Foreword

BY SARAH BOYACK MSP

Edinburgh is a city in transition. It was the birthplace of the Scottish Enlightenment, hosts the world's longest-running international arts festival, is Scotland's capital city, and is home to our new Scottish Parliament.

But as a compact city it faces some difficult challenges. How to expand and house its citizens while not destroying the compact nature of the city which makes it so distinctive without the unending urban sprawl that characterises so many cities?

One of Edinburgh's unique features is that it has managed to transform itself from a sleepy provincial city to a globally recognised city, without losing the identity that makes it attractive. Edinburgh has retained its historic core and landscape setting while accommodating a restructured economy and expanding business, financial and service sectors.

Our visionary new Parliament complex occupies a site in the heart of the Old Town and blends into Holyrood Park. Its escalating cost created a shadow over the first term of the Parliament. But in the first few months since it opened, over

200,000 visitors have seen the Parliament for themselves and opinion is increasingly favourable.

As a local MSP I can see the conflicts which characterise our planning system. How to ensure that people have a quality of life while living in the city centre. How to control the expansion of pubs and clubs. How to find room for affordable housing in a city where land values have escalated and property values have doubled in the last five years. How to create long-term jobs that pay well. How to address the pressure of rapidly increasing traffic and develop much-needed new transport infrastructure.

Edinburgh's past civic leaders have tried to deliver high-quality design with a new emphasis on planning and architecture that respects our environment and conserves our natural resources.

Our 21st-century challenge is how we incorporate sustainable development principles in the future development of the city. The authors of this book will help those of us involved in that process reflect on the importance of design and quality. That must be a good thing.