

QDCC Report - Cllr Alastair Shields - July 2016

While in recess, the concerns over the local development plan continue to dominate our council business and as I have interpreted them – for all the wrong and unfavourable reasons. Two weeks ago I provided this response to Keith and Terry and am now sharing it among the wider QDCC membership for your perusal. I also laid bare my views on the Craighall development as it stands and will discuss this in more depth at our meeting when this inevitably arises on the agenda.

Response to recent planning decisions concerning LDP2 and its affect on South Queensferry and surrounding territory (9th July, 2016):

'From my interpretations of the document, I naturally find it unfortunate that much of the valid points made out in the representations have been over-ridden by the reporter. As we have long made clear for some years now there is nobody better placed to make a case for what is best for Queensferry than the people that reside there. While the reporter makes frequent reference to the validity of the representations made, it is very clear that what we are looking at is the town very much becoming a centrepiece of the overall development plan. That Queensferry is effectively identified as a commuter area in the representations, I get the sense from the reporter that there is then too much of a requirement upon accommodating those that use it for those very purposes (whether they reside there or not) and I worry that this has become more of a priority than the purpose of making it a comfortable living environment for inhabitants - present and prospective. With the coming of the new bridge and better transport access I do appreciate the reporter's need to focus on this which is fine for commuters but how will residents benefit from this during development and after?

I read page 365 (point 13) and I don't agree at all with the assertion that housing development of the expected target will better employment opportunities in the town (too many houses and people, what do we know of new business coming in or having the space to start up?), I do see a direct hit on tourism as more traffic will ensue around the Hawes and the High Street on a scale ever seen before, and there is an obvious need to protect our world heritage site - how does more housing and people help this say for tourism purposes as such development will equate to a prolonged programme for changing the road infrastructure around Builyeon Road particularly.

On the subject of Builyeon Road, I refute the reporter's flippancy towards the site itself and lack of appreciation as to how overly-congested this will become in time, plus we are in the midst of the consultation programme with Alan Farningham - do the discussions had with him match that of the reporter's assertions? I also feel that the greenbelt has been undermined in the report generally speaking - slightly sugar-coated by the idea of sacrificing part of it to improve access to other green space area - but I will voicing strongly again that even a small programme of development over green area lights the blue touch paper for anywhere else in Edinburgh. Think Garden District ...

This is a serious time for west Edinburgh to act in unison. I have contacted both the MP and MSP in the last two days, both of whom graciously replied speedily, to be involved in a strategy to confront the plans laid before us. There is time left, but not much of it. All this report tells us is what we've perhaps long suspected and I don't believe many if not nearly all of the representations have been given the credit they are due.'

Other matters over the past month:

- Graffiti, akin to that of a 'hate crime', discovered by a resident at Society Point. Police Scotland informed of the matter immediately.
- Chris Scobbie, Police Scotland rep/Area Commander for West Edinburgh & Pentlands moved on this month after a very short period in the post (assigned to a new position elsewhere). Wishing him good luck in his new post and thanked him for his efforts while in charge. Inspector Steve Sutherland is now the contact in place.
- Dalmeny: contacted by a resident concerned about the condition of the pathway leading to the train station (Dalmeny Underpass, on the north carriageway on the M90 to Standingstone Road, as well as the south carriageway path). Details passed to West Locality concerning a need to work on the overgrowth of bushes along the pathway, acknowledge slippiness during wet conditions - requirement for a handrail to be used as almost absolute safety reliance, and better lighting.
- I hosted my monthly advice surgery at the Library on the evening of July 6th.