

Sarah Boyack MSP says ignoring planning process for Christmas market is unacceptable

FAILURE OF CHRISTMAS MARKET PLANNING“UNACCEPTABLE”

Sarah Boyack MSP criticised planning failures for this year's Christmas Market at Princes Street Gardens as “unacceptable”.

It comes after Edinburgh City Council's Culture & Communities Committee met earlier in the week and in the process of the scheduled report on last year's events examined the progress of Underbelly's Christmas Market planning applications for 2019.

It was confirmed that some parts of the market still require a building warrant, despite a scheduled opening this Saturday. As of today, there are still no alternative plans in place should the warrants be rejected.

At the meeting Charlie Wood Director of Underbelly confirmed that changes might have to be made to the market to comply with planning and building warrant requirements.

Ms Boyack who is Shadow Local Government spokesperson, and a planning expert, voiced concern over the lack of scrutiny and accountability in the planning process.



Sarah Boyack MSP PHOTO ©2019 The Edinburgh Reporter

She said : “I share the concerns expressed by councillors about the lack of due process. The fact that we have a major expansion into Princes Street Gardens on a much bigger scale than before and that it doesn’t have planning permission is unacceptable. I’m also worried about the safety concerns raised by *The Edinburgh Evening News*.”

The committee yesterday agreed to work with Underbelly to look at the possibility of moving future markets to a hard surface area, allowing residents to regain full public access to Princes Street Gardens. The council had already proposed in the summer months that a full review of the Winter Festival arrangements is now necessary.

Ms Boyack added : “The committee’s agreement to look at relocating the market to a more suitable location is entirely appropriate, reducing both damage and visual impact of the market.

“Whilst we all welcome the economic benefits the market brings

to the city, it should not be at the expense of the environment or residents' needs. Princes Street Gardens is a beautiful space in Edinburgh's city centre and it is important we take steps to protect it and ensure all regulatory requirements are being met."



East Princes Street Gardens at the end of October 2019 Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com