

Edinburgh Civic Forum Meeting 7 Jun 2016

Alex Lunn SNP Councillor of Craigentenny and Duddingston Ward, Vice-Convenor of Planning Committee, (also on Licensing sub-committee, Petitions Committee and Planning Local Review Body Panel) spoke and said would welcome any comments or calls on any issues.

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Current Planning Issues (David Leslie)

- 1) Local Development Plan - Reporters Report due end of June, it is now on DPEA website. Assessed modifications and amendments will cooer 5th September for the committee to consider for adoption by November
- 2) Strategic Development Plan - 2nd Proposed Plan is being developed and not yet approved, further clarification and additional information was requested for next meeting on 20 June to reconsider, after that public representation and ratification will be in August for public representation.
- 3) Planning System Review: Independent panel was set up to review in the hope to make a more efficient process. It has been 10 years since the last review so it is time to do another. This review is now published on the Scottish Government website. Document: "Planning to Deliver Great Places". The panel's recommendations in brief were:
 - (i) Front loaded engagement
 - (ii) Community Empowerment Act needs to tie in and link with the system (currently "tokenistic" rather than meaningful)
 - (iii) early engagement and use of social media
 - (iv) Locality Plans - spatial and community planning needs to join up and have strong community involvement
 - (v) Community Councils to comment only on major applications

Community Council 5 min limit at Hearings (Ian Parry)

Ian as convenor can negotiate and balance the applicant and objector time slots which is normally set at 15 minutes each, but if there are more representations, then it can be adjusted, and we are in trial period at the moment for this more flexible system, which is supposed to help the regulation to have a fair representation.

Planning Concordat - Draft (Nancy Jamieson)

The Concordat was first developed in 2010 with developers in mind, and later added Community Council's involvement in 2013. The current version 2015 consults EACC, Cockburn Association and Developers Forum.

The current draft concordat (see attached) focuses on being in plain English, a step by step guide to the planning system and removed all irrelevant matters (such as development plan) with clear requirements for developers and what is expected from Community Council's input listed at each stage of the process. It acknowledges the challenges and current issues faced in planning system and try to make realistic adjustments.

The Concordat Engagement Fund is abolished since it has not been effective in the cumbersome administrative process to application, the developers are more than happy to provide funding towards publicity or other material required by CC's.

****Comments to be received by 24 June.**

Development Viability (Chris Stewart)

Chris sets out to demonstrate facts about the market and to get a fair understanding for discussion. The impact the market has on the construction industry is immense. The Developers have to go through rigorous process through planning and HES before they reach solutions.

The Market:

Banking regulations change meant that as compared with 2007, amount going into the market from all lenders was £85bn, when compared with 2015 it was £24.7bn. Private Rented Sector spend is 2% rather than 10% of UK.

Currently 70% of capital funds are from outside the UK, which means it is competed for across the globe, the funds that are invested can equally invest anywhere else in the world. Edinburgh is only the 18th city in Europe to invest in, even lower ranking against the world stage.

Edinburgh needs strong local funding, but that is hard, decrease in diversity in market becomes the norm due to risk associated with supporting local ventures, more national and international tenant with balance sheets are accepted and less of local businesses, all to do with risk and financial ability/affordability.

The things that have really affected the Real Estate Industry is mainly the following structural changes after the recent recession:

- Legislation changes and banking/financial regulation tightening
- Tenancy reform
- LBTT (Taxation reform in housing market)
- Business rates and industrial development rates
- Section 63 on heritage and sustainability
- Brexit / Referendums and political uncertainties
- competition for capital funds, need to attract international investors across Europe and the World (instead of just negotiate with local financial institutions)
- changes in market and returns

Interesting to note that Glasgow city centre scheme (by George Square, with Chris Stewart/ same developer as The Registers in Edinburgh) was chosen by the Council not for them being the highest bidder, but for the best developed plan, with all rounded benefit for the local economy, heritage and buildings concerned. Something for Edinburgh to aim for?