

# The Edinburgh Development Concordat



Approved by Policy and Sustainability Committee  
December 2020

Introduction and wider context: \_\_\_\_\_

*'(COVID-19) pandemic, impending recession and our economic recovery'*

This Concordat is a working document which sets out how developers and businesses, representative community organisations and the Council's development functions can work together to achieve good placemaking. This Concordat recognises the requirement for flexibility and adaptability and advocates a more continuous tripartite agreement between the public, private and community sectors from pre-application discussions through to post decision engagement, to ensure expectations are managed and met. The scope of this concordat has been widened to involve wider development functions of the Council such as 'Building Standards', 'Road Construction Consent', 'Licensing', 'Environmental Health' and 'Legal Services' where applicable, to ensure a whole Council approach as an enabler of development.

This Concordat replaces earlier concordats and recognises the need for agility, flexibility and collaborative engagement between Council services, the development and business communities and representative community organisations in the wake of the (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to address the City's economic recovery.

'WHO' is the new Edinburgh Development Concordat for? \_\_\_\_\_

*'a tripartite agreement between the Council, development industry and local communities'*

- i The City of Edinburgh Council development functions
- ii The development and business sectors
- iii The local communities of Edinburgh

Concordat Roles: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Role:** The Edinburgh Development Concordat is based on principles around behaviours based on how we are going to understand, appreciate and work better with one another. Qualities such as 'Understanding', 'Collaboration' and 'Alignment' in achieving the outcomes of good 'Placemaking' and 'Economic Growth' are actively encouraged amongst all members.

*NOTE: for further information on the 'Placemaking Agenda' see Appendix*

Developers are encouraged to promote the value of early and meaningful engagement including post planning decision engagement with community councils in shaping and realising development proposals. Within this context, the [changes to pre-application consultation proposed by the Scottish Government: consultation](#) should be recognised.

Community organisations are encouraged to promote the vital role in representing the views of the wider community when new developments are proposed and to work collaboratively with developers from pre-application through to post planning decision.

Council will promote the ways that developers and representative community organisations can engage with each other and will promote a "whole Council

approach” as an enabler of development to promote and facilitate a more continuous “end to end” approach taking in all of the development functions of the Council throughout the whole development process. A ‘fit for purpose’ enforcement regime will help ensure a consistency of regulation and further promote the “whole Council approach”.

To achieve this, the Council will promote greater awareness and alignment amongst all of its development functions and the new ways of working required to actively contribute and uphold the principles of the concordat. It is however, important to recognise and respect the independence of regulatory roles of each of the Council’s development functions including, the autonomy that the planning authority must take in reaching planning decisions affecting all interests openly, impartially, with sound judgement and for justifiable reasons.

## ‘WHY’ we require the ‘Edinburgh Development Concordat’

### ‘Introduction’

Edinburgh remains a city of growth but, now, in the wake of the (COVID-19) pandemic, faces even greater challenges to provide homes and jobs for our communities. Protecting Edinburgh’s heritage assets and retuning its economic profile to that of previous levels is a key priority for years to come. In doing so, the plan-led system in Scotland is used to make decisions about the future developments of our areas and is used to balance different interests to make sure that land is used and developed in a manner that creates high quality, sustainable and inclusive places to live, play and work. It is recognised that not everyone wants change/developments in their own area and tensions can rise. However, before change is proposed, experience has shown that when developers, communities and the local authority work constructively together, better places can be created. Getting the balance right is difficult but important.

### ‘Strategic Outcomes and Direction’

The values and principles of the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision are the cornerstone guiding Edinburgh’s social and economic recovery and delivering radical change and strategic outcomes that Edinburgh’s public, partners and stakeholders desire. The City Vision provides clear aspirations for what the city is looking to achieve and will help to create a coalition of communities across city stakeholders committed to delivering on the city vision principles and supporting one another in embedding these within their own strategies and values.

The 2030 City and Mobility Plan’s and the City Centre Transformation Project will support the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision to bring about good growth, support health and wellbeing, the provision of the right types and quality of new homes and neighbourhoods with increased affordability, promote sustainable, safe and attractive accessible options for moving people and goods around the city and enable sharing in the economic success of the city.

These outcomes reflect Edinburgh’s objectives to address the impact and challenges of climate change, to be carbon neutral by 2030, to build 20,000 new affordable homes before 2027, to transform our city centre and rebalance space in the city from private vehicles to active travel and public transport while supporting business, innovation, learning and culture.

The Council’s Adaptation and Renewal Programme looks to ensure the Council and the City prepares for the City’s longer-term renewal. The programme is built from the Council’s agreed priorities of Sustainability, Poverty and Wellbeing and be guided by the principles set out in the 2050 City Vision.

'HOW' will the new Edinburgh Development Concordat work? \_\_\_\_\_

*'Behavioural benefits of aligning understanding and collaborative working'*

**Benefits for developers and businesses**

- to signal that the Council remains open for business
- to establish the benefits of early and post decision engagement
- to establish the coordinated involvement of wider development functions of the Council within this engagement process
- to encourage and ensure transparency, collaboration and alignment in recognition of the values and principles of the 2050 City Vision and the economic value in developing 'good places'.
- to ensure expectations are managed and met

**Benefits for Council**

- to promote a culture of continuous improvement
- to demonstrate added value
- to better understand and manage expectations
- to promote better understanding and alignment within Council's wider development functions as a proactive enabler of development.
- to encourage and ensure transparency, collaboration and alignment in recognition of the values and principles of the 2050 City Vision to achieve the development of 'good places'.

**Benefits for the City's communities**

- to ensure early participation and post-decision engagement in the processes involved within the Council's development functions
- to reduce information and process uncertainty
- to ensure that meaningful pre-application consultation (PAC) is delivered through the planning process
- to encourage and ensure transparency, collaboration and alignment in recognition of the values and principles of the 2050 City Vision to achieve the development of 'good places'.

## Appendix

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### *'The Placemaking Agenda'*

Placemaking is a creative, collaborative process. At its heart is an 'all-inclusive' approach to the design, development, regeneration and management of the built environment. Successful placemaking:

- a) results in sustainable, well-designed homes and strong communities;
- b) meets peoples' needs;
- c) harnesses the unique characteristics of each place; and
- d) improves the overall quality of life

The Edinburgh Development Concordat strongly reflects the national agendas on 'Placemaking'. 'Designing Places' sets out the role of the planning authorities in delivering the Scottish Government's aspirations for design and making places. Designing Places promotes principles of context, identity and character.

The six qualities of successful places are set out as:

- distinctive;
- safe and pleasant;
- easy to move around;
- welcoming;
- adaptable; and
- resource efficient

These guiding principles continue to underpin the Scottish Government's approach to delivering good places.

['Creating Places - A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland'](#) considers 'place' to comprise: the environment in which we live; the people that inhabit these spaces; and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their surroundings. Architecture, public space and landscape are central to this.

Quality of place and space, and the movement and life they support, play a key role in delivering the objectives of the Edinburgh Development Concordat and other national and local policies.





T h e   E d i n b u r g h   D e v e l o p m e n t   C o n c o r d a t

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