

## Committee Minutes

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# Planning Committee

Edinburgh, 4 October 2012

**Present:-** Councillors Perry (Convener), Howat (Vice-Convener), Bagshaw, Blacklock, Brock, Cairns, Child, Dixon, Heslop, McVey, Milligan, Mowat, Rose and Ross.

## 1 Minutes

### Decision

- 1.1 To approve the minutes of the Planning Committee of 9 August 2012 as a correct record.

### **Matter arising:-**

#### **Item 7 – Development Management Procedures – Meeting with Standards Commission and Scottish Government**

Councillor Rose requested an update in regard to the Planning Committee's decision to make representations to the Scottish Government and the Standards Commission - in regard to concerns on the Councillors Code of Conduct, as currently affected the role of ward councillors within procedures for the consideration of planning applications.

The Head of Planning and Building Standards gave a verbal update in regard to a meeting with the Standards Commission which had been fairly productive and at which the Commission suggested that the Council bring forward a proposal for a possible procedure or protocol that could operate within the parameters of the Code, and planning legislation, and which could be considered further by the Commission.

### Decision

- 1) To note the verbal update by Head of Planning and Building Standards on the outcome of recent discussions with Standards Commission and his intention to report to the Council's group spokespersons on possibilities for a scheme or protocol that might operate within the

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Councillors Code, for further submission and consideration by the Standards Commission.

- 2) To note that a meeting with Scottish Government would be arranged following any Standards Commission response to any proposal by the Council.
- 1.2 To approve the minutes of the Development Management Sub-Committee of 1, 15, and 29 August and 12 September 2012 as correct records - subject to correction of the minutes of Development Management Sub-Committee of 15 August 2012 to include Councillor Mowat in the sederunt.
- 1.3 To note the minutes of the Local Review Body of 8 and 22 August and 5 and 19 September 2012.

## **2 Royal Victoria Hospital Site – Planning Brief - Motion by Councillor Bagshaw**

Councillor Bagshaw had submitted a motion, as follows –

‘The Planning Committee -

- 1) Notes that NHS Lothian has decided to place the Royal Victoria Hospital site on the market for disposal once it is closed fully later in 2012 and that it constitutes a potentially important redevelopment site;
- 2) Notes the extensive size of the site and the major contribution it makes to the wider amenity of the Craigleith area through the presence of a significant number of mature trees;
- 3) Resolves that the scale and nature of the site require a planning and design brief to be prepared by Council officials in order to guide potential developers in terms of acceptable uses, the balance between housing and other uses, road and pedestrian access points, the design principles governing the density of any new housing and the retention of the mature trees as an integral part of the design concept for the site;
- 4) Resolves that the local community, and in particular Craigleith and Blackhall Community Council, be involved in the preparation of the planning and design brief and consulted accordingly.’

Following discussion, Councillor Bagshaw agreed to accept amendments to his motion, to read as follows :-

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- 1) Notes that NHS Lothian has decided to place the Royal Victoria Hospital site on the market for disposal once it is closed fully later in 2012 and that it constitutes a potentially important redevelopment site.
- 2) Notes the extensive size of the site and the major contribution it makes to the wider amenity of the Craigleith area through the presence of a significant number of mature trees.
- 3) Resolves that the scale and nature of the site require a planning and design brief. In accordance with established procedures, this should be prepared by NHS Lothian in consultation with Council officials and should aim to guide potential developers in terms of acceptable uses, the balance between housing and other uses, road and pedestrian access points, the design principles governing the density of any new housing and the retention of the mature trees as an integral part of the design concept for the site.
- 4) Resolves that the local community, and in particular Craigleith and Blackhall Community Council, be involved in the preparation of the planning and design brief and consulted accordingly.
- 5) Requests the Head of Planning and Building Standards to advise NHS Lothian accordingly and to agree a programme for reporting the brief to Planning Committee.'

### **Decision**

To approve the motion by Councillor Bagshaw, in the amended terms, with the Head of Planning and Building Services requested to advise NHS Lothian accordingly.

## **3 Edinburgh Design Guidance**

The Committee had previously agreed that the Council's non-statutory planning guidance should be consolidated into a suite of guidance documents and arranged so as to target the appropriate user groups. The Head of Planning and Building Standards now reported on a draft 'Edinburgh Design Guidance' which aimed to consolidate and replace 13 of the current, separate, documents.

The aim of the new guidance was to explain the development plan policies which had a major design impact and to set out the Council's expectations for the design of new development in the city. The content had been updated, re-organised and clarified, and with illustrations and photographs added, to make it easier for applicants to identify what was required in advance of submission of any planning application.

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The Edinburgh Design Guidance, once finalised, would replace the following guidance documents–

- Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design
- Edinburgh Standards for Sustainable Building
- Edinburgh Standards for Housing
- Protection of Key Views
- Building Heights and Roofscape
- Daylighting, Sunlight and Privacy
- Villa Areas and the Grounds of Villas
- Mews Development
- Landscape and Development
- Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- Housing Development in Garden Grounds
- Biodiversity
- Trees and Development.

The Head of Planning and Building Standards considered that the new guidance should be used in discussions and negotiations on development proposals during the consultation period. He recommended that the draft guidance be treated as a material planning consideration, to be cited in planning reports. If the consultations were to highlight any issues of concern, then revisions could be made for the finalised version.

It was the intention that the draft guidance should now be issued for public consultation, with any views received to be reported back to the Committee, before finalisation.

### **Decision**

- 1) To approve the draft Edinburgh Design Guidance for public consultation.
- 2) To agree that it be used as a material planning consideration during the public consultation period.
- 3) To congratulate the officers for their good work in progressing this matter.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

## **4 Enterprise Areas - Update**

The Head of Planning and Building Standards gave an update on progress on the establishment of procedures in enterprise areas, with particular reference to the Port of Leith and the Edinburgh Bioquarter as new enterprise areas, established in 2012. Progress was being made in establishing protocols and in

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working with Scottish Enterprise and other organisations to progress the master plans for the enterprise areas, and related developments

**Decision**

To note the progress made in establishing procedures for Enterprise Areas, as outlined in the report by the Director of Services for Communities.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

**5 Modernising Planning: Planning Performance Framework 2011-12**

The Scottish Government had introduced a new Planning Performance Framework to assess the performance of planning authorities in Scotland, in terms of which the Council was required to submit a report to the Scottish Government on its performance over the last year. The Head of Planning and Building Standards now gave the Council's draft submission on performance, as assessed against the key component parts, as follows:

- National Headline Indicators;
- Performance assessment across 8 areas of agreed activity - defining and measuring a high quality planning service;
- Supporting evidence and links to related reports and studies;
- Service Improvement and timescales for the delivery of improvements.

(The report was supplemented with statistical information on decision-making timescales and workforce and financial information.)

During discussion, members referred to the need for provision for the public to be able to comment or express any dissatisfaction on any aspect of the service and also for targets and achievement rates to be included in future reports.

**Decision**

- 1) To approve the Planning Performance Framework 2011-2012 and agree its submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To request that the future performance reports include a column to indicate targets and achievement rates.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

## **6 Public Realm Projects – The Grassmarket and Rose Street**

The Head of Planning and Building Standards reported on (a) the findings of a before-and-after review of the impact of public realm work in the Grassmarket, as carried out by consultants, and (b) progress on a framework for bringing forward public realm enhancements along Rose Street, as coordinated by Essential Edinburgh.

The Grassmarket improvements had been finished in 2009, and the study had looked at a 'before and after' comparison, in terms of attractiveness and cost-benefits, having consulted business owners and other stakeholders. The conclusion was that the project had been successful but also that there were lessons to be learned, including the need for an action plan of continuity measures, to follow the physical improvements, for the long term.

The Rose Street proposals, with focus on key themes of lighting and traffic management, with pedestrian priority at the core, would profit from the conclusions of the Grassmarket study. The vision for Rose Street sought to retain the 'bohemian character' with cultural activities for locals and visitors and reinforce the identity of the area as a 'destination' within the city.

### **Decision**

To note the content of the Grassmarket Review report and the lessons learned for future public realm projects, and progress on delivering improvements to public realm in Rose Street.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

## **7 Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy**

The Forestry Commission Scotland and Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership had commissioned a 'Forestry and Woodlands Strategy' on the basis of the Forestry Commission document "The Right Tree in the Right Place'. The strategy provided a spatial framework to optimise the contribution of woodland to people, the economy and the environment. The City of Edinburgh Council was invited to approve the proposals for its interest, with the intention of the strategy being launched in the Autumn 2012.

### **Decision**

To approve the Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

## **8 City Centre and World Heritage Site Boundary – Pedestrian Way-Finding**

The Council had approved a motion by Councillor Mowat calling for a report on how to both delineate the boundary of the World Heritage Site and promote its status. The Head of Planning and Building Standards now reported on arrangements that had been put in place to secure the provision of a new pedestrian wayfinding system in the city centre and the demarcation and promotion of the World Heritage Site, taking account of examples of other cities' experience in the UK and further afield.

Amongst other proposals, the Head of Planning and Building Standards was intending that the Council's contracts for advertising and street furniture contracts, when due for renewal in the autumn of 2014, should include wayfinding signage and the demarcation of the World Heritage Site boundary. A cross-directorate working group of officers was currently looking at the matter and a report, including a new system of navigation for pedestrians and cyclists, and the delineation of the World Heritage Site, would be prepared by the end of this year.

In discussion, members stressed the importance of cross-directorate liaison relative to the contracts matter, in view of the sensitivity of the matter.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the arrangements put in place to co-ordinate a review of pedestrian wayfinding signage in the city centre and the consideration of appropriate methods of World Heritage Site boundary demarcation and promotion.
- 2) To discharge the motion by Councillor Mowat as approved by the City of Edinburgh Council on 22 December 2012.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted)

## **9 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity - Consultation**

The Council had been invited to comment on a Scottish Government consultation paper 'The 2020 Challenge was Scotland' which in itself was a response to the European Union's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020. Responses to the consultation document were invited by 26 September 2012.

The Head of Planning and Building Standards reported on the draft response submitted to the Scottish Government. In conclusion, he said that 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity was to be welcomed as it had the potential to create positive environmental change through restoration and enhancement

of native biodiversity and ecosystem services. At the same time, it was to be noted that some key steps were too loosely defined and hard to measure – in this he suggested that the English Biodiversity Strategy be reviewed, as an example of good practice.

**Decision**

To endorse the Council's response to the consultation paper, as submitted and detailed in the report by the Director of Services for Communities.

(Reference – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

**10 Policy on Architecture and Placemaking for Scotland –  
Consultation Paper**

The Council had been invited to comment on a Scottish Government consultation paper on 'A Policy on Architecture and Placemaking for Scotland'. The paper raised a number of issues including how such a policy could be used to promote higher quality design in order to contribute to Scotland's economic growth.

The Head of Planning and Building Standards reported on the draft response as submitted, drawing on Edinburgh's experiences in such matters.

**Decision**

To endorse the draft response to the consultation paper as submitted and detailed in the report by the Director of Services and Communities.

(References – report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)