

Minutes

Planning Committee

2.00pm, Wednesday 11 August 2021

Present

Councillors Gardiner (Convener), Child (Vice-Convener), Booth, Cameron, Gordon, Main (substituting for Councillor Staniforth), Mitchell, Osler, Rose, Whyte (substituting for Councillor Mowat) and Young.

1. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the Planning Committee of 19 May 2021 as a correct record.

2. Business Bulletin

The Committee's business bulletin for 11 August 2021 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the business bulletin.
- 2) To agree to include statistical information in the next Business Bulletin on Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 3) To agree that statistical information on the work that had been carried out on reducing the numbers of planning applications that had not been determined within the statutory time period and where applicants had appealed for non-determination of applications would be included in the Business Bulletin of the next Planning Committee.
- 4) To agree that the planning guidance provided in libraries would be circulated to Community Councils.

(Reference – business bulletin, submitted)

3. Short-Term Let Area of Control

A written deputation from the Cockburn Association was accepted and circulated to the Committee.

Committee considered a report that proposed that the entire Council area was designated as a Short-Term Let Control Area. The draft proposal was supported by an evidence report and would be subject to public consultation.

Designation of a Short-Term Let Control Area for the entire Council area would not be a blanket ban, but it would bring the change of use of all dwellings to short-term lets within planning control, allowing decisions to be taken in accordance with the Development Plan and material consideration. The Short-Term Let Control Area would not impact on letting out of rooms or entire property lets where the property was the principal home of the host and the host was absent.

Decision

- 1) To approve the draft proposal to designate the entire Council area as a Short-Term Let Control area.
- 2) To note that a six week consultation period was proposed.
- 3) To note that following a period of consultation a final proposal would be put before Committee.
- 4) To note that approval from Scottish Ministers was required for designation of a control area.
- 5) To note that one of the main justifications for the STL control area was the loss of residential housing to STLs; to note with regret that the current (2016) Local Development Plan had no policies on loss of housing, and therefore to note with regret that this could not currently be used as grounds for refusing an STL application; to note that the Choices for City Plan consultation did include a policy on loss of housing which, if approved in a new plan by this Committee, may enable this to be taken into account in the future.
- 6) To note that the current guidance on Short-Term Lets was limited to a single paragraph in the Guidance for Businesses (p.9), but that whilst this outlined factors to be considered, it did not offer firm advice on what was likely to be acceptable and what was not; to agree that businesses proposing STLs, as well as residents with an STL in their neighbourhood, would benefit from clearer guidance on what was, and what was not, likely to be acceptable, and therefore to agree to bring forward draft guidance as soon as possible on STLs after the feedback consultation had established the scope of the control area.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

4. Development Management Discretionary Charges Update

An update was provided on the refreshed non-material variation application (NMVA) service introduced by the Council on 1 April 2021.

The NMVA process was functioning smoothly with 49 variation requests received as at 21 June 2021, which represented £7,788 of income from the newly introduced charges. A quality assurance regime was being put in place to assess the quality of service being provided to customers.

Decision

- 1) To note that the changes to the Council's non-material variation service which were agreed on 3 February 2021 were implemented on 1 April 2021.
- 2) To note the update provided on application numbers and income from 1 April 2021 – 21 June 2021.
- 3) To note that an update on the changes would be brought to a future meeting of the Planning Committee once sufficient data had been collected on performance.

(References – Planning Committee, 3 February 2021 (item 6); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

5. Training and Awareness Raising Programme

Details were provided of the proposed themes and dates for the training and awareness programme for Planning Committee members, and where relevant, members from other Council Committees.

Decision

- 1) To approve the priorities for training and awareness raising over the next months and the indicative themes for workshops.
- 2) To note the decision of Policy and Sustainability Committee on 20 April 2021 to roll out carbon literacy training to key staff and elected members, and therefore to agree that all elected members of the Planning Committee should be offered, and be encouraged to attend, carbon literacy training, and that carbon literacy would be included in the elected member training and awareness programme in the future.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

6. Planning Improvement Plan - Update

Committee considered a report that provided an update on the Council's refreshed Planning Improvement Plan (PIP).

Progress had been made in a number of areas since the PIP was refreshed in February 2021. Additionally, all recommendations of an internal audit on developer

contributions had now been implemented and closed. The new and revised procedures which resulted would continue to be subject to quality assurance processes.

Decision

To note the progress which had been made on the implementation of the Planning Service's Improvement Plan and progress against internal audit actions on developer contributions.

(References – Transport and Environment Committee, 19 February 2021 (item 2); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

7. Edinburgh Local Development Plan: Action Programme 2021 - adoption

Decision

To continue the report to provide further information on T7 project costings and on the status and reasons for the removal of some transport projects, and to bring the report back to the December 2021 Planning Committee.

(Reference - report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

8. Motion by Councillor Rose – uPVC Windows

The following motion by Councillor Rose was submitted in terms of Standing Order 17:

“Committee:

- 1) Notes current restrictions on installing uPVC windows in Edinburgh, particularly in conservation areas
- 2) Notes changes to material in manufacturing uPVC windows and changes in the end of life implications for uPVC window materials
- 3) Notes the increasing importance in the contribution to home warmth and efficiency of windows
- 4) Notes the sustained high differential cost between timber and uPVC windows
- 5) Notes the impacts of costs in preventing greater home efficiency
- 6) Instructs a report in 3 cycles examining the above and related issues to update the Committee on whether changes in the current standards is appropriate.”

- moved by Councillor Rose, seconded by Councillor Mowat

Amendment

- 1) Notes current restrictions on installing uPVC windows in Edinburgh,

particularly in conservation areas

- 2) Notes changes to material in manufacturing uPVC windows and changes in the end of life implications for uPVC window materials
- 3) Notes the increasing importance in the contribution to home warmth and efficiency of windows
- 4) Notes the assessment of building fabric needs to consider whole life cost, longevity, aesthetics and embodied energy
- 5) Notes that advice and financial assistance towards the cost of energy efficiency improvements, including the installation of energy efficient windows, can be obtained from the Energy Saving Trust and Home Energy Scotland
- 6) Agrees that improvements to the energy efficiency of homes is essential to tackle the climate crisis and achieve the council's net zero carbon target, but that energy efficiency improvements can and should be made in a way that is sympathetic to the period features of many of our older homes, and the special character of our conservation areas;
- 7) Requests an update to committee members on the advice and financial assistance that is available to citizens to undertake energy efficiency improvements, including to the windows in their homes.
- 8) Instructs a scoping report be brought to February 2022 Planning Committee examining built environment and building fabric related issues to identify whether changes in the current policies and guidance is appropriate in order to address the climate change emergency and zero carbon commitment”

- moved by Councillor Gardiner seconded by Councillor Child

Voting

For the Motion - 3

For the Amendment - 8

(For the motion – Councillors Mitchell, Mowat and Rose

For the amendment – Councillors Booth, Cameron, Child, Gardiner, Gordon, Osler, Staniforth and Young)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted amendment by Councillor Gardiner:

Committee:

- 1) Notes current restrictions on installing uPVC windows in Edinburgh, particularly in conservation areas

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- 2) Notes changes to material in manufacturing uPVC windows and changes in the end of life implications for uPVC window materials
- 3) Notes the increasing importance in the contribution to home warmth and efficiency of windows
- 4) Notes the assessment of building fabric needs to consider whole life cost, longevity, aesthetics and embodied energy
- 5) Notes that advice and financial assistance towards the cost of energy efficiency improvements, including the installation of energy efficient windows, can be obtained from the Energy Saving Trust and Home Energy Scotland
- 6) Agrees that improvements to the energy efficiency of homes is essential to tackle the climate crisis and achieve the council's net zero carbon target, but that energy efficiency improvements can and should be made in a way that is sympathetic to the period features of many of our older homes, and the special character of our conservation areas;
- 7) Requests an update to committee members on the advice and financial assistance that is available to citizens to undertake energy efficiency improvements, including to the windows in their homes.
- 8) Instructs a scoping report be brought to February 2022 Planning Committee examining built environment and building fabric related issues to identify whether changes in the current policies and guidance is appropriate in order to address the climate change emergency and zero carbon commitment.