



Currie Community Council

If replying to this letter, please write to:

Archie Clark, Millbank, 33 Lanark Road West,
Currie, Midlothian. EH14 5JX.

Home Tel. 0131 449 4703

Office Tel. 0131 225 8444

For the attention of Sandra Carey,
Scottish Executive Development Department,
Planning Division,
Area 2-H
Victoria Quay,
EDINBURGH. EH6 6QQ.

20th February 2007

Dear Ms Carey
Consultation on Draft West Edinburgh Planning Framework 2006

I refer to the above received under cover of your letter dated 29th November 2006 and offer the following comments.

We are disappointed to find that the emphasis is almost entirely economic without any real appreciation of the damage that will be caused to the setting of the City and the need to contain growth. It appears the Executive is reacting to commercial demands rather than taking an holistic view. Indeed, the document unashamedly states that growing the economy is the Executive's "top priority". Where lies the list of priorities from which this one was plucked? Is the value of the landscape to be measured in how many square metres of commercial space it can provide without any calculation of its place in boosting the tourist industry? Does money matter more than ensuring that future generations have a nice environment in which to bring up their families? This suggests that the Scottish Executive is considering short term gain instead of taking the longer view of what our country wants to look like in 100 years' time.

While the word "sustainable" is occasionally used, there is no awareness that by permitting sprawl, a contrary concept is being promoted. It appears the main driver for expansion in the vicinity of Edinburgh Airport is a belief, based on dubious figures, that airline traffic will continue its artificially steep climb. We do not believe this will be so. Cheap air fares and costly land travel can only continue while fuel is available at relatively low cost and when it can be obtained on the continent as our own reserves become depleted. We would have thought the reference in para. 08 to air travel contributing "a significant amount" to greenhouse gas emissions would have been reflected in an understanding that *now* is the time to review the need to promote *other* forms of transport.

We find it difficult to understand how a legal agreement of only 10 years' duration for international institutions can sit beside quality buildings whose lifespan after that period must be in doubt. [Page 9 – International Business Gateway.] As a nation, we have plenty of experience of companies taking advantage of grants for periods much longer than 10 years, then rapidly removing themselves to another part of the globe when decisions are made at some remote head office. That results in empty buildings and a dramatic loss of employment. By their very nature, "international" companies can flit from country to country. A 40-year agreement may seem unrealistic to the Executive but that is what is required if buildings of quality are to be built.

continued/...

Currie Community Council

Chairman: Graham Dane, 25 Thomson Road, Currie. EH14 5HT. dane@enterprise.net

Visit our website at <http://www.ma.hw.ac.uk/cccl>

More than doubling the number of jobs in the area (from 20,000 to 50,000) will inevitably mean more commuting from Edinburgh and other places. Why is the Scottish Executive promoting this outward shift when there are many brownfield sites available within the City boundary? Has the Executive prepared any analysis of the extra fuel (including electricity from remote power stations) that this will require to bring people scattered over the 100 square miles that is Edinburgh to this area? It is not apparent from the documentation. Where is the proof that the Executive is not promoting something that is unsustainable? Removal of the Green Belt land that provides the setting for the City would be unnecessary if inner City sites were promoted instead and the enormous amount of finance for a single tramline used instead to improve core inner City links.

We are surprised that there is only one rather inadequate and insufficiently detailed map included in the three glossy documents we received. We asked for one providing a clearer description of the extent of the area under consultation and were told that none existed. The Schedules include roads and places that are not even on the map. How can one come to an informed judgement when the information is just not there? West Edinburgh is a very big area and is not confined to the Green Belt round the Airport! Considering that the Forth Road Crossing will need to be replaced within the lifespan of this proposal, the lack of any reference as to when resources are to be made available to enable that workforce currently domiciled north of the Forth to reach the site is a serious omission. The implications of failure to include a mention of a replacement Forth crossing are not lost on this Community Council as people will look for houses where the need to commute across the Forth is not a problem. We are well aware that developers are already looking at some very large areas of land on the west of the City with a view to constructing large housing estates.

It appears the Scottish Executive is following the "Heathrow Model" where a major airport is surrounded by sheds and of necessity, extended lines of communication are required. If the Central Belt is not to become one solid built-up area of cheap buildings of poor quality, then a different approach is necessary. As it is, the once simple approach to Edinburgh Airport, itself a landmark building, has become one tortuous chicane of endless roundabouts. What is now being proposed is an even bigger log jam, compounded by whatever traffic is going to the Royal Highland Show. The WEPF Environmental Report para. 1.4.1, 7th Bullet makes the point. Far too many competing proposals vie for the same conduits to feed the Airport.

Para. 16 states that "the environmental quality of the gateway to Scotland's capital city .. needs to be protected and enhanced". Here we agree but unfortunately, this document does not indicate that the Executive has any proposals as to how this could be achieved. We believe that more research should be undertaken to reassess how existing townships could provide the facilities proposed in these documents, within their existing boundaries.

I hope you will find these comments useful.

Yours sincerely



Archibald J.C. Clark
(Planning Convenor)

WEPF01_SE

Currie Community Council

Chairman: Graham Dane, 25 Thomson Road, Currie. EH14 5HT. dane@enterprise.net

Visit our website at <http://www.ma.hw.ac.uk/ccc/>