

Customer Ref: 01709      Response Ref: ANON-KU2U-GPUD-Q  
Name: James Wall  
Response Type: Agent / Consultant  
On behalf of: Locate Developments

Supporting Info: Yes  
Email: james.wall@turley.co.uk

Choice 1 A

**We want to connect our places, parks and green spaces together as part of a city-wide, regional, and national green network. We want new development to connect to, and deliver this network. Do you agree with this? - Select support / don't support**

Short Response: Not Answered

Explanation: Not Answered

Choice 1 B

**We want to change our policy to require all development (including change of use) to include green and blue infrastructure. Do you agree with this? - Support / Object**

Short Response: Not Answered

Explanation: Not Answered

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Choice 1 C

**We want to identify areas that can be used for future water management to enable adaptation to climate change. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 1 D

**We want to clearly set out under what circumstances the development of poor quality or underused open space will be considered acceptable. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 1 E

**We want to introduce a new 'extra-large green space standard' which recognises that as we grow communities will need access to green spaces more than 5 hectares. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice 1 F

**We want to identify specific sites for new allotments and food growing, both as part of new development sites and within open space in the urban area. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 1 F

**We want to identify specific sites for new allotments and food growing, both as part of new development sites and within open space in the urban area. Do you agree with this? - Upload (max size 3mb)**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 1 G

**We want to identify space for additional cemetery provision, including the potential for green and woodland burials. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **1 H**

**We want to revise our existing policies and green space designations to ensure that new green spaces have long term maintenance and management arrangements in place. Do you agree with this? - Yes/No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **2 A**

**We want all development (including change of use), through design and access statements, to demonstrate how their design will incorporate measures to tackle and adapt to climate change, their future adaptability and measures to address accessibility for people with varying needs, age and mobility issues as a key part of their layouts. - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **2 B**

**We want to revise our policies on density to ensure that we make best use of the limited space in our city and that sites are not under-developed. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **2 C**

**We want to revise our design and layout policies to achieve ensure their layouts deliver active travel and connectivity links. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **2 D**

**We want all development, including student housing, to deliver quality open space and public realm, useable for a range of activities, including drying space, without losing densities. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **3 A**

**We want all buildings and conversions to meet the zero carbon / platinum standards as set out in the current Scottish Building Regulations. Instead we could require new development to meet the bronze, silver or gold standard. Which standard should new development in Edinburgh meet? - Which standard?**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **4 A**

**We want to work with local communities to prepare Place Briefs for areas and sites within City Plan 2030 highlighting the key elements of design, layout, and transport, education and healthcare infrastructure development should deliver. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **4 B**

**We want to support Local Place Plans being prepared by our communities. City Plan 2030 will set out how Local Place Plans can help us achieve great places and support community ambitions. - How should the Council work with local communities to prepare Local Place Plans?**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **5 A**

**We want City Plan 2030 to direct development to where there is existing infrastructure capacity, including education, healthcare and sustainable transport, or where potential new infrastructure will be accommodated and deliverable within the plan period. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **5 B**

**We want City Plan 2030 to set out where new community facilities are needed, and that these must be well connected to active travel routes and in locations with high accessibility to good sustainable public transport services. Do you agree with this? - Yes / NO**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **5 C**

**We want to reflect the desire to co-locate our community services close to the communities they serve, supporting a high walk-in population and reducing the need to travel. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **5 D1**

**We want to set out in the plan where development will be expected to contribute toward new or expanded community infrastructure. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice 5 D2

**We want to use cumulative contribution zones to determine infrastructure actions, costs and delivery mechanisms. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 5 E

**We want to stop using supplementary guidance and set out guidance for developer contributions within the plan, Action Programme and in non-statutory guidance. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 6 A

**We want to create a new policy that assesses development against its ability to meet our targets for public transport usage and walking and cycling. These targets will vary according to the current or planned public transport services and high-quality active travel routes. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation



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Choice **6 B**

**We want to use Place Briefs to set the targets for trips by walking, cycling and public transport based on current and planned transit interventions. This will determine appropriate parking levels to support high use of public transport. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **7 A**

**We want to determine parking levels in development based on targets for trips by walking, cycling and public transport. These targets could be set by area, development type, or both and will be supported by other measures to control on-street parking. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **7 B**

**We want to protect against the development of additional car parking in the city centre to support the delivery of the Council's city centre transformation programme. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **7 C**

**We want to update our parking policies to control demand and to support parking for bikes, those with disabilities and electric vehicles via charging infrastructure. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **7 D**

**We want to support the city's park and ride infrastructure by safeguarding sites for new park and ride and extensions, including any other sites that are identified in the City Mobility Plan or its action plan. Do you agree with this? - We want to support the city's park and ride infrastructure by safeguarding sites for new park and ride and extensions, including any other sites that are identified in the City Mobility Plan or its action plan.**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **8 A**

**We want to update our policy on the Cycle and Footpath Network to provide criteria for identifying new routes. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **8 B**

**As part of the City Centre Transformation and other Council and partner projects to improve strategic walking and cycling links around the city, we want to add the following routes (along with our existing safeguards) to our network as active travel proposals to ensure that they are delivered. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **8 C**

**We want City Plan 2030 to safeguard and add any other strategic active travel links within any of the proposed options for allocated sites. We also want the City Plan 2030 to include any new strategic active travel links which may be identified in the forthcoming City Plan 2030 Transport Appraisal, the City Mobility Plan, or which are identified through this consultation. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **8 C**

**We want City Plan 2030 to safeguard and add any other strategic active travel links within any of the proposed options for allocated sites. We also want the City Plan 2030 to include any new strategic active travel links which may be identified in the forthcoming City Plan 2030 Transport Appraisal, the City Mobility Plan, or which are identified through this consultation. Do you agree with this? - Upload new cycle routes**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **9 A**

**We want to consult on designating Edinburgh, or parts of Edinburgh, as a 'Short Term Let Control Area' where planning permission will always be required for the change of use of whole properties for short-term lets. Do you agree with this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **9 B**

**We want to create a new policy on the loss of homes to alternative uses. This new policy will be used when planning permission is required for a change of use of residential flats and houses to short-stay commercial visitor accommodation or other uses. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **10 A**

**We want to revise our policy on purpose-built student housing. We want to ensure that student housing is delivered at the right scale and in the right locations, helps create sustainable communities and looks after student’s wellbeing. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

**Explanation** NEW PURPOSE-BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION TO BE LOCATED ON A DIRECT WALKING, CYCLING, OR PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTE TO ITS INTENDED UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE  
Locate Developments are broadly supportive of new purpose-built student accommodation being convenient to direct walking, cycling or public transport routes. However, the Council should consider the potential conflict between this proposed policy and the current non-statutory student guidance which seeks to direct student accommodation to areas which have lower concentrations of students (the Council currently considers areas of high concentration to be those in excess of 50% students). Areas with lower student concentrations tend to be further away from university campuses and therefore could make it more difficult to provide accommodation on a direct walking, cycling, or public transport route to an intended university or college.  
TO DELIVER MARKET AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AS PART OF THE MIX  
We have provided a detailed response to this proposed requirement in Choice 10 (B).  
TO BE BUILT FOR, AND MANAGED BY, ONE OF EDINBURGH’S UNIVERSITIES OR COLLEGES  
Locate Developments have concerns regarding this proposed requirement. Firstly, this would place a significant responsibility on universities to invest in student accommodation and to provide the resources to manage that student accommodation. Universities have tended to focus on ensuring that first year students have accommodation which means that unless universities were to significantly invest in purpose built student accommodation then second, third and fourth year students could find themselves in the private rented HMO market competing for available rented accommodation and taking up accommodation which could otherwise be used for families. The impact on universities of having to meet this additional need would be unsustainable and undesirable. The private sector can efficiently and effectively meet the varying needs of students by delivering high quality purpose built accommodation. In addition, the non-affiliation of the private sector to individual institutions means that all students have access to the same quality and variety of accommodation not just those studying at a particular college or university. The private sector continually demonstrates its ability to be flexible to the needs and demands of the student population in a market driven economy. The increased standard of accommodation has been driven by competition between private operators reacting at speed to the changing needs of the student community. This has, in turn, created a higher quality and more diverse choice of student accommodation in Edinburgh.  
DELIVER A MAXIMUM OF 10% STUDIO FLATS  
We are unclear what the justification is for a maximum of 10% studios flats to be delivered as part of student accommodation developments and there is no evidence provided for why studio flats are unpopular to students. The provision of studio accommodation is regulated by demand and operators of purpose built student accommodation provide accordingly. Between different groups of students, there is not always a ‘one size fits all’ approach to the type of student accommodation which is desired as evidenced in the UCAS survey which shows that 83% of international students were happy with studio accommodation compared with the equivalent figure of 71% for all students. The impact from COVID-19 is also likely to make studio accommodation a more popular choice as this allows independent living unlike other models which do not allow the option of social distancing. Again, the demand for these will be driven by the market and the private sector is best placed to respond to the needs and demands from students. In our view the proposed policy is overly prescriptive and is seemingly not based on any evidence of need and demand for such accommodation.

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**Supporting Info**

Yes

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**Response Type**

Agent / Consultant

**On behalf of:**

Locate Developments

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Choice 10 B

**We want to create a new policy framework which sets out a requirement for housing on all sites over a certain size coming forward for development. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

**Explanation** Locate Developments would strongly object if this policy was carried through to the LDP and find it an unreasonable requirement to place on developers. We provide a summary of our reasoning below:  
**NO JUSTIFICATION FOR POLICY**  
There is no reasoned justification or evidence provided which would support the proposed policy. In our view, it is confused and would only lead to significant implications on the development viability of land uses which the policy includes. The supporting text of Choice 10 Creating sustainable communities provides the following justification for the proposed policy: "Purpose-built student housing, retail, leisure, hotels and other commercial developments, are being built often at the expense of creating strong sustainable communities. We want sites coming forward for these uses to also deliver new housing." This statement suggests that nearly all proposals for the land uses identified are being built at the expense of creating strong sustainable communities. At no point has any attempt been made to define what is meant by a 'strong sustainable community' and how the land uses have been developed to the detriment of communities. In our view this assertion is completely unjustified and there is no evidence to support it. The development of other land uses responds to market need and demand and provides significant social and economic benefits to communities. Purpose-built student accommodation provides students with a quality choice of accommodation which, in turn, frees up general residential housing which would otherwise be used by students living in HMOs. The impact of having a significant number of economically active students in an area can also have an extremely positive effect on local businesses which will be to the benefit of local communities and deliver jobs and regeneration. Furthermore, hotels play a vital function in supporting the economy by providing managed accommodation for tourists and business. Hotel development will play a particularly important role in supporting the visitor economy as the Council seeks to restrict the use of AirBNB accommodation (see Choice 9). It is therefore alarming that should the Council pursue this policy that it will effectively make these land uses unviable for development. In the context of student accommodation, the Council confirmed that there was no evidence that student numbers have had a measurable negative impact on communities. In paragraph 3.10 of a report to Planning Committee of 25 February 2016 which sought approval of the revised non-statutory student guidance it was stated that: "there is no evidence that the existing range of student concentrations across Edinburgh have created a measurable negative impact on a community or place." The assertion, then, that student accommodation has been at the expense of strong sustainable communities is not one which is based on any evidence. Furthermore, no evidence has been provided by the Council to show how the other land uses (such as hotels, retail etc.) set out in Choice 10 B have had a measurable negative impact on communities. As documented in the same report to Planning Committee on 25 February 2016, the DPEA and Chief Planner made it clear that guidance which seeks to resist student accommodation would need to quantify any harm from this particular land use: "any guidance which resisted additional student accommodation would need to be able to quantify any harm from this particular land use."  
  
Furthermore, a DPEA Reporter on a recent appeal decision (PPA-230-2298) relating to student accommodation at 543 Gorgie Road provided similar comments in that if there was no evidence of harm from the proposals then it would be illogical to pursue a policy line which requires 50% residential

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housing to be provided and reduces the amount of student accommodation which can come forward. This appeal decision is explained fully in the subsequent section. As the Council has not provided any evidence that the land uses associated with this proposed policy have caused harm on communities, it would suggest that this policy is merely seeking to leverage more market and affordable housing with no evidence of need and demand. This is evident from the Housing Study which was submitted as a supporting document to Choices for City Plan 2030 which states: "In recent years the development of a significant number of larger student developments, in the Old Town, Southside and Fountainbridge have been on sites where much needed housing would previously have been delivered. A requirement to provide market and affordable housing alongside student housing could mitigate against this." This statement implies that residential development is much needed whereas student accommodation is not needed. This is somewhat contradictory to the Council's position that it has a generous housing land supply which is significantly above its 5 year completions target (this was acknowledged by the Council's Report by the Executive Director of Place to the council's planning committee in October 2019 and also by the Reporter in Appeal Case PPA-230-2298). As there is no evidence of harm from student accommodation and the Council is maintaining a 5 year effective land supply, it is unclear what this policy is seeking to mitigate against. The council recognises the need for PBSA to support its universities and these sites have been amongst the most appropriate locations for this to be provided. The housing requirement has been met in other areas of the city where that use has been the most appropriate. There will be many sites brought forward for residential development that would not be suitable locations for PBSA. The Strategic Development Plan, or in this instance HNDA2, is responsible for identifying the housing land requirement in Edinburgh. This is based on an objective assessment of housing need and demand. It is not for individual authorities to decide on what they consider to be much needed housing. Should the Council need to provide more land for residential housing within the LDP period then they should do so in accordance with paragraph 119 of SPP which states: "Local development plans in city regions should allocate a range of sites which are effective or expected to become effective in the plan period to meet the housing land requirement of the strategic development plan up to year 10 from the expected year of adoption." Choice 12 proposes a number of residential allocations to meet the housing land requirement over the plan period. It is therefore unclear why this policy is seeking additional residential housing over and above the evidenced-based requirement set out in HNDA2. We recognise that windfall sites can also contribute to the housing land supply however they come forward based on market demand. Windfall sites do not prevent other land uses from coming forward through an arbitrary requirement for residential housing and are assessed on their individual merits. The negative impact from this policy would be further exacerbated if residential housing demand dropped over the plan period as a result of an economic downturn. This would prevent other uses coming forward which could otherwise stimulate the economy and meet certain needs. In the current situation where the impact on the housing market from the COVID-19 lockdown is uncertain, policies need to be flexible so that there are not burdensome barriers in place which will stifle the economy. APPEAL DECISION (PPA-230-2298) The requirement for 50% mainstream residential housing on sites over 0.25 hectares first appeared in the non-Statutory Student Guidance (February 2016) albeit being limited to student accommodation. Since the Choices for City Plan 2030 document was published for consultation, on March 11 2020 an appeal was allowed by the DPEA for purpose-built student accommodation at 543 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh. Within the appeal notice, the Reporter dismissed the requirement in the guidance for 50% residential housing as it did not appear in the LDP and because there was no evidence that the proposals would result in excessive student concentrations and therefore it would be illogical to restrict student accommodation coming forward: "... having found that the proposed development complies with part b) of Policy Hou 8, in that the proposals would not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation in the locality, it seems illogical to then pursue a policy line that reduces the potential contribution to the amount of purpose-built and managed accommodation that could be provided on the site." The Reporter also concluded that the Council was considerably above its housing completions target and that therefore there was no justification for favouring housing over student accommodation: "the Report by the Executive Director of Place to the



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council's planning committee in October 2019 shows that Edinburgh's overall five-year house completions programme is 30% above the five year completions target. Furthermore, the adopted LDP assumed a contribution of 4,656 homes from windfall sites whereas the executive director reports that, since April 2015, 6,200 homes have received planning permission on windfall sites of which 1,650 have been completed and 4,140 are programmed for completion in the next five years. I DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THIS PROVIDES CLEAR JUSTIFICATION FOR FAVOURING HOUSING OVER STUDENT ACCOMMODATION ON THE APPEAL SITE."Whilst this appeal was specific to a proposal for student accommodation, in our view the conclusions are relevant to all land uses covered in this proposed policy. It would be illogical to refuse development where there is no evidence of harm particularly when the Council states that it has a generous housing land supply and is allocating sites to meet the housing land requirement over the plan period. VIABILITY IMPLICATIONS ON NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT A requirement of 50% mainstream residential would have significant viability implications on land uses other than residential housing coming forward for development. The provision of the facilities and services in developments such as student accommodation and hotels involve a number of fixed costs that are usually spread across a large number of units. The requirement for 50% residential development on sites would significantly reduce the floor space which could be provided for student or hotel development. This is because the different land uses have vastly different policy requirements. For example, the Council's current policy and guidance requires that residential development provides 20% family housing of 3 bedrooms or more with access to a private garden. This means that you cannot accommodate as many people as you would otherwise be able to in a 100% student development. As far fewer students are able to be accommodated in a single scheme it means that the fixed costs will be significantly higher per unit and rents for students would need to be significantly higher. This could have the potential of making schemes unviable for delivery. Such a requirement would also lead to inefficient use of land given the different policy requirements for each of the uses. Proposals to develop land should seek to maximise the density of development in order to sustainably accommodate the city's population. This policy, therefore, seemingly conflicts with Edinburgh City Council's objective of maximising density and making efficient use of land. We would also question why sites over 0.25 hectares was chosen. There is no apparent evidence for why this size of site was chosen and, notwithstanding the reasons set out above, it would be difficult to accommodate two use classes whether it be student accommodation, hotel, office or retail on a site that size. That is before the shape, orientation and constraints to development are taken into consideration. CONCLUSION TO CHOICE 10 B If the requirement in Choice 10 B was taken forward in the LDP, Locate Developments would object for the reasons which we have set out above. In summary these include:

- There is no reasoned justification for the policy. It does not seek to mitigate against harm from proposals and it is not based on evidence of housing need and demand.
- During the consultation period for the Choices for City Plan 2030, a DPEA Reporter concluded in a recent appeal decision (PPA-230-2298) that it would be illogical to require student accommodation to provide 50% mainstream residential housing where there is no evidence of harm particularly when the Council states that it has a generous housing land supply and is allocating sites to meet the housing land requirement over the plan period.
- The policy would have significant viability implications for land uses other than residential development. The effect will be to severely reduce the opportunities for the development of beneficial schemes that will provide economic growth, jobs and valuable services to local communities.
- The policy would result in an inefficient use of space. A 100% student accommodation site can provide accommodation for a significantly greater number of people than that of which a 50/50 accommodation can provide for and therefore additional sites would need to be found to accommodate students who would otherwise have been accommodated on a single site.
- In a post COVID-19 world, policies must be flexible enough to enable economic growth and prevent barriers to development. This requirement would have serious implications on development viability and is potentially dangerous to the long term economic outlook of Edinburgh.

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Choice **10 C**

**We want to create a new policy promoting the better use of stand-alone out of centre retail units and commercial centres, where their redevelopment for mixed use including housing would be supported. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

**Explanation** Locate Developments are supportive of creating a policy which promotes the better use of single-use out of centre retail units and commercial centres. We also believe that any policy should make specific reference to supporting proposals developing above existing single-use retail units and commercial units. Locate Developments has a detailed understanding of the potential opportunities and benefits of development of utilising the space above single-use retail / commercial units to accommodate a range of potential uses. Building over existing assets means that no land is required for these developments thus creating sustainable high density development often in areas which have good active travel links and public transport options. The development of a range of uses, including purpose-built student accommodation, on development above existing retail / commercial units could provide significant benefits to the city by assisting it to accommodate as much of its growth on its existing footprint as possible. This would mean there would be less need to explore greenfield sites for development. Developing above existing units can be extremely complex and have significantly greater costs attached to them than developments being built from the ground, due to structural and operational constraints, including the need to penetrate and keep the loss of floorspace from the retained retail / commercial use to a minimum and the restriction of ground floor access commonly to the site frontage only. In most instances, and depending on the individual characteristics of a site, this means that only one use will be able to be delivered above a retained retail use rather than a mix of uses. If the benefits of this development are to be realised, and they are potentially significant, then policy must be sufficiently supportive and flexible.

Choice **11 A**

**We want to amend our policy to increase the provision of affordable housing requirement from 25% to 35%. Do you agree with this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

**Explanation**

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Choice 11 B

We want City Plan 2030 to require a mix of housing types and tenures – we want the plan to be prescriptive on the required mix, including the percentage requirement for family housing and support for the Private Rented Sector. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No

Short Response Not Answered

Explanation Not Answered

Choice 12 A

Which option do you support? - Option 1/2/3

Short Response Not Answered

Explanation Not Answered

Choice 12 B1

Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Support - Calderwood

Short Response Not Answered

Explanation

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Choice 12 B2

Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Support - Kirkliston

Short Response

Not Answered

Explanation

Choice 12 B3

Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Support - West Edinburgh

Short Response

Not Answered

Explanation

Choice 12 B4

Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Support - East of Riccarton

Short Response

Not Answered

Explanation

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Choice **12 B5**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Support - South East Edinburgh**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 B6**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Object - Calderwood**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 B7**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Object - Kirkliston**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **12 B8**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Object - West Edinburgh**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 B9**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Object - East of Riccarton**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 B10**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Support Greenfield - Object - South East Edinburgh**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **12 BX**

**Do you support or object to any of the proposed greenfield areas? (Please tick all that apply) - Explain why**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 C**

**Do you have a greenfield site you wish us to consider in the proposed Plan? - Greenfield file upload**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 C**

**Do you have a greenfield site you wish us to consider in the proposed Plan? - Greenfield file upload**

Short Response

Explanation

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Choice **12 C**

**Do you have a greenfield site you wish us to consider in the proposed Plan? - Greenfield file upload**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **12 D**

**Do you have a brownfield site you wish us to consider in the proposed Plan? - Brownfield sites upload**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **13 A**

**We want to create a new policy that provides support for social enterprises, start-ups, culture and tourism, innovation and learning, and the low carbon sector, where there is a contribution to good growth for Edinburgh. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation



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Choice 14 A

**We want City Plan 2030 to support the best use of existing public transport infrastructure in West Edinburgh and accommodate the development of a mix of uses to support inclusive, sustainable growth. We will do this through ‘an area of search’ which allows a wide consideration of future uses within West Edinburgh without being tied to individual sites. Do you support this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 14 B

**We want to remove the safeguard in the existing plan for the Royal Highland Showground site to the south of the A8 at Norton Park and allocate the site for other uses. Do you agree with this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 14 C

**We want City Plan 2030 to allocate the Airport’s contingency runway, the “crosswinds runway” for the development of alternative uses next to the Edinburgh Gateway interchange. Do you agree with this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:

Name

Response Type

On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice 15 A

**We want to continue to use the national 'town centre first' approach. City Plan 2030 will protect and enhance the city centre as the regional core of south east Scotland providing shopping, commercial leisure, and entertainment and tourism activities. Do you agree with this? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 15 B

**New shopping and leisure development will only be allowed within our town and local centres (including any new local centres) justified by the Commercial Needs study. Outwith local centres, small scale proposals will be permitted only in areas where there is evidence of a lack of food shopping within walking distance. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 15 C

**We want to review our existing town and local centres including the potential for new identified centres and boundary changes where they support walking and cycling access to local services in outer areas, consistent with the outcomes of the City Mobility Plan. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:

Supporting Info

Name

Email

Response Type

On behalf of:

Choice 15 D

**We want to continue to prepare and update supplementary guidance for our town centres to adapt to changing retail patterns and trends, and ensure an appropriate balance of uses within our centres to maintain their vitality, viability and deliver good placemaking. Instead we could stop using supplementary guidance for town centres and set out guidance within the plan. Which approach do you support? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 15 E

**We want to support new hotel provision in local, town, commercial centres and other locations with good public transport access throughout Edinburgh. Do you agree with this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 15 G

**We could also seek to reduce the quantity of retail floorspace within centres in favour of alternative uses such as increased leisure provision and permit commercial centres to accommodate any growing demand. Do you agree with this approach? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:

Name

Response Type

On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice **16 A1**

**We want to continue to support office use at strategic office locations at Edinburgh Park/South Gyle, the International Business Gateway, Leith, the city centre, and in town and local centres. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 A2**

**We want to support office development at commercial centres as these also provide accessible locations. - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 A3**

**We want to strengthen the requirement within the city centre to provide significant office floorspace within major mixed-use developments. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:

Name

Response Type

On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice **16 A4**

**We want to amend the boundary of the Leith strategic office location to remove areas with residential development consent. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 A5**

**We want to continue to support office development in other accessible locations elsewhere in the urban area. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 A5**

**We want to continue to support office development in other accessible locations elsewhere in the urban area. Do you agree? - Do you have an office site you wish us to consider in the proposed Plan?**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:

Supporting Info

Name

Email

Response Type

On behalf of:

Choice **16 B**

**We want to identify sites and locations within Edinburgh with potential for office development. Do you agree with this? - Yes/No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 C**

**We want to introduce a loss of office policy to retain accessible office accommodation. This would not permit the redevelopment of office buildings other than for office use, unless existing office space is provided as part of denser development. This would apply across the city to recognise that office locations outwith the city centre and strategic office locations are important in meeting the needs of the mid-market. Or we could Introduce a 'loss of office' policy only in the city centre. - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 E1**

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Support - Leith Strategic Business Centre**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:   
Name   
Response Type   
On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice 16 E2

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Support - Newbridge**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 16 E3

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Support - Newcraighall Industrial Estate.**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 16 E4

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Support - The Crosswinds Runway**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:   
Name   
Response Type   
On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice 16 E5

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Do not support - Leith Strategic Business Centre**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 16 E6

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Do not support - Newbridge**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 16 E7

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Do not support - Newcraighall Industrial Estate.**

Short Response

Explanation



Customer Ref:  Response Ref:

Name

Response Type

On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice 16 E8

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Yes / No - Do not support - The Crosswinds Runway**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 16 EX

**We want to identify proposals for new modern business and industrial sites to provide necessary floorspace at the following locations. Do you agree? - Explain why**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice 16 F

**We want to ensure new business space is provided as part of the redevelopment of urban sites and considered in Place Briefs for greenfield sites. We want to set out the amount expected to be re-provided, clearer criteria on what constitutes flexible business space, and how to deliver it, including the location on-site, and considering adjacent uses, servicing and visibility. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Customer Ref:  Response Ref:   
Name   
Response Type   
On behalf of:

Supporting Info

Email

Choice **16 G**

**We want to continue to protect industrial estates that are designated under our current policy on Employment Sites and Premises (Emp 8). Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

Choice **16 H**

**We want to introduce a policy that provides criteria for locations that we would support city-wide and neighbourhood goods distribution hubs. Do you agree? - Yes / No**

Short Response

Explanation

# **Edinburgh Choices for City Plan 2030 Consultation Response**

Locate Developments

April 2020

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Turley, on behalf of Locate Developments, welcomes the opportunity to submit representations to the Edinburgh Choices for City Plan 2030 consultation.
- 1.2 Locate Developments are a property development and investment company developing across multiple classes including student accommodation, hotel, retail and residential.
- 1.3 These representations focus on the proposed policies and requirements contained within Choice 10 of the Choices for City Plan 2030 document. In summary, we have concerns relating to a number of the proposed policies and requirements and the subsequent sections of this representation will provide our reasoning for this.
- 1.4 Since the Choices for City Plan 2030 document was published for consultation, COVID-19 and the associated lockdown has had a significant impact on our daily lives and economic activity in Scotland. It is unclear what impact COVID-19 will have on the economy in the long term, however, policies must be flexible enough to encourage sustainable development. Some of the proposed policies in the Choices for City Plan 2030 document which the Council are seeking to pursue, particularly in relation to student accommodation and commercial development, would be inflexible and onerous at a time when it is essential to prevent barriers to sustainable development. Should the Council pursue such policies they would have the impact of stifling development and potentially preventing a strong economic recovery. When moving towards a Proposed Plan it is important that this is carefully considered to ensure that policies remain flexible enough to encourage and promote development.

## 2. Response

**Choice 10 A) We want to revise our policy on purpose-built student housing. We want to ensure that student housing is delivered at the right scale and in the right locations, helps create sustainable communities and looks after student's wellbeing. We will do this by requiring:**

- **New purpose-built student accommodation to be located on a direct walking, cycling, or public transport route to its intended university or college**
- **To deliver market and affordable housing as part of the mix**
- **To be built for, and managed by, one of Edinburgh's universities or colleges**
- **Deliver a maximum of 10% studio flats.**

2.1 We will consider each of these requirements in turn:

- **New purpose-built student accommodation to be located on a direct walking, cycling, or public transport route to its intended university or college**

2.2 Locate Developments are broadly supportive of new purpose-built student accommodation being convenient to direct walking, cycling or public transport routes. However, the Council should consider the potential conflict between this proposed policy and the current non-statutory student guidance which seeks to direct student accommodation to areas which have lower concentrations of students (the Council currently considers areas of high concentration to be those in excess of 50% students). Areas with lower student concentrations tend to be further away from university campuses and therefore could make it more difficult to provide accommodation on a direct walking, cycling, or public transport route to an intended university or college.

- **To deliver market and affordable housing as part of the mix**

2.3 We have provided a detailed response to this proposed requirement in Choice 10 (B).

- **To be built for, and managed by, one of Edinburgh's universities or colleges**

2.4 Locate Developments have concerns regarding this proposed requirement. Firstly, this would place a significant responsibility on universities to invest in student accommodation and to provide the resources to manage that student accommodation. Universities have tended to focus on ensuring that first year students have accommodation which means that unless universities were to significantly invest in purpose built student accommodation then second, third and fourth year students could find themselves in the private rented HMO market competing for available rented accommodation and taking up accommodation which could otherwise be used for families.

2.5 The impact on universities of having to meet this additional need would be unsustainable and undesirable. The private sector can efficiently and effectively meet the varying

needs of students by delivering high quality purpose built accommodation. In addition, the non-affiliation of the private sector to individual institutions means that all students have access to the same quality and variety of accommodation not just those studying at a particular college or university.

2.6 The private sector continually demonstrates its ability to be flexible to the needs and demands of the student population in a market driven economy. The increased standard of accommodation has been driven by competition between private operators reacting at speed to the changing needs of the student community. This has, in turn, created a higher quality and more diverse choice of student accommodation in Edinburgh.

- **Deliver a maximum of 10% studio flats.**

2.7 We are unclear what the justification is for a maximum of 10% studios flats to be delivered as part of student accommodation developments and there is no evidence provided for why studio flats are unpopular to students.

2.8 The provision of studio accommodation is regulated by demand and operators of purpose built student accommodation provide accordingly. Between different groups of students, there is not always a 'one size fits all' approach to the type of student accommodation which is desired as evidenced in the UCAS survey which shows that 83% of international students were happy with studio accommodation compared with the equivalent figure of 71% for all students.

2.9 The impact from COVID-19 is also likely to make studio accommodation a more popular choice as this allows independent living unlike other models which do not allow the option of social distancing. Again, the demand for these will be driven by the market and the private sector is best placed to respond to the needs and demands from students.

2.10 In our view the policy is overly prescriptive and is seemingly not based on any evidence of need and demand for such accommodation.

2.11 **Choice 10 B) We want to create a new policy framework which sets out a requirement for housing on all sites over a certain size coming forward for development. On sites over 0.25 hectares coming forward for student housing, hotels and short-stay commercial visitor accommodation, and other commercial business, retail and leisure developments, at least 50% of the site should be provided for housing. The new policy would not apply to land specifically allocated or designated within the plan for a specific use – i.e. business and industry land, safeguarded waste management sites, minerals sites, single school sites, our town and local centres, or sites covered by our office policy.**

2.12 Locate Developments would strongly object if this policy was carried through to the LDP and find it an unreasonable requirement to place on developers. We provide a summary of our reasoning below:

No Justification for Policy

2.13 There is no reasoned justification or evidence provided which would support the proposed policy. In our view, it is confused and would only lead to significant implications on the development viability of land uses which the policy includes.

2.14 The supporting text of Choice 10 Creating sustainable communities provides the following justification for the proposed policy:

***“Purpose-built student housing, retail, leisure, hotels and other commercial developments, are being built often at the expense of creating strong sustainable communities. We want sites coming forward for these uses to also deliver new housing.”***

2.15 This statement suggests that nearly all proposals for the land uses identified are being built at the expense of creating *strong sustainable communities*. At no point has any attempt been made to define what is meant by a ‘strong sustainable community’ and how the land uses have been developed to the detriment of communities. In our view this assertion is completely unjustified and there is no evidence to support it.

2.16 The development of other land uses responds to market need and demand and provides significant social and economic benefits to communities. Purpose-built student accommodation provides students with a quality choice of accommodation which, in turn, frees up general residential housing which would otherwise be used by students living in HMOs. The impact of having a significant number of economically active students in an area can also have an extremely positive effect on local businesses which will be to the benefit of local communities and deliver jobs and regeneration.

2.17 Furthermore, hotels play a vital function in supporting the economy by providing managed accommodation for tourists and business. Hotel development will play a particularly important role in supporting the visitor economy as the Council seeks to restrict the use of AirBNB accommodation (see Choice 9). It is therefore alarming that should the Council pursue this policy that it will effectively make these land uses unviable for development.

2.18 In the context of student accommodation, the Council confirmed that there was no evidence that student numbers have had a measurable negative impact on communities. In paragraph 3.10 of a report to Planning Committee of 25 February 2016 which sought approval of the revised non-statutory student guidance it was stated that:

***“there is no evidence that the existing range of student concentrations across Edinburgh have created a measurable negative impact on a community or place.”***

2.19 The assertion, then, that student accommodation has been at the expense of strong sustainable communities is not one which is based on any evidence. Furthermore, no evidence has been provided by the Council to show how the other land uses (such as hotels, retail etc.) set out in Choice 10 B have had a measurable negative impact on communities.

2.20 As documented in the same report to Planning Committee on 25 February 2016, the DPEA and Chief Planner made it clear that guidance which seeks to resist student accommodation would need to quantify any harm from this particular land use:



***“any guidance which resisted additional student accommodation would need to be able to quantify any harm from this particular land use.”***

- 2.21 Furthermore, a DPEA Reporter on a recent appeal decision (PPA-230-2298) relating to student accommodation at 543 Gorgie Road provided similar comments in that if there was no evidence of harm from the proposals then it would be illogical to pursue a policy line which requires 50% residential housing to be provided and reduces the amount of student accommodation which can come forward. This appeal decision is explained fully in the subsequent section.
- 2.22 As the Council has not provided any evidence that the land uses associated with this proposed policy have caused harm on communities, it would suggest that this policy is merely seeking to leverage more market and affordable housing with no evidence of need and demand.
- 2.23 This is evident from the Housing Study which was submitted as a supporting document to Choices for City Plan 2030 which states:

***“In recent years the development of a significant number of larger student developments, in the Old Town, Southside and Fountainbridge have been on sites where much needed housing would previously have been delivered. A requirement to provide market and affordable housing alongside student housing could mitigate against this.”***

- 2.24 This statement implies that residential development is much needed whereas student accommodation is not needed. This is somewhat contradictory to the Council’s position that it has a generous housing land supply which is significantly above its 5 year completions target (this was acknowledged by the Council’s Report by the Executive Director of Place to the council’s planning committee in October 2019 and also by the Reporter in Appeal Case PPA-230-2298). As there is no evidence of harm from student accommodation and the Council is maintaining a 5 year effective land supply, it is unclear what this policy is seeking to mitigate against. The council recognises the need for PBSA to support its universities and these sites have been amongst the most appropriate locations for this to be provided. The housing requirement has been met in other areas of the city where that use has been the most appropriate. There will be many sites brought forward for residential development that would not be suitable locations for PBSA.
- 2.25 The Strategic Development Plan, or in this instance HNDA2, is responsible for identifying the housing land requirement in Edinburgh. This is based on an objective assessment of housing need and demand. It is not for individual authorities to decide on what they consider to be *much needed* housing.
- 2.26 Should the Council need to provide more land for residential housing within the LDP period then they should do so in accordance with paragraph 119 of SPP which states:

***“Local development plans in city regions should allocate a range of sites which are effective or expected to become effective in the plan period to meet the housing land requirement of the strategic development plan up to year 10 from the expected year of adoption.”***

- 2.27 Choice 12 proposes a number of residential allocations to meet the housing land requirement over the plan period. It is therefore unclear why this policy is seeking additional residential housing over and above the evidenced-based requirement set out in HNDA2.
- 2.28 We recognise that windfall sites can also contribute to the housing land supply however they come forward based on market demand. Windfall sites do not prevent other land uses from coming forward through an arbitrary requirement for residential housing and are assessed on their individual merits.
- 2.29 The negative impact from this policy would be further exacerbated if residential housing demand dropped over the plan period as a result of an economic downturn. This would prevent other uses coming forward which could otherwise stimulate the economy and meet certain needs. In the current situation where the impact on the housing market from the COVID-19 lockdown is uncertain, policies need to be flexible so that there are not burdensome barriers in place which will stifle the economy.

Appeal Decision (PPA-230-2298)

- 2.30 The requirement for 50% mainstream residential housing on sites over 0.25 hectares first appeared in the non-Statutory Student Guidance (February 2016) albeit being limited to student accommodation.
- 2.31 Since the Choices for City Plan 2030 document was published for consultation, on March 11 2020 an appeal was allowed by the DPEA for purpose-built student accommodation at 543 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh. Within the appeal notice, the Reporter dismissed the requirement in the guidance for 50% residential housing as it did not appear in the LDP and because there was no evidence that the proposals would result in excessive student concentrations and therefore it would be illogical to restrict student accommodation coming forward:

***“... having found that the proposed development complies with part b) of Policy Hou 8, in that the proposals would not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation in the locality, it seems illogical to then pursue a policy line that reduces the potential contribution to the amount of purpose-built and managed accommodation that could be provided on the site.”***

- 2.32 The Reporter also concluded that the Council was considerably above its housing completions target and that therefore there was no justification for favouring housing over student accommodation:

***“the Report by the Executive Director of Place to the council’s planning committee in October 2019 shows that Edinburgh’s overall five-year house completions programme is 30% above the five year completions target. Furthermore, the adopted LDP assumed a contribution of 4,656 homes from windfall sites whereas the executive director reports that, since April 2015, 6,200 homes have received planning permission on windfall sites of which 1,650 have been completed and 4,140 are programmed for completion in the next five years. I do not consider that this provides clear justification for favouring housing over student accommodation on the appeal site.”***

- 2.33 Whilst this appeal was specific to a proposal for student accommodation, in our view the conclusions are relevant to all land uses covered in this proposed policy. It would be illogical to refuse development where there is no evidence of harm particularly when the Council states that it has a generous housing land supply and is allocating sites to meet the housing land requirement over the plan period.

#### Viability Implications on Non-Residential Development

- 2.34 A requirement of 50% mainstream residential would have significant viability implications on land uses other than residential housing coming forward for development.
- 2.35 The provision of the facilities and services in developments such as student accommodation and hotels involve a number of fixed costs that are usually spread across a large number of units.
- 2.36 The requirement for 50% residential development on sites would significantly reduce the floor space which could be provided for student or hotel development. This is because the different land uses have vastly different policy requirements. For example, the Council's current policy and guidance requires that residential development provides 20% family housing of 3 bedrooms or more with access to a private garden. This means that you cannot accommodate as many people as you would otherwise be able to in a 100% student development. As far fewer students are able to be accommodated in a single scheme it means that the fixed costs will be significantly higher per unit and rents for students would need to be significantly higher. This could have the potential of making schemes unviable for delivery.
- 2.37 Such a requirement would also lead to inefficient use of land given the different policy requirements for each of the uses. Proposals to develop land should seek to maximise the density of development in order to sustainably accommodate the city's population. This policy, therefore, seemingly conflicts with Edinburgh City Council's objective of maximising density and making efficient use of land.
- 2.38 We would also question why sites over 0.25 hectares was chosen. There is no apparent evidence for why this size of site was chosen and, notwithstanding the reasons set out above, it would be difficult to accommodate two use classes whether it be student accommodation, hotel, office or retail on a site that size. That is before the shape, orientation and constraints to development are taken into consideration.

#### Conclusion to Choice 10 B

- 2.39 If the requirement in Choice 10 B was taken forward in the LDP, Locate Developments would object for the reasons which we have set out above. In summary these include:
- There is no reasoned justification for the policy. It does not seek to mitigate against harm from proposals and it is not based on evidence of housing need and demand.
  - During the consultation period for the Choices for City Plan 2030, a DPEA Reporter concluded in a recent appeal decision (PPA-230-2298) that it would be illogical to require student accommodation to provide 50% mainstream residential housing

where there is no evidence of harm particularly when the Council states that it has a generous housing land supply and is allocating sites to meet the housing land requirement over the plan period.

- The policy would have significant viability implications for land uses other than residential development. The effect will be to severely reduce the opportunities for the development of beneficial schemes that will provide economic growth, jobs and valuable services to local communities.
- The policy would result in an inefficient use of space. A 100% student accommodation site can provide accommodation for a significantly greater number of people than that of which a 50/50 accommodation can provide for and therefore additional sites would need to be found to accommodate students who would otherwise have been accommodated on a single site.
- In a post COVID-19 world, policies must be flexible enough to enable economic growth and prevent barriers to development. This requirement would have serious implications on development viability and is potentially dangerous to the long term economic outlook of Edinburgh.

**Choice 10 C) We want to create a new policy promoting the better use of single-use out of centre retail units and commercial centres, where their redevelopment for mixed use including housing would be supported.**

- 2.1 Locate Developments are supportive of creating a policy which promotes the better use of single-use out of centre retail units and commercial centres. We also believe that any policy should make specific reference to supporting proposals developing above existing single-use retail units and commercial units.
- 2.2 Locate Developments has a detailed understanding of the potential opportunities and benefits of development of utilising the space above single-use retail /commercial units to accommodate a range of potential uses. Building over existing assets means that no land is required for these developments thus creating sustainable high density development often in areas which have good active travel links and public transport options.
- 2.3 The development of a range of uses, including purpose-built student accommodation, on development above existing retail / commercial units could provide significant benefits to the city by assisting it to accommodate as much of its growth on its existing footprint as possible. This would mean there would be less need to explore greenfield sites for development.
- 2.4 Developing above existing units can be extremely complex and have significantly greater costs attached to them than developments being built from the ground, due to structural and operational constraints, including the need to penetrate and keep the loss of floorspace from the retained retail / commercial use to a minimum and the restriction of ground floor access commonly to the site frontage only. In most instances, and depending on the individual characteristics of a site, this means that only one use will be

able to be delivered above a retained retail use rather than a mix of uses. If the benefits of this development are to be realised, and they are potentially significant, then policy must be sufficiently supportive and flexible.

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