

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM BRIAN A ARMSTRONG

I feel strongly that the City of Edinburgh Council should not have pursued a Private Bill to reverse the decision of the Court of Session on the Portobello Park proposals. The clear judgement was that this is inalienable common good land. I consider it arrogant of the Council to revisit this matter other than through the appeal procedure - this they declined to do. Not only is the Council's proposal fundamentally unjust but it creates a precedent for similar action in the future by themselves and by other Scottish Councils.

Councils of the present have sometimes been too inclined to assume that their democratic election permits them to make inappropriate decisions over the uses of common good land. Their duties are to the Edinburgh citizens of the future as much as to the parents of one school now. Parents are inevitably preoccupied solely with the needs of their children and comprise a formidable lobby to obtain their wishes. Following the court's judgement Council leaders should have explored with the Portobello community the options available for the future of the High School rather than colluding with a pressure group.

I believe the Park should remain as open space, as it is designated in the Local Plan, and that brownfield sites should continue to be explored for the High School.

I further believe that this kind of local dispute should not be made a concern for the Scottish Parliament and occupy its time.

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