Local Government and Communities Committee

Planning (Scotland) Bill

Submission from Michael Martin

As a local community volunteer, I would ask you most strongly to include a Community Right of Appeal (CRA) in this Bill.

Our community has seen many local developments that completely ignore local opinion and expertise - despite submitting comments to the CEC Planning Department, and despite local Planning Committee councillors agreeing - and voting - with us, the developer routinely goes to Appeal, and the proposal often goes through, on the decision of one unelected official.

It is obvious from the above, that profit led and cash rich developers are leading development. This often means going against Local Development Plans and Strategic Development Plans, and the best intentions of Planning staff, who attempt to site development near sustainable transport links, amenities and employment areas. Planners and local residents alike have their views routinely ignored, while developers site new housing on profitable Green Belt land, with top end housing at profitable prices.

The results are already clear – development that is sited away from sustainable sites with access to transport, employment and amenities, congestion and pollution on our roads, lack of affordable public housing (- not profitable enough), food producing Green Belt destroyed and recreational green spaces built over.

A Community Right of Appeal would balance this very uneven playing field and deter developers from submitting proposals that could be refused by a community. It would lead to a respectful dialogue between community and developer, which could result in genuinely useful development. Without this safeguard, any consultation or involvement will continue to be a charade, trumped by the inevitable, one sided Appeal.

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