

Grange / Prestonfield Community Council – summary response to Choices for City Plan 2030

(i) Introduction: GPCC has submitted separately via the consultation hub responses to the “Choices for City Plan 2030” document. During the corona virus shutdown GPCC has continued online and at its online meeting on 15th April 2020, it was agreed that we would also send an email summarising our comments and drawing attention to some further points as set out below.

(ii) Overview: “Choices for City Plan 2030” and the buttressing studies form the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the next Local Development Plan (LDP) to 2030. Important though all that is, that is all it is. Close focus responses are required to close focus questions, but we must not lose sight of the big practicalities. The MIR and LDP to come are linked to the City Council’s four strategic objectives, but cannot fulfill these ambitious aims alone. Unless there is a City Council-led detailed programme for implementation and financing, expectations will be raised which cannot possibly be met.

The built environment and infrastructure of 2030 Edinburgh are mostly already here. New development in the LDP period, even if the market is buoyant, will still be a relatively small part of the whole. So how to bring about and pay for necessary change and improvement to existing private and public built assets and the spaces around them are equally important and difficult challenges.

Whilst we support many of the preferred options in the “Choices” documentation, we have significant caveats and comments, which the consultation hub process rather inhibits. It is structured around the CEC preferred option or other limited choices, whereas we would have preferred more encouragement for other ideas or approaches.

New challenges in spring 2020 came upon all of us with the corona virus shutdown and related impacts. Some lessons could perhaps already be learned to inform City Plan 2030 and a similar crisis could happen again. Section (iv) below sets out a few thoughts.

(iii) Local Development Plan Scheme: Population movements and changes described in the MIR documents are based on projections from 2011 census data and a lot depends on the accuracy of these forecasts for a relevant MIR and the subsequent LDP “City Plan 2030”. In January 2020 a revised LDP Scheme forecast the adoption of City Plan 2030 in February 2022, whereas the August 2018 Scheme forecast LDP adoption in March 2021, so there has already been a drift of almost a year in projected LDP adoption. The January 2020 Scheme is a tight timetable with no allowance for any further delays of any sort.

(iv) Resetting the date of LDP Adoption: The corona virus crisis could impose a further substantial delay of unknown duration in the adoption of City Plan 2030. We think it would be better to decide now to delay the adoption of the new LDP until there has been time to absorb preliminary results from the March 2021 census, so as to be able to test the assumptions for the new LDP.

We think a further delay such as this need not be excessive, but could also have other benefits, allowing time for consideration of other LDP scenarios possibly arising from the corona virus crisis, such as lower or zero economic growth, accelerating retail changes, the impact on office and workplace spatial demand from changing work patterns and necessary changes to spatial and environmental criteria in homes to reflect working from home. If fewer students come from elsewhere to study here in face-to-face tuition throughout their course, will we need so much purpose-built student accommodation? How many tourists will come here, seeking what of our

culture, heritage and space? We could maybe look at not just carbon neutrality, but reducing carbon consumption further, recognising the value of embedded carbon in the existing building stock and taking that fully into account in the carbon balance sheet.

Tony Harris

On Behalf of GPCC