



## SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Development Department  
Planning Division

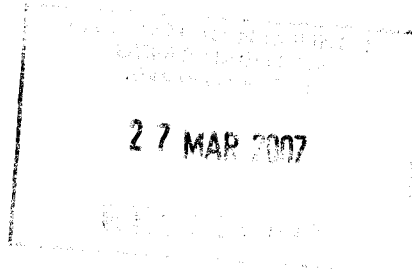
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Your ref: ELSP/2/2  
Our ref: B1194588

23 March 2007



Dear Mr Collins

### **EDINBURGH AND THE LOTHIAN STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW 2020 REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF ABANDONMENT**

I refer to Ian Glen's letter dated 24 January 2007, sent on behalf of the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan Joint Liaison Committee, seeking the approval of Scottish Ministers for the abandonment of the current review of the above named plan.

Ministers have considered the arguments put forward for abandoning the review and refocusing on early work for the strategic development plan for the wider city region. They consider that the planning context has changed significantly since 2004 and agree that circumstances mean that preparation of the structure plan review is unlikely to be possible in the timescale set out in the 2004 approval letter. Therefore, subject to the caveats below, Ministers are content that the current review process is abandoned.

Housing land supply is a crucial issue in the Edinburgh city region. Although it is your view that monitoring and action processes are in place to ensure that the existing structure plan can deliver sufficient housing land in the short term, it will be essential that the new strategic development plan makes more land available in line with identified need in the area. In the meantime, Ministers remain concerned about the pace of delivery of housing land in the area and are particularly keen to see the early resolution of the difficulties that have delayed development in the South East Wedge. They expect authorities to closely monitor the situation and, if necessary, release additional land in line with the maintenance of the five-year land supply requirements of Policy HOU 10 in the approved structure plan. They also expect that authorities will do all they can to ensure that houses and, in particular, affordable housing units are developed on allocated sites.

To emphasise the importance that Ministers attach to this issue, we expect the Councils, following discussion with the house-building industry, to submit by July a succinct overview of recent and planned house building in Edinburgh and Lothians, and proposals for the release of land overcoming planning constraints which inhibit progress on the provision of new housing. As you already undertake an annual housing land audit process and prepare an annual housing monitor, there would be merit in this overview being updated every year to ensure the issue of housing is kept in clear

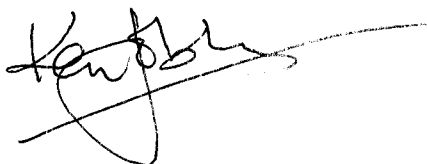


focus as the new strategic development plan is prepared. If necessary, the Chief Planner will convene a meeting to follow up the overview.

The new strategic development plan should be used to provide greater opportunities for the more effective delivery of housing land in sustainable locations. Therefore, early work for this new plan must start immediately. It is expected that formal preparation of the strategic development plan can commence in 2008 once the relevant provisions in the new Planning Act have been commenced and secondary legislation is in place. The authorities should project manage preparation of the plan to a tight timetable and it must be submitted to Ministers within 2 years of commencement of the provisions in the Act.

The Joint Liaison Committee should be aware of the need to manage the risk of working with Fife and Scottish Borders Councils ahead of the formal confirmation of the designation order for the strategic development planning authorities. The draft designation order which will confirm which authorities are to work together to prepare the new strategic development plans is due to be published for consultation later this year.

Yours sincerely



**KEN JOBLING**  
**Principal Planner**