



25/1/18

## **APPROVED PROPOSALS - WRONG THINKING**

Not surprised by today's Transport and Environment Committee's decision to approve the controversial Picardy Place and Leith Street proposals. Today was as much a process of justification and reflection on how things could be done better.

In listening to the debate, we acknowledge that much work has done to accommodate current vehicular transport levels. Only after this was accomplished that consideration was given to civic design issues, the needs of pedestrians and the requirements of cyclists.

To quote Edinburgh's former urban design champion Riccardo Marini's tweet on the subject:

"As long as you keep thinking of Picardy as a movement issue you will never get the right solution! The minute you think of it as a PEOPLE PLACE (actually a series of linked places) only then will it change - it should be a real part of that wonderful city"

One positive outcome is that legitimate civic concerns forced the debate. Consultation of these proposals has not been adequate or particularly meaningful. Urban design-led solutions had not been considered. The majority of consultees are not satisfied with the current proposals but their interventions did achieve more engagement than the Council initially offered. Well done citizens of Edinburgh!

There's no escaping the fact that more space is given over to vehicular traffic. Little weight was given to the Council's own traffic reduction targets. Some additional accommodation has been made for cyclists. It remains to be seen if these are workable.

We welcome the promise of opportunities to further influence the details of the interventions proposed. If this is to remain a significant traffic interchange then all current entrances and exits must be retained, including Leith Street. The redevelopment cannot proceed in isolation. The needs of pedestrians must be better addressed and the interests of local residents better protected. The Council has acknowledged that it has challenges ahead.