

Notes of the meeting between Councillor Perry, Convenor of the Planning Committee of Edinburgh City Council, Alison Kirkwood, Principal Planner, Edinburgh City Council and Cammo Residents Association Committee Members Gary Bennett (Chair), Grant McCulloch and Sally Chalmers

City Chambers. Monday 24 June 2013.

The key issues discussed were:

The status of the David Murray proposals for the City Council to release green belt land for a 600 acre “garden district” to the west of Edinburgh, between the business park at the Gyle and Heriot-Watt University.

The response on the Murray proposal from the planners seems to be that the bulk of it lies outside the boundaries of west Edinburgh. We contend that the Murray / West Edinburgh proposals do not need to be confined to ward or other administrative boundaries. After all, Gogar is more West Edinburgh than Cammo!

CRA action : The CRA will write to Councillor Perry and Alison Kirkwood asking why they view the boundary issue is insurmountable. We will also point to Murray’s contention that he has public support, that the plans should benefit the environment as people will live within walking distance of key employment hubs, the Murray plans include the building of new schools avoiding the need for boundary change and that by moving the housing closer to employment and transport links, including the tram, adverse affects on the traffic flows at the Gogarburn, Maybury and Barnton junctions should be minimised.

Why has Cammo been selected as the area of green belt to be released (eg Balerno and Currie not being proposed for development in the plan)?

Their main objection to Currie and Balerno seems to be the single road access to Edinburgh which they recognise is already congested.

CRA view: We understand that there is a current proposal being submitted to the LDP for a Balerno Relief Road which could be funded by land release. We would also contend that Maybury Road is also a single main route for us to access the City Bypass, Glasgow Road, Airport, Gyle and all points south and that this will become the only route if Cammo Walk is closed to vehicular traffic as proposed in the Local Development Plan and Turnhouse Road becomes congested through building on the Maybury site. We need to feel confident that there is a robust case for releasing green belt land at Cammo and its selection is based on a full consideration of all options.

Is Cammo effective?

Developers have shown an interest in the site according to A Kirkwood.

Is so much land really needed when we are still in an economic downturn with house buying at a low?

Councillor Perry and A Kirkwood claimed that their hands were tied by the Scottish Government process which requires 5 years' supply of land developers are interested in building on.

CRA view : We would dispute this. Edinburgh City Council should do more to protect Edinburgh and its green belt and should robustly defend urban sprawl in the country's capital city which is known throughout the world for its beauty and benefits economically as a result of this reputation. Local authorities set the numbers in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy and the Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SESPlan).

Why is the Local Development Plan allocating 3,200 houses in West Edinburgh SESPlan requires 2,000 houses in West Edinburgh up to 2024?

Councillor Perry and A Kirkwood stressed that the figures that the Council is working to are dependent on an update / review of the Strategic Development Plan. This will reflect any changes to the Scottish Planning Policy which is currently out for consultation (deadline 23 July 2013).

CRA action : CRA will submit a representation to the Scottish Government on this and lobby MSP's on the following:

- what constitutes a "generous" supply of land for housing?
- how are sites established as effective or capable of becoming effective for housing supply within the plan period and who determines this?
- Strengthen protection for the green field sites in the policy. For example, the policy should require that more work is done in the first instance to make existing sites in need of development economically viable. It is not acceptable that sites ripe for development lie undeveloped around Edinburgh while plans are put in place to encroach into the green belt to develop housing.

Councillor Perry and A Kirkwood stated that the Council is under pressure to 'give the developers greenbelt' as these sites are seen as more economically viable. We could have the crazy situation however that developers say that they will develop Cammo etc., be given permission to build, not actually build anything as they say it is not economically viable and then DEMAND more Greenbelt which the council are bound to give to them!

Next steps

All those who submitted representations to the Local Development Plan will be informed when a summary of the representations is published.

CRA action : We will email Councillor Perry and A Kirkwood covering the points outlined above. This will also include a point that whatever the outcome of the Scottish Planning

Policy Consultation, Edinburgh City Council needs to look again at its interpretation of it bearing in mind that it is the Council's responsibility as an elected body is to balance planning matters with listening to local communities and to produce a plan which give full consideration to all of the options treating all of them equally.

CRA will submit a representation on the Scottish Planning Policy consultation.

CRA will continue to lobby Councillors and MSPs.