

Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Gordon Munro

*Plans for a new development in the heart of Leith will be the stimulus to regenerate the wider area according to Councillor **Gordon Munro**.*

Planning approval was given for the long empty site opposite Ocean Terminal on Wednesday of this week. You can read more about this [here](#).

✘ Gordon Munro writes: “THE demand for new, high-quality, affordable housing in Edinburgh has never been greater.

“It’s something felt keenly in my constituency of Leith and the surrounding areas, evidenced by some startling recent episodes, one of which being the 3400 applications for just 96 mid-market rent homes at Western Harbour.

“That’s why it’s crucial that proposals for 388 new dwellings on the disused land opposite Ocean Terminal was given the full go-ahead last week.

“There are a number of benefits associated with the Waterfront Plaza plans that could truly act as the catalyst to regenerate the whole area, improving the lives of so many Leithers.

“The area in question has been a derelict eyesore since I was elected in 2003, so work to transform such a viable brownfield site is long overdue.

“The economic boost to the surrounding shops, including the restaurants and cinema in Ocean Terminal, will be timely – and a major shot in the arm for businesses always eager for increased footfall.

“Its 97 high-quality, affordable homes will help address the critical and socially damaging shortage we’re currently facing

as more people look to remain in, and move to Leith.

“And my opinion is backed up.

“Despite often being regarded as a developer of upmarket detached homes, I commend the work by CALA at the neighbouring Albert Dock project and the new homes at Ten Brunswick Road, which sold out before completion. Both regenerated troublesome brownfield sites, creating a range of desirable and attractive homes.

“But this development is not just about the developer, it’s about Leith as a whole. It can really help to kick-start regeneration of the wider area.

“New, stylish, modern homes will attract people not only to live in Leith, but to visit more often and for those arriving into the docks or to visit Britannia to stay in the area and spend more money.

“This will have a real impact not just our businesses but also the general feel within Leith, with even more of a buzz around the fantastic bars and restaurants.

“The type of bespoke shops that the commercial units are intended for are perfectly suited for the area as well.

“Artisan galleries and cafés will be ideal for Leith as a recent study revealed that the EH6 postcode is home to the most artists in the capital.

“Proposed workspaces and units take inspiration from the hugely successful Arches development on Market Street, which show how fantastic these spaces can be for start-up businesses.

“It’s also attracted high profile backing from respected provider, the Port of Leith Housing Association and the Leith Chamber of Commerce, which shows how crucial it will be to the area.

“Put frankly, the cluster of shoppers, businesses and tourists that pack Princes Street need as much encouragement as possible to come down to Leith and explore the wonderful bars and shops we have to offer.

“To me it is clear that the Waterfront Plaza proposals will have a massively positive impact on Leith, both aesthetically and economically.

“The disused, derelict site as it currently stands is not in keeping with the modern, diverse, Leith we’ve become familiar with.

“These plans will help to do this so it’s essential that the planning committee see sense and accept them and enable Leith to continue its transformation into one of the capital’s most vibrant locations.

“Yes, there will be concerns – as there always is when new developments emerge – but sensibly tackling the overwhelming issue of housing supply and boosting the health of our local economy must prevail.”

Gordon Munro is the Labour Councillor for the Leith Ward and sits on the Housing and Economy Committee.