

Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Alex Lunn

✖ SNP Councillor Alex Lunn represents Craigentinny/Duddingston ward. He is Vice-Convener of the [Planning committee](#).

Councillor Lunn writes:

An annual report by the Scottish Property Federation and GL Hearn has recently sought to highlight that Edinburgh “lags behind” the cities of George Osborne’s Northern Powerhouse in terms of meeting planning targets.

However the report is missing the story of Edinburgh.

That’s not a criticism of the report. Most reports are about stats and numbers. The story of Edinburgh is what makes our city so attractive to investors in the first place.

For a start Edinburgh is not Manchester, Newcastle or Sheffield. Edinburgh is Edinburgh, a world heritage site, leading financial centre, tourist magnet, world leader in the arts & sciences, cultural hub, top educational destination and so many other things rolled into one.

Edinburgh also has a worldwide reputation for being open to business and development that is well deserved and makes us a top choice for many firms seeking to invest in Northern Europe.

It is in this environment that our planning decisions are taken and should be judged.

As Vice Convener of Planning, I for one, would rather ensure we are getting it right, rather than being quick for the sake of it.

As a world heritage site it's imperative we take a thorough view in planning matters. That's not to say we don't have our challenges and I certainly (like the rest of my colleagues) like things done in a timely manner.

However the reality is that while all cities have their own unique issues. Edinburgh has an ever-changing set of needs that puts Scotland's capital in league of its own.

Edinburgh benefits from our history, good reputation, highly educated population and world leading universities and festivals. Most other cities (especially in northern England) envy these strengths of ours, and when it comes to attracting investors, it gives us an edge beyond our neighbours.

That is why for planning, Edinburgh will continue to do what's best for the long term future Edinburgh.

It's what our citizens, future citizens, investors and future investors have come to expect. We will endeavour to be speedy but not at the risk of undermining our strength in the long term.