Local Government and Communities Committee

Planning (Scotland) Bill

Submission from Bill Mason

I have been made aware of the consultation on current planning legislation and would like to ask that consideration be given to granting individual and community objectors on planning applications an ‘equal right of appeal’. At present, the planning process appears to be balanced in favour of developers and it is extremely difficult for those objecting to a development (or to certain features of a development) to gain an adequate hearing in the process. Individual objectors have to give up their own time, energy, and monies to research a proposal, and it can be extremely discouraging (and democratically demotivating) to find that objectors are not equal in the process and that developers can effectively wear a community down through a process of attrition and repeated appeals.

There is little point in consulting on an application if the comments of those who know a site or neighbourhood well are essentially ignored. All the current process does is to make people cynical about the planning system and the appeal procedures – an equal right of appeal would do much to restore people’s faith in the system and would encourage more informed and enthusiastic community engagement.

Kind regards,

Bill Mason