



**Gullane Area Community Council (GACC)**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (7pm) at the Gullane Recreational Hall**

<b>In Attendance:</b>	<b>Apologies from:</b>
<u>Committee</u> Malcolm Duck (MD), Chair – from 7.20pm Alan Fraser (AF), Chair Frank Neate (FN) Zena Trendell (ZT) Martin White (MH) Rebecca Hughes (RH), Vice Chair  Derek Lawson (DL - Cala Homes)  Several members of the public	Ruth Butterworth (RB), Secretary Simon Paterson Brown (SPB) Karen McDougall (KM) Alasdair Muir (AM) Hayden Edwards (HE)

1. Welcome

The meeting opened at approximately 7.10pm with the intention of discussing the housing at Saltcoats, Gullane & its potential future development. The key purpose of the meeting is to consider proposals for the remaining piece of land next to the current development (maps were provided to aid discussion). At the point that the original development was approved, this piece of land was considered for Aberlady Primary School campus extension. Since then, and according to the education department calculations this campus extension is no longer required. Therefore, Cala Homes approached East Lothian Council (ELC) regarding its suitability for further housing. Subject to a few changes to their original proposals, the current plan is to release 50% of the land (for a football pitch or other recreational use) & the other 50% for housing (map shown with proposal or initial sketches). ELC have said this is fine in principle.

General discussion followed regarding the reduction of play areas available for children.

DL stated that Cala Homes are about to embark on a consultation process with ELC (from September 2024) for potentially 17 houses.

Discussion then centred around Scottish Water & the lack of capacity at the Gullane Water & Sewage Works. There's an embargo in place regarding new connections. DL said Cala Homes were aware of this, however, a solution is required. This year Scottish Water had indicated a new growth project (controlled & managed by Scottish Water) yet this never materialised. It related to the end of line i.e. extension of sewage works. FN highlighted that Scottish Water income from the Saltcoats housing development will not be sufficient for the level of work required to bring the sewage works up to capacity for the number of houses in the area.

DL said he understood there is a statutory process involved & should planning approval be gained (including Scottish Water technical approval) the drainage connection will be via this end-of-line solution. If no technical approval is given from Scottish Water, then Cala Homes will not build. DL highlighted that Scottish Water has advised Cala that there is no capacity to add new connections to the Gullane Water Treatment Works. At present it appears both parties at the meeting (i.e. Cala Homes & Gullane Area Community Council) are seeking the same outcome – for Scottish Water to resolve the sewage works issue. Consideration was also made for a septic tank to service the houses (drainage would be via the Mill Burn), however, this is less than ideal.

DL stated that he had no further details regarding the Scottish Water growth project.

Concerns were raised regarding the continued pollution of Aberlady Bay and the potential loss of its Nature Reserve designation.

The formal planning application for the additional 17 homes will be submitted in either October or November 2024. It is anticipated that Scottish Water will not provide a formal objection, rather, ELC may insert a planning limitation or condition.

The current Saltcoats buildings were given technical approval by Scottish Water. This was based on a drainage assessment at the time. Now, Cala Homes have been told that there is no more capacity for the additional 17.

MW said that consideration of Local Place Plans (LPP) needs to be made. There is a moratorium in place stating that no more house building until these issues are resolved. AP confirmed the draft LPP is available on the Gullane Village Association website.

DL highlighted that Cala Homes are giving back to the community via the football pitch. They could leave the remainder of the land unavailable for locals, however, want to make it accessible for the local population via a football field. The proposed planning application is for 17 homes despite potential for 34 houses over the full land/site. It was also noted the current proposal is supported by Gullane Sports Development Trust. At this point, Cala Homes are confident that planning consent will be given with planning conditions (i.e. via the technical approval regarding sewage connections). It will then be important for Scottish Water to take action.

John Holden, of Scottish Water has promised the growth project will begin in earnest from October 2024, however, they had previously guaranteed this and failed to do so.

Sentiment within the meeting is that Scottish Water will not progress any growth project. Furthermore, it was stated that current opposition from the local population

via the Community Council is with the ELC, not Cala Homes. There was recognition that all we can do is hold the authorities to account for the community interest. There is also understanding that Cala Homes is there to make profit, whereas Scottish Water, SEPA and ELC are responsible for the current situation.

Concerns were raised at more houses being built with facilities & infrastructure continuing to struggle (including lack of availability of buses, paths etc.). Many of the houses built are large & this leads to questions about the need for a larger school in the future. This is the key issue that is not understood.

Conversation returned to concerns around the sewage connection. FN quoted from a policy note, 'The provision of Water and Sewerage Services (Reasonable Cost) (Scotland) Regulations 2015 – S.S.I 2015'. In short, if certain conditions are not met then Scottish Water are under no obligation to accept new connections or approve them.

DL clarified that the points of connection for the new housing (x 17) is within the current road on the map & these have prior approval, which complicates matters.

It was noted that DL had referred to the UK housing emergency multiple times, and it was suggested these do not need to be built within East Lothian, there is the whole of Scotland to consider. There is relative resistance from local populations regarding this.

MD thanked DL for coming to the meeting and expressed a desire for more engagement. He recognised that in order to increase local services, further density of population is required, therefore, the plan to date has been to expand current villages within East Lothian. However, this is not working.

There is an understanding that the aim is for 20-minute neighbourhoods etc. However, Tom Reid was clear no more housing to be approved yet they have.

DL explained some of the history to date. The Saltcoats development within Gullane was decided prior to any East Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP), as some other developments were. As these were national decisions (by the Scottish Government) ELC wanted to take control of housing building within the Local Authority.

More locally Cala Homes are concerned that GACC will object to the current proposal as they have said no to everything in the past.

It is possible that Cala Homes do nothing for now, they come back in the future with a proposal (possibly in 10-20 years) as the land has already been allocated.

DL provided clarity regarding the long-term & the types of houses within the developments. Following planning consent, the title deeds of the recreational space will be transferred to ELC. This space could potentially be anything (for play or recreation).

Of the new 17 houses, 25% will be low-cost housing (i.e. mid & low market rent). For example, of the builds that have taken place within Gullane 84 houses were earmarked as affordable housing (i.e. for ELC & housing associations). The remainder are a variety of 3-, 4- & 5-bedroom houses for sale on the open market.

Wider work that Cala Homes have been involved in has included bringing unused housing stock back into use & work on the Gullane to Drem cycle path (unfortunately, this was not completed as the landowner changed his mind about a section of the land).

Discussion followed that both the GACC & the local population do not want to be difficult, or to stop appropriate building, however, the people living here want to make our lives & the area better. Expansion can prevent progress towards the making of a community. It was agreed that the local population need to have more say regarding financial agreements & where the money is going.

Past projects such as improvements to Tranent High Street & Network Rail were highlighted prior to DL agreeing to share a spreadsheet detailing Section 75 pledges Cala Homes have made to ELC. This will be added to once the planning process begins again for these 17 houses & ELC will do the necessary calculations before making any decisions regarding funding & projects.

Several members in attendance highlighted that the local community has been left disappointed in the past as ELC has made promises that have not been delivered (examples include the Gullane to Drem path, footpath to school in Saltcoats etc.). These past failures to deliver the promises benefits has understandably led to the local community taking a more cautious approach & requesting ELC bring forward delivery of community projects in advance of further housing developments.

DL advised the community to change its perspective, in that, to benefit from the process they will need to be proactive (in terms of identifying what they need/want from it), engage with the process (ensure they receive funding via S75) & take a strategic approach (i.e. work together across villages to establish an overview).

Community members indicated a preference for infrastructure to be agreed prior to housing (i.e. the developer, with trains, water, paths, schools, local authorities etc.). Local associations now being asked to via the LPP's to identify specific areas of land.

In terms of next steps, the community needs to agree a stance on the proposed housing development, use of the recreational area & any further potential benefits (for example, in South Queensferry Cala Homes paid for a new resident's booklet & the LPP as well as

stipulating that any S75 is kept locally). It was noted that ELC will ask for a maintenance charge (from residents) regarding the upkeep of the recreational area.

2. Actions:

- Spreadsheet detailing Section 75 funded projects by Cala Homes (including the comprehensive list specifying the base contribution rate plus the indexation value)
- Contact details for the ELC S75 Officer
- Provide electronic versions of the maps discussed
- Indication of potential planning proposal submission
- Commitment to meet again in the future