

Winchburgh Rail Station Local Stakeholders Presentation

29th January 2024

Winchburgh Developments Limited offices, Winchburgh

Note of meeting

In attendance: John Hamilton, Pam Spowart (Winchburgh Developments Limited); Stewart Carlile (West Coast Capital); Robin Matthew (PPCA Limited); Paul Murphie (Big Partnership); Steve Wallace (Sweco) Robin Holder (Holder Planning on behalf of Hopetoun Estate); Penny Lochhead (PMR Leisure);

Hazel McLeod (Winchburgh community), Graeme Campbell (Winchburgh Community Council), Gail Kelly (Winchburgh CDT)

Cllr. Scott Arthur, Jamie Robertson (City of Edinburgh Council) (Via Teams)

Craig McCorriston (West Lothian Council) (via Teams)

Diane Calder, Tony Boyle, Sally Pattle (via Teams), Tom Conn, Kirsteen Sullivan (West Lothian Councillors)

Fiona Hyslop MSP; Foyso Choudhury MSP, Sue Webber MSP; Lesley Hinds

Reason for meeting

Full stakeholder meeting on delivery of Winchburgh rail station, following direction from West Lothian Council, to be convened – date to be confirmed. Two such meetings have taken place previously but no direction yet as to how Winchburgh Developments Limited can help enable delivery of rail station. Winchburgh Developments Limited cannot do this alone.

Based on the upcoming full stakeholder meeting, a local stakeholder meeting was considered appropriate at this time.

Presentation (John Hamilton)

Additional points raised –

- Winchburgh Developments Limited has no borrowings other than Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure Fund loan on commercial/fully repayable terms. The loan terms do not permit expenditure on railway station design or construction.
- Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal correspondence (circulated) references a £150m infrastructure fund to help support 5,000 new homes in Winchburgh.
- Scotrail has consistently supported a new rail station at Winchburgh.

- Need to deliver rail station in Winchburgh by 2026. Beyond that date, it makes no sense, from a Winchburgh Developments Limited business plan point of view, and alternative provision would be made.

Questions

Cllr Diane Calder – is CRD bid for East Broxburn – Maybury ongoing? Can monies be repurposed?

Response (Craig McCorrison) – explained history of Structure Plan / Strategic Development Plan housing allocations in West Lothian Council linked to rail station access (Armadale (paid for by public funding)); Kirknewton (existing for Calderwood) and Winchburgh (no station at the time) as part of fundamental sustainable transport solutions. Delivery of a rail station was always part of the land allocation argument at Winchburgh. Noted problem of daily congestion on M9. However, CRD bid / project is well advanced and such funding unlikely to be redirected from that to Winchburgh.

Response (Jamie Robertson) CRD funding (combined Transport Scotland; City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Government) is required to provide public transport capacity to accommodate West Edinburgh expansion (circa 20,000 homes); access to airport, Royal Highland Showground and Ingliston park and ride. Tram has finite capacity (can only accommodate 25% of public transport demand). Outline Business Case about to be published. 8,000 new public transport trips expected in AM peak once all built out.

City of Edinburgh Council recognise merits of a Winchburgh rail station and support that as a separate item to CRD bus corridor. Business Case for a Winchburgh rail station is strong.

Noted that a park and ride facility at East Broxburn has been removed from the scheme.

Fiona Hyslop MSP – call for development at Winchburgh came from community through planning process supported by two landowners going back to pre-2000. Two issues here - how to close the funding gap for a new rail station and how to deliver by 2026. All political parties have to get behind this. Everyone has to commit to delivery.

Response (John Hamilton) – Winchburgh Developments Limited has a sum of money set aside to contribute to the delivery of the rail station and is committed to that. Not enough to deliver the station itself. Station design alone could cost up to £1.5m.

Cllr Tony Boyle – East Broxburn commuters have ridiculed Broxburn – Maybury plans as there is still a blockage at Corstorphine. Why committed without public support? Park and ride at Kilpult removed from scheme. Noted no improvement to Newbridge roundabout itself possible.

Response (Jamie Robertson) – Maybury – City Centre route subject of separate proposals. No strategic demand for park and ride facility at Kilpult identified.

John Hamilton – Winchburgh Developments Limited wants to redirect S75 contribution expectation to A89 / Newbridge roundabout to new Winchburgh rail station (estimated circa £1m with indexation)

Response (Craig McCorrison) – rail station good for Winchburgh – Edinburgh City Centre but not great for airport etc.

Sue Webber MSP – reference Edinburgh Evening News article citing bus journey time decrease by 10 minutes (from circa 50) but Winchburgh to Edinburgh city centre direct only 15 minutes by rail. Planning has not been granted for West Edinburgh expansion so is not happening now, Winchburgh is. Money could be prioritised for Winchburgh now and made available for the A8 corridor if required.

John Hamilton comment – no other location in the UK is better placed to get rail station investment right now.

Cllr Kirsteen Sullivan – issue becomes more pressing as more housing being built at Winchburgh. Why are we in a holding pattern? Need action now. Why no detailed design yet? Need for next steps and ownership.

Response (John Hamilton) – Winchburgh Developments Limited doesn't have the responsibility, resources, funding or expertise to move this forward alone.

Foyso Choudhury MSP – we want to work together. No clear answers received from previous Transport Ministers. This isn't a party political issue. Need to get Partick Harvie involved.

Scott Arthur comment – everyone supports notion of a station. City of Edinburgh Council wants to see cars taken off roads – need to balance housing requirements and climate change responsibilities.

Cllr Tom Conn – history lesson with no path forward. There is no hill to climb. Someone needs to take responsibility. Next stage is design which Winchburgh Developments Limited could fund. No point in trying to get money from A89 – Maybury project. It would be good to see the Robroyston station funding model. Bottom line is cost. If there is no funding for a Winchburgh station, a solution and funding is required for Linlithgow station.

Response (John Hamilton) –. Taking ownership and agreement on cost are issues but agree there has to be a will for project delivery. Based on other rail projects construction cost could be within £15-25m range. Winchburgh Developments Limited has funds allocated to help deliver a station but without rail project certainty this would need to be invested in a bus solution.

Fiona Hyslop MSP – needs to be seen as a regional issue. Common sense approach needed to CRD funding. This will be one of the cheapest rail stations to deliver given Winchburgh Developments Limited commitment. This is now about getting cars off the road. Who does the design work? Need to get Transport Scotland involved. Next stakeholder meeting needs to assign responsibilities and

provide cost. Partick Harvie has to be lead Minister on this. Expectation that previous Transport Scotland work will be made available pre full stakeholder meeting.

Response (John Hamilton) – Design costs could be £1.2-1.5m although different methodology could reduce that to £500k. Winchburgh Developments Limited cannot instruct Network Rail design.

Stewart Carlile – more than £50m of investment so far from shareholders with no return expected until 2027. This will be more if there is a rail station at Winchburgh– the station has a regional impact and the park and ride will help address West Lothian Council concerns on traffic congestion on M9 and congestion at Linlithgow station. WDL is delivering all the other infrastructure to support the settlement expansion including the town centre park and ride facility that could be utilised by a station. It cannot deliver the station alone.

Fiona Hyslop MSP – need to rebadge park and ride as “mobility hub”.

Robin Matthew noted that Winchburgh Developments Limited has a planning application lodged with West Lothian Council to do that right now.

Fiona Hyslop MSP- need for Fiona, Sue and Foysol to sit down and talk about this now.

Hazel McLeod – agreement to cross party working is a big positive. Network Rail have designed new stations all over Scotland. Why is new design here required? The Edinburgh western growth proposals are nowhere near the stage that Winchburgh is. Buses are getting stuck at Kirkliston now forcing people back into cars.

Steve Wallace noted that there are not enough buses currently in the public transport system.

Next Steps

- 1. Date requires to be set for full stakeholder meeting. (Full list of attendees to be confirmed with Patrick Harvie’s office)**
- 2. Sue Webber to submit written question to the Minister on matter of Winchburgh rail station at Parliament tomorrow (30th January 2024).**
- 3. Presentation to be circulated.**