

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

OBJECTION 23 – JET CAMERON

I would like to object to the Bill recently being promoted by The City of Edinburgh Council dated the 25th April 2013 to make provision for an Act of the Scottish Parliament to change the status of Portobello Park so as to permit the City of Edinburgh Council to appropriate it for the purposes of the Council's functions as an education authority; and for connected purposes.

My objection is for the whole of the Bill.

I am objecting to the Bill for various concerns which include loss of green amenity space; concern over a precedent being set for removal of Common Good land; and need for an alternative option to be considered by the Council and therefore to remove the requirement to appropriate the Park for their own gain in this indirect way.

My detailed reasons why I feel I would be adversely affected by this Bill are as follows:

1. **Amenity access to Green space** - I feel that my ability to access open space in the Edinburgh area would be reduced. At present I am able to make use the whole of this park for walking, general exercise, appreciation of wildlife habitat, and for taking in fresh air. I value my ability to do so in this Park. If this Bill is accepted I am certain that my ability to do this at any time of the day or night would be removed through the plans the Council have to develop it. The Council have applied for Planning Permission to use the Park for a function (i.e. School) that would not allow me to freely move around the whole of the Park area. The Green space area is a substantial size and this is one of the Park's benefits allowing a range of activities to take place at the one time, not limited by area or time.
2. **Physical and Mental Benefits** - The benefits of the park are not only physical but mental, living within a large city but being able to see large scale trees and open space is of benefit to me, giving an impression of the countryside within a city. This is one of the many reasons I like to live in Edinburgh and enjoy the importance the City pays to green space. The Council should value this Park in the same way as other areas of established open green space. The Park gives a break from the built up areas and balances out the urban fabric of the city. A city is more than just a development of buildings, open space has its part to play in the quality of the environment. Being able to see the Park regularly has a calming effect on me and I know it also benefits others passing by bus or car along that route even if they never stop.
3. **Protection of Common Good Land** - I am concerned that the Council are ignoring the fact that this park is proven by Law to be Common Good land, defined as this for the long term benefit of all residents of Edinburgh. It was considered many years ago in the original plan for the area that a Park was needed for the community. It is not right that

by promoting this Bill that the Park will push for this protection to be removed. I believe the sole purpose of the Council proposing this Bill is to remove this protection and build upon the park, a short sighted plan. If this happens I am certain that I could be adversely affected by similar Common Good removal around the City which would adversely affect me and my environment. The purpose of Common Good is, by definition, for the common good of all, not just for one sector of the population. Consideration needs to be made for all aspects of the Edinburgh community not just for educational needs.

4. **Development of Brownfield Land first** - There are many areas around Edinburgh of Brownfield land that should be developed before building on an area of green space. This is how I feel about all green space in Edinburgh. I believe the Council is using this Bill to gain powers beyond what is fair by law. If attention was spent developing Brownfield land an excellent school facility could be built elsewhere for the benefit of the Community while retaining the green site for future generations. Finding a way to have both modern educational establishments and green space should be pursued. If this Bill is accepted I am concerned development of Brownfield land will not be pursued which I believe would be a mistake.
5. **Key Edinburgh Views** - The view east towards Arthur's Seat has been considered by many as a key view in Edinburgh. I particularly enjoy that aspect and feel that allowing any construction to take place on the park would be detrimental to this view. The open aspect views from Park Avenue and surrounding streets on all sides would also be affected by any built form on the Park. In terms of the urban design of Portobello and the wider Edinburgh the Park offers a node point, place of reference, and focal point for the area and the community.

I wish these issues to be considered as you review the promotion by the Council.

19 June 2013