

Waterside Community Council Objections to Location of Proposed School



WCC: Objections to Location of Proposed School



WCC

Objects to Building School on the Only Park in Waterside



- **Waterside Community Council remains firmly opposed to building a school on Waterside Park*.**
- **The proposal goes against numerous planning policies and would irrevocably damage **community life**, our **health & wellbeing**, the **environment** and the **character** of our **village**.**



***Definition:** WCC uses “**park**” in the sense of “**large public garden or area of land used for recreation**” rather than just “**football pitch**”. Waterside Park includes **all** the community land around the playing fields that is **used for multiple recreational purposes**.

Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

➤ AMENITY

Loss of amenity green space – Loss of visual amenity & character – Traffic – Impact on privacy

➤ POLICY

The proposals contravene the Local Development Plan and other Council and Scottish Government policies

➤ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Loss of open space – Impact on wildlife – Impacts on local community – Noise – Flooding

➤ DESIGN

Height of building – Detailing & materials
How the proposed development takes account of its surroundings

➤ ACCESS

Access for emergency vehicles





Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

AMENITY

Loss of Amenity Green Space

(for play; exercise; the gala; cross-country; community life; fun...)



EZS 10 02 2021

Waterside Community Council Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds **AMENITY**

Loss of Visual Amenity and Character

Concrete and tarmac (where currently there is green space on either side of the road) would destroy the symmetry of the green gateway into the village.





Waterside Community Council Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

AMENITY

TRAFFIC (SLIDE 1)

Transport Assessment Report (GB01T19/J09/109523)

The school traffic would dramatically affect traffic flow on Bankhead Rd (the one road into Waterside).

From the consultants' report: Between 8.45am and 9.15am, 179 vehicles would access the school, and 94 would exit it. All via Bankhead Rd.

This is an increase from 67 to 238 vehicles (**an increase of 254%***) turning right into Bankhead Rd, **against oncoming traffic.**

238 cars travelling along Waterside Rd from the Kirkintilloch direction and turning into Bankhead Rd **across traffic approaching at an average rate of 1 vehicle every 3 seconds** would cause **major congestion.** This issue has been consistently ignored.

To state that 1,500 vehicles, each with a move that conflicts with another vehicle's path, **can pass through a T-junction in half an hour without major hold-ups is not credible.**

*Figure 1.8 on page 79 of this report wrongly claims a traffic increase of only 95%. Consequently, the Threshold Assessment Table (p.90) is wrong too, as are the conclusions based upon it.



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

AMENITY

TRAFFIC (SLIDE 2)

Transport Assessment Report (GB01T19/J09/109523)

A local group showed the effect that just under 100 cars had on Bankhead Rd and Waterside Rd when half travelled out of Waterside, and the other half into Waterside.

Gridlock.

The exercise was conducted on a Sunday morning (when traffic is light) using around one-third of the vehicles predicted at peak times if the school goes ahead.

The photographs on this and the next slide demonstrate the gridlocked result of this.

Please note that there is much concern about the potential for queuing traffic to delay access to the emergency services.



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

AMENITY

TRAFFIC (SLIDE 3)

Transport Assessment Report (GB01T19/J09/109523)



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

AMENITY

IMPACT ON PRIVACY

The original proposal was for a **single-storey** school.

This planning application is for a **two-storey** building which would be **13.5m tall**, significantly higher than any other building in the area, and would dominate the landscape.

People on the 2nd floor of this raised two-storey building would be able to **look down into the** houses on Cairnview, removing residents' privacy.



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

POLICY

The proposals contravene the Local Development Plan and other council and Scottish Government policies (Slide 1)

Heather Holland's letter of 28 January 2021 (for EDC's Land Planning & Development) said:

“this is an application for a major development which is significantly contrary to the Local Development Plan...”

Building on the site **contravenes** a range of East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan policies; for instance:

- Design and Placemaking (LDP Policy 2)
- Green Belt (LDP Policy 3)
- Open Space (LDP Policy 7 – and also Scottish Planning Policies 153, 156)
- Green Infrastructure and Green Network (LDP Policy 5)



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

POLICY

The proposals contravene the Local Development Plan and other council and Scottish Government policies (Slide 2)

Design and Placemaking (LDP Policy 2) / Green Belt (LDP Policy 3)

- ▶ The erection of a two-storey building surrounded by high fencing and tarmac and the loss of grassed space would have a very **negative impact** on the **character, function and amenity** of this **green space** and on **our much loved village**.
- ▶ It would **destroy** “features that contribute to the **heritage, character and local distinctiveness**” of our area.
- ▶ EDC’s Open Space Strategy 2015-2020 says “**open space can define the landscape and townscape structure and identity of settlements.**” The playing fields do this in Waterside – **this green space marks a clear and attractive separation from** neighbouring **Kirkintilloch** (preventing coalescence) and is an **essential part** of the **character** of the village.
- ▶ **Building on Waterside Park would destroy one half of the green gateway into the village.**

Open Space (LDP Policy 7, Scottish Planning Policies 153, 156...)

- ▶ Losing our park would have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health as well as community life. EDC does not have the strong justification needed to build here.

Green Infrastructure and Green Network (LDP Policy 5)

Losing this space would damage habitat connectivity.



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

LOSS OF OPEN SPACE

Non-football uses of this open space include:

- ▶ our annual gala, Waterside Village Fest, far too big for the small proposed community space and the pitch (on which funfair rides, for instance, would not be allowed)
- ▶ walks (with/without dogs) & runs (with space for social distancing); the park is flat and accessible to all
- ▶ children's play (no need for adult supervision of older children in this safe, enclosed area visible from the road)
- ▶ cross-country
- ▶ orienteering
- ▶ family picnics
- ▶ tobogganing
- ▶ wildlife movement: part of green network linking with the Luggie wildlife corridor).

**There is no other park in Waterside
or within the required 400m.**



Waterside Community Council
Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

If the school were built here:

- **Waterside children** would lose the only large grassed area where they can safely play unsupervised in the village.
- There could **never again** be a proper **gala** in the village.
- **Walkers – the elderly, families, children** – would lose a space they all use.
- **Health** would be suffer – **green, open spaces are vital for physical fitness and mental health. The Scottish Government advises that** physical activity reduces health problems like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity; it has also been found to be better for mild depression than medication. This park is very well used for such activity.



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

The Luggie Water environment is host to a wide variety of **wildlife**: from birds of prey to goldcrest; Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats and Daubenton's bats; numerous small mammals and insects; even adders and newts.

This biodiversity is contributed to and sustained by Waterside Park and the nearby "horse's field", as well as other, increasingly reduced, areas forming part of the habitat network.

Many species of birds and mammals are under threat of extinction in Scotland, and **change of land use** is the main reason for species loss and decline in species numbers.

EDC has a responsibility **to limit further damage to our environment and to protect and foster biodiversity for future generations.**

EDC should not use **Green Belt Open Space** to build on just because it happens to own it.





Waterside Community Council
Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds
AMENITY

NOISE & INCONVENIENCE TO NEARBY RESIDENTS

- According to the application, the school would be situated close to the houses on Cairnview. Children at play unavoidably create considerable noise.
- 270 vehicle visits to and from the school twice a day at peak times would have a detrimental effect on air quality and noise for the residents in both Cairnview and the wider community within Waterside and surrounding area.
- During the construction period significant extra traffic, noise and dust would be caused by construction vehicles accessing the site during working hours. In particular there would be 1,500 heavy tipper trucks required to import the infill needed to raise the site by 2m.

Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

DESIGN

DETAILING & MATERIALS

The architects' visualisations show a building which is totally at odds with a semi-rural former mining and weaving village.





Waterside Community Council Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds **DESIGN** The proposed development takes **no** account of its surroundings.



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

DESIGN

HEIGHT OF THE BUILDING

The tall, two-storey design on a raised platform (because of flooding issues) would dominate the entrance to the village of Waterside. It would tower over the surrounding houses. Additionally, a box-like building surrounded by tarmac and high fences (the first building seen on coming into Waterside) is out of keeping with the character of the conservation area it abuts.

The original design was single-storey. A brownfield alternative described as “feasible and suitable” in EDC documentation (the former Auchinairn Primary) was rejected because of the educational impact of a two-storey building*. This indicates a two-storey building is undesirable educationally, and a site that can accommodate a single-storey building must be found instead.

* Thomas Glen, 12 June 2018: **“At Auchinairn the topography meant that the school could not provide educational facilities on one level... This has an educational impact and this is why it was discounted.”**



Waterside Community Council

Valid Reasons to Object on Material Planning Grounds

SITE: **FLOODING**

Specifications for the development in relation to flooding

The criterion for a **football pitch** is **1 in 200** (i.e. a flooding event occurs only once in every 200 years).

The criterion for a **new ASN school** is **1 in 1000** (i.e. a flooding event occurs only once in every 1000 years).

The location of the proposed school and the new football pitch is prone to surface water flooding as identified in the site investigation report. **PL35_SITE_INVESTIGATION_REPORT_PART_1_OF_6-556007**

Section 4.4 Groundwater, p.29

4.4.1 During site works, groundwater ingress was noted within all of the borehole locations but was not recorded in the majority of the trial pitch locations. Groundwater was recorded between 0.50m bgl [below ground level] and 2.00m bgl and described as rapid ingress.

4.4.3 Given the result of groundwater monitoring, and the observations made during intrusive investigations, it is concluded that the site is underlain by potentially significant pockets of water expected at depths typically between 0.50m and 2.00m bgl (i.e. within the raised beach deposits). It is conjectured that this groundwater "is the result of rainwater infiltration".

4.4.6 As such it is concluded that the shallow infiltration pockets of water (of potentially significant volume) underlie the site at depths from 0.50m and 2.00m bgl in the central and southern site areas (i.e. within the raised beach soils) and the location of the proposed new building. The flood maps in this report also show the areas at risk from surface water flooding.

THIS IS NO SURPRISE AS THIS MARSHY AREA WAS PREVIOUSLY USED AS RETTING PONDS TO BREAK DOWN FLAX INTO FIBRES.



East Dunbartonshire Planning Contradictions 1, 2 & 3

1) The Auchinairn site was discounted as the topography meant the school could not provide educational facilities on one level.

Source: Thomas Glen, Minutes of Statutory Consultation Meeting, 12 June 2018

The reality is the planning application for Waterside has a two-storey building for the school.

2) EDC is within the Central Scotland Green Network Area and has a vision “by 2050 Central Scotland has been transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people’s lives are enriched by its quality”

The reality is the proposed development of an ASN school at Waterside stands in direct contradiction to this.

3) East Dunbartonshire Green Network Strategy 2017 (page 31) states that “habitat fragmentation and isolation is considered to be a primary cause of biodiversity loss, and the protection and enhancement of habitat corridors can aid in the reversal of the effects of habitat fragmentation on biodiversity”.

Building on Waterside Park would be counter to the principles and practices embedded in the Green Network Strategy.

East Dunbartonshire Planning Contradictions 4 & 5

4) Policy 5 of the East Dunbartonshire Council Local Development Plan 2017 states “The green network in East Dunbartonshire is made up of connected areas of green infrastructure and open space that together form an integrated and multi-functional network. Development will protect and enhance its hubs, corridors, links and stepping stones”.

The proposed development does NOT protect Waterside Park. Instead it damages and removes corridors, links and stepping stones.

5) East Dunbartonshire’s Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 states “The natural environment is at the core of what makes East Dunbartonshire a special place to live, visit and work. Yet our biodiversity is under unprecedented threat from a variety of sources – including urban expansion, climate change, unsympathetic management and, critically, a lack of understanding of its importance”.

[Signed] Councillor Jim Gibbons – Convenor of Place, Neighbourhood & Corporate Assets.

The plan goes on to acknowledge that “Lack of recognition for the value of nature means the vital benefits of a healthy environment are not fully appreciated and therefore not sufficiently considered in decision making”.

The current plans to build a school at Waterside Park amount to a direct contravention of the principles set out in East Dunbartonshire’s biodiversity policy.

Misleading Open Space & Green Belt Assessment

According to this report, “the provision or enhancement of community facilities and open spaces or recreational facilities can be ... acceptable forms of development” on Open Space.

This report, tailored to make the removal of Waterside Park seem almost good, states that our Waterside pitch (which had had over £100,000 spent on it in improvements) “is not currently in good condition”, so “the proposals would support the enhancement of this provision and provide further community benefits that would provide enhancement of the area for the local community.”

Waterside’s was a standout pitch until EDC stopped maintaining it and had test boreholes made in it because of the school proposal. It could easily be restored. No new pitch (out of sight from Bankhead Rd) could make up for losing the rest of the multipurpose, well-used green space to a towering, jarring, non-area-enhancing building.



Waterside Community Council

COSTS NOT FACTORED IN



One reason given for the decision to build at **Open Space Waterside** over **Brownfield Auchinairn** was that it would be cheaper. Since then **the financial cost to the council has increased by £10m, nearly half as much again as the original authorised estimate. So far not a sod has been dug nor a brick laid and now is the time to rethink the location of this major project before expenditure spirals out of control.**

Currently the cost is **£33.5m** (without the uncosted extra road works and diversion of a major trunk water main which would be required. There are likely other site problems leading to further price hikes). **Is Waterside still a financially cheaper option?**

The **significant cost** to the Waterside community in terms of **community life, health and wellbeing, environmental and amenity loss, loss of community identity and loss of self-determination** has never been factored in by EDC.

The cost and inconvenience to **parents, pupils, teachers and other staff** of siting the school at the furthest extreme rather than centrally within the council area (*as originally specified by EDC*) has not been considered.

As was clear at consultation meetings, Waterside does **NOT** consent to building here.

Should this project be voted through, it will be **against our collective will.**