

Planning Committee

1.00 pm, Thursday, 19 June 2014

Present

Councillor Perry (Convener), Howat (Vice-Convener), Bagshaw, Blacklock, Brock, Child, Dixon, Heslop, McVey, Mowat, Robson, Rose and Ross.

1. Local Development Plan: Second Proposed Plan

At its meeting on 12 June 2014 the Planning Committee continued consideration of the Local Development Plan: Second Proposed Plan to allow the decision of the Scottish Minister on the Strategic Development Plan Supplementary Guidance on Housing Land to be received.

The Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards advised that the decision on the Supplementary Guidance on Housing Land had now been received & consideration of the Local Development Plan, second proposed plan could proceed.

The Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards presented the proposals in the second proposed plan.

Motion

1. Committee agrees the recommendations at paragraph 1.1 of the report by the Acting Director of Services for Communities, with minor clarifications and adjustments, as per the text of the Motion below.
2. Committee notes that, provided parties who made representations on the first proposed plan (LDP1) resubmit representations as appropriate on the second proposed plan (LDP2), the Committee will have an opportunity to consider all such representations at the next stage in a meaningful way and in the context of the Strategic Development Plan's increased housing land requirement.
3. Committee instructs the Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards to inform all those who made representations to the first Proposed Plan (LDP1) that they need to resubmit their representations, as required by legislation, and offer any assistance that they may require.
4. Committee further notes that, notwithstanding the requirement on the Development Management Sub-Committee to determine planning applications, for any assessment of Greenfield or existing open space housing sites, prematurity shall be a material consideration in any such determination.

5. Committee further instructs the Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards to re-assess the site referred to as 'East of Milburn Tower' on the following basis:
 - a. The proposed site lies predominantly within the West Edinburgh Strategic Development Area. The strategic development plan states that there is a policy presumption for directing any new housing releases to SDA's;
 - b. The site has good accessibility to existing public transport. There are four easily accessible Tram stops (Edinburgh Park Station, Edinburgh Park Central, Gyle Centre and Gogarburn) and there are existing bus services that serve Edinburgh, Gyle Centre and the RBS headquarters. It would also be feasible to route a bus through the site. Mainline train stations also afford the area additional public transport opportunities. The southern part of the site has access to Hermiston Park & Ride facility. Direct pedestrian access to Edinburgh Park can be provided through the existing under pass and path next to the culvert;
 - c. A clear and defensible green belt boundary can be formed by dense and mature woodland along Gogar Station Road at the western edge of the site. The southern part of the site is more open but already partly developed and the existing tree belt could be extended. The M8 motorway provides a clear edge to the site at the southern and south western end;
 - d. The site integrates well with existing centres of employment, retail and existing public transport. The eastern boundary is aligned with Edinburgh Park and the northern boundary would afford greater integration with the proposed International Business Gateway (IBG)
 - e. The site is contained and not visible from most surrounding areas. Although the site is visible from the north on Glasgow Road this is generally by vehicular travellers who are passing quickly and through an area that will change significantly as the International Business Gateway (IBG) is developed. The ground level of the site is below the road and important views to the Pentland Hills can be preserved.
6. Committee instructs the Acting Head of Planning and Building Standards to report back to the Committee on his re-assessment of the "east of Milburn Tower" site, including a revised Transport Appraisal and Education Appraisal which will set out the infrastructure requirements to achieve high settlement integration and a sustainable community, when Committee considers representations received on the second proposed plan.
7. Committee notes the requirement to have in place sufficient infrastructure to facilitate the level of housing development, and the associated community needs (health, transport, education, retail, community hub, etc). These should be identified and costed, with a budget provision identified through the Corporate Action Programme, and have an agreed implementation date before housing development is initiated.
8. Committee reaffirms its commitment to protecting as much of the Green Belt as possible; and notes that 74% of the homes within the Plan are expected to be built on Brownfield sites.

9. In response to the representations to the Plan and recent communications, Committee agrees to continue to explore the prioritisation of building houses on Brownfield sites, including further information on possible housing densities and the requisite parking standards before releasing land in the Green Belt.
 10. Granton Waterfront Central Development Area (EW 2b) should continue to be developed as a housing led-mixed use development creating a sense of place and community. The section relating to EW 2b of the Granton Waterfront Development Principles should have added "The potential to enhance employment and a 'destination' through existing and new commercial, tourist and retail opportunities should be expressly encouraged".
- Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Brock.

Amendment 1

Committee notes the detailed work that has been undertaken to prepare the Local Development Plan; the thoroughness of this and thanks officers for this work which has been undertaken in response to a new process requiring response to National Planning Policy and the Strategic Development Plan and that this is the first time the process has been worked through and the challenges that have arisen from this. This process has been lengthy, complex and has not produced a plan that will "make Edinburgh the very best it can be".

The City has previously agreed a vision for the future of the City (A Vision for Capital Growth 2020 -2040) which accommodates growth along clearly defined public transport corridors thus allowing the City to grow; to share the wealth and the benefits of the City with those who have grown up in the City and wish to set up their own households and with people who wish move into the City to take advantage of all it has to offer.

Due to the requirement to allocate additional housing as a result of the Scottish Government's rejection of the first proposed Strategic Development Plan the proposed plan does not clearly articulate this vision. The revised SESPlan requires the allocation of such significant additional housing that in order to protect Edinburgh's green spaces and to allow development in a sustainable manner a new plan, rather than a revised plan which simply adds in additional housing to a plan which was at its limit, should be developed.

The Plan as currently proposed will cause additional congestion and, due to the significant amount of housing required, has allocated housing in areas that do not have the infrastructure to support new housing which will render this housing unattractive for new residents and place significant pressures upon existing residents overloading services such as schools and health centres and reducing amenity for residents. There are concerns that making such significant allocations will mean greenbelt land will be designated for housing before available brownfield land has been fully built out and given the lower costs of developing greenfield and greenbelt land this is likely to lead to development of these areas before available brownfield land is used because there are no means available to the Council to prevent this happening.

The Plan should make clear the type of development that will be possible in Edinburgh to maximise land usage and release the minimum necessary greenbelt and greenfield land. The Plan should guide developers as to what type of development is acceptable - it must be high quality, well designed dense development that creates a sense of place with the necessary facilities easily available to residents; it should contain sufficient numbers of dwellings to support new facilities in areas where existing ones would be overburdened. Edinburgh has many examples of areas where housing is dense but highly desirable to live in which create healthy communities, such as the colonies and traditional tenements of 4 or 5 storeys. The City should be confident in its heritage and seek to reinterpret these traditional and local forms as an Edinburgh vernacular for the 21st century. It should be noted that requiring higher densities will allow less land in total to be required and that development returns per hectare should be higher.

Committee therefore:

1. Rejects the proposed Local Development Plan;
 2. Instructs officers to bring forward new proposals which accommodate development firstly on brownfield sites and then along fixed rail transport corridors both existing and proposed in two cycles;
 3. Encourages a significantly higher density (c.70 - 80 dwellings per hectare) than has been allowed in the plan with provision for adequate services either in supporting existing local centres which would benefit from additional users or by creating new local centres supported by sufficient housing to provide local employment, retail, education, community and health facilities;
 4. Requires the Convenor to raise the following matters with Scottish Ministers; a review of the planning process which has proved to be cumbersome, slow and confusing; consideration of how the effective housing land supply can be better calculated so that brownfield sites can be prioritised; how the HNDA can be modified in order that future plans do not require such large amounts of land to be allocated leading to further unsustainable releases of land.
- Moved by Councillor Mowat seconded by Councillor Hyslop.

Amendment 2

1. Recognises the established need for more affordable housing in the city;
2. Recognises the unrealistic nature of the identified housing requirement for 107,000 homes in the South East of Scotland which significantly exceeds all recent rates of construction;
3. Notes the need to bring back into use the up to 2,000 homes in Edinburgh which lie empty for more than 6 months, to re-examine housing densities, and to give priority to housing in existing urban areas in order to make full use of brownfield land;
4. Recognises that the changing demography of the city region and the way that it is reflected in household formation is unlikely to be best-fulfilled by building low density housing in suburban estates.

5. Recognises that if the citizens of Edinburgh are to have faith in the planning process and local democracy in general, genuine account must be taken of their views on the proposed LDP;
 6. Recognises that the impact of the LDP on transport, schools, the environment and air quality have not been adequately addressed;
 7. Concludes therefore that the city's current housing requirements can be met by the use of brownfield land and that there is at present no need for the inclusion of any of the greenfield sites set out in the plan;
 8. Consequently, agrees the recommendations at paragraph 1.1 of the above report, subject to the removal of the greenfield allocations, and calls for urgent talks with Scottish ministers to resolve the issues raised.
- Moved by Councillor Bagshaw, seconded by Councillor Ross

Voting

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---------|
| For the motion | - | 8 votes |
| For amendment 1 | - | 3 votes |
| For amendment 2 | - | 1 vote |

Decision

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2. Committee notes that, provided parties who made representations on the first proposed plan (LDP1) resubmit representations as appropriate on the second proposed plan (LDP2), the Committee will have an opportunity to consider all such representations at the next stage in a meaningful way and in the context of the Strategic Development Plan's increased housing land requirement.
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 - g. The site has good accessibility to existing public transport. There are four easily accessible Tram stops (Edinburgh Park Station, Edinburgh Park Central, Gyle Centre and Gogarburn) and there are existing bus services that serve Edinburgh, Gyle Centre and the RBS headquarters. It would also be feasible to route a bus through the site. Mainline train stations also afford the area additional public transport opportunities. The southern part of the site has access to Hermiston Park & Ride facility. Direct pedestrian access to Edinburgh Park can be provided through the existing under pass and path next to the culvert;
 - h. A clear and defensible green belt boundary can be formed by dense and mature woodland along Gogar Station Road at the western edge of the site. The southern part of the site is more open but already partly developed and the existing tree belt could be extended. The M8 motorway provides a clear edge to the site at the southern and south western end;
 - i. The site integrates well with existing centres of employment, retail and existing public transport. The eastern boundary is aligned with Edinburgh Park and the northern boundary would afford greater integration with the proposed International Business Gateway (IBG);
 - j. The site is contained and not visible from most surrounding areas. Although the site is visible from the north on Glasgow Road this is generally by vehicular travellers who are passing quickly and through an area that will change significantly as the International Business Gateway (IBG) is developed. The ground level of the site is below the road and important views to the Pentland Hills can be preserved.
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- Moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Brock.

(References – Planning Committees 19 March 2013 (Item 1), 3 October 2013 (Item 2), 23 October 2013 (Item 3), to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 4 December 2012 (Item 9); 12 June 2014 (Item 2); reports by the Acting Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

2. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Ross declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a director of EDI, PARC Craigmillar, Shawfair Developments and Waterfront Edinburgh.