

Local Government and Communities Committee**Planning (Scotland) Bill****Submission from Mary Gordon**

Point 6: Does the Bill provide more effective avenues for community involvement in the development of plans and decisions that affect their area? Will the proposed Local Place Plans enable communities to influence local development plans and does the Bill ensure adequate financial and technical support for community bodies wishing to develop local place plans? If not, what more needs to be done?

This is all very well but as there is no provision for 3rd party appeal on planning decisions it's a punch in the face for local groups and people. As far as I know only one local group has managed to bring a juridical review of a planning decision in the whole of Scotland. It was regarding the India Buildings Development in Edinburgh - they had to raise £27,000 to do so. This is an ENORMOUS sum which most groups cannot do. It means that unsympathetic developers and councils always have the upper hand. Their track record is pretty abysmal (see Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh) This is hardly democratic with an unequal access to law.

Point 9: Do you support the requirement for local government councillors to be trained in planning matters prior to becoming involved in planning decision making? If not, why not?

Yes yes yes. But as I've seen Councillors with total lack of spacial awareness on the Edinburgh Planning Committee whether this will make any kind of positive impact is anyone's guess.

Point 12: Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Bill?

No mention of protecting Common Good. These have been willy nilly been sold by councils usually for low cost and little benefit to the local populace see New Waverley / Caltongate development Edinburgh, India Buildings Edinburgh.

No mention of prioritising UNESCO World Heritage Status issues in the planning – See Edinburgh.

VAT while it is not charged on new builds but is charged on renovations it will always make it more difficult to make the chase for reuse.