by CEC about our thoughts on mitigation.

Secondly I would like to state on behalf of my group that there are no mitigation measures which can overcome the devastating effects of destroying Portobello Park in perpetuity. The only viable option is to keep it intact and improve the sporting facilities available there.

Group 2 and as far as I am aware, all the objector groups have always been clear in their stance that it is illegal and wrong for the community, long term, to develop Common Good Land by way of a private bill. We are groups who have objected to the private bill and who oppose a private bill which singles out one park and in doing so sets a precedent for others allowing development 'by the back door' instead of finding out what the people of Scotland want in relation to all Common Good Land across the country.

It is interesting that CEC on more than one occasion have highlighted that community groups of objectors have failed to come up with mitigation solutions to the development when they themselves have failed to exhaust the options.

Let's also be clear that the proposed replacement green space on the existing school site would not even be a proposal without the pressure these groups have asserted on CEC, but CEC have admitted it is in the wrong space to compensate the people losing the park.

If mitigation is high on CEC's agenda why are they not putting more efforts in to mitigate the effects of development in this area? Despite all the experts they have to hand and all the resources at their disposal, they have done nothing to reduce the real concerns of over 3000 citizens through problem solving process or lateral thinking on key issues such as road safety.

If CEC are agreeing that PHS can only rebuild on the current site if they get the whole site, then instead of appropriating the entire park, why did they not for example propose appropriating 1.3 hectares for St John's, leaving 5 hectares at Portobello Park. The traffic issues and safety are significantly reduced,

especially as primary children do not leave the premises at lunchtime, and most are accompanied to school by an adult, and a lollipop person could be provided at Park Avenue. The building would only be 2 storeys, and the footprint much smaller so the visual and environmental impact would be less, and of course 80% of the park would remain - in its current location, rather than a smaller provision at a new location which is not in the right place to compensate for the loss of Portobello Park. This would allow PHS to be rebuild on existing site without decant because the area at St John's and the disused tennis courts and artificial pitches could be used either for the new build or for temporary space to accommodate classes from the tower while it was demolished and replaced. The recently built games hall could be saved and incorporated, saving money and improving sustainability.

It is ideas like this that clearly should have been identified by CEC and highlighted to the community before or at the consultation stage. They chose not to.

CEC seem unwilling to consider proposals like this because they are unwilling to lose face by losing this very public battle, irrespective of their long term costs on our community.

We trust that the Scottish Parliament will want to give full consideration to this before making such a far reaching decision.

Jennifer Peters
Group 2

6 May