

ASN Proposal

Questions issued by Waterside Community Council, received 28th May 2018

PLANNING

(FW): Can you please advise what your strong justification is to build on open green space, when there are brownfield options available?

Whilst officers are aware of a number of potential brownfield opportunities, the underlying principle adopted as part of the site option appraisal was that the sites had to be in Council ownership, both from a delivery and cost perspective. Whilst planning and other factors present a risk to any project, the risk in progressing with the consultation on a site without delivering on the most fundamental of criteria, ownership, represents too great a risk to the delivery of the project.

An initial technical exercise was conducted with respect to 13 sites short-listed for the construction of the new facility. Of those sites considered, only two were considered to be feasible at this stage in the process; the sites at Waterside Road and the site of the former Auchinairn Primary School, the latter being a brownfield site. Thereafter Education colleagues considered the merits of both sites from the perspective of service delivery, taking into account the constraints that each site might be subject to, and concluded that of those 2 sites, only the Waterside site could provide a suitable facility to meet the educational aspirations for a new ASN facility.

(FW): Can you please explain how you square your proposal to build on a designated open space with your own Open Space Strategy document when 5 other potential brownfield sites scored higher?

The summary of each site is very clear in that if the site is too small to accommodate the new facility, not fully within Council ownership, or is already committed for another use then it has been discounted. Clearly any site that falls within at least one of those categories cannot deliver the new facility, whether it is a brownfield site or not.

(CL): Please explain how your proposal to build a school on Waterside football field fits in with Local Development Plan “Protection of Existing Facilities Policy” (P26), bearing in mind that there is no room in Waterside to build a suitable replacement and/or enhanced facilities; any facilities provided at the school are likely to be more expensive to hire; the community does not see any community gain in this proposal let alone a significant demonstrable one; and there is no excess of provision to meet current and anticipated demand for full-size pitches?

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal would require to demonstrate through the statutory planning process how the reduction in playing field facilities would be mitigated.

As discussed through the consultation process to date, the Council has a track record of working successfully to engage local communities and other stakeholders in the design process for Major Projects. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the needs and aspirations of the community for the development would be considered from the early stages of the design process and consulted on regularly.

(CL): Given a) that the football field is part of the symmetrical green entrance to our historic village and b) that it is the only space (and a safe one) in our area for proper football matches, children's play, and large-scale community events, can you explain how you justify making this school proposal in light of the Local Development Plan's "Design and Placemaking Policy"? Are you not guilty of wasting everyone's time by focusing on this field rather than on a more appropriate one?

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal submitted for planning consent would require to demonstrate how the design and site arrangement would comply with the Design and Placemaking policies contained within the Local Plan.

The Council has a commitment to consulting with the local community and other stakeholders throughout the design process for any of its Major Projects.

(JQ) I'd like to ask why you have not consulted and worked in partnership with EDC's Planning Department and Sports Scotland, as it appears that you are breaching Scottish Planning Policies and you are contradicting your Local Development Plan / Open Space Strategy. As well as being part of the community, I am also a tax payer, please can you explain why you have not followed these policies/agencies' guidelines?

The Council's Planning service has been involved in the assessment of options and has highlighted the Planning considerations. SportsScotland has not been consulted at this stage as no proposals are in place, we are at a consultation stage. In the event of a proposal being supported and promoted for development then SportScotland would be consulted as part of the Planning process and their views reflected in any assessment, including the potential for the need to re-provision any reduction or loss of pitch facilities.

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal would require to demonstrate through the statutory planning process, that a sequential approach to identifying sites has been undertaken and to provide a strong justification as to why the site at Waterside Road is considered the only suitable option for the ASN School.

SPORT

(SW): Can you explain how the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework (2014) and its ambitions can be achieved in our community when you are planning to build on the only publicly accessible open/green space in the village?

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal would require to demonstrate through the statutory planning process how the reduction or loss of any playing fields would be mitigated.

(SW): How can spending £100,000 on upgrading Waterside park and then planning to build on it give value for money to taxpayers, while football clubs, which give children and adults the chance to participate in sport and stay active, may fold due to a) parents no longer being able to afford increased fees, or b) clubs running at a loss?

Previous drainage improvements were made to the site and were designed to improve the condition of the pitches to allow for increased playing hours, particularly during the Autumn / Winter phase of the football season.

Whilst the Council has a responsibility to avoid potentially abortive capital expenditure, the previous investment in the Playing Fields would not be considered significant justification to discount the site from consideration for the ASN School.

(JC): Irrespective of what council officials might promise, the reality is that during the process of building the school, all amenities will be lost including the football pitch. What do officials propose to do to assist and support youth groups and clubs which currently use the pitch during the extended period in which there will be no facilities for their use?

Any interim arrangements during the construction phase in particular would be subject to discussion and consultation with the wider community and stakeholders.

As has been stated on numerous occasions at recent public meetings, the Council is committed to working with the local community on any potential development to look at how any potential future development could meet the needs of the Council in terms of a new ASN facility, introducing complimentary community facilities and creating a development that seeks to maintain as much greenspace within any proposals. As part of these discussions officers would look at mitigating impact through the use of other local facilities in and around the Waterside area.

HEALTH (LC)

What alternative funded health initiatives are you going to provide to counteract the direct consequences that removal of this green space will have on increasing chronic disease, including cardiovascular disease, type ii diabetes, and child and adult obesity?

The Council recognises the importance of greenspace and the contribution it can make to wellbeing and recognises the importance of greenspace to local communities. Whilst this is the case the Council is not aware of any evidence provided by any party on the suggested 'direct consequences' on this potential development being used to accommodate an ASN facility whilst seeking to maintain an area of green space.

The Council is committed to working with the local community and all stakeholders to maximise the benefits of the design, layout and facilities delivered for all parties. If approved the Council would seek to deliver a design where community access to leisure facilities can be maintained and enhanced.

What consideration has been given to the effects of removal of our green space on the physical and mental health of our children and those with chronic mental and physical health conditions to maintain wellness?

Please see response above.

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal submitted for planning consent would require to demonstrate how the design and site arrangement would comply with the Design and Placemaking policies contained within the Local Plan. If approved the Council would seek to deliver a design where community access to leisure facilities can be maintained and where possible enhanced.

Has consideration been given to the potential of increasing costs for obesity management, mental health costs, the impact on sense of community, which is more difficult to quantify?

As above.

This has not been considered as a specific outcome of this proposal. As referenced above, if approved the Council intend to deliver a design where community access to leisure facilities can be maintained and where possible enhanced.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (DC)

Why do you feel that the children and adults of this area are not entitled to follow through on government recommendations such as in *Good Places Better Health for Scotland's Children*?

The Council does not agree with the above assertion.

A commitment to children and young people is reflected in its Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Council's work with partners and through our implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

If approved, Council intend to deliver a design where community access to leisure facilities can be maintained and would be developed with the local community to reflect the needs of local people, including young people.

The parents of Campsie View and Merkland believe that their choice is absolute and they appear to have assumed that we would willing to concede to your plans. Do you think it is right or indeed licit to subject us to the kind of moral blackmail and harrowing unpleasantness that we have suffered thus far?

The Council cannot comment on the views of individual parents however does not agree with the statement nor find the language used helpful as part of the current consultation and discussions.

EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING FOR THE COMMUNITY (DMcF)

After the initial build of the ASN school, in what ways will you invest and develop the school? For instance might you want to include a swimming pool and new technology in the future? If so, then wouldn't Waterside's football field site be too small? Would it not be better to start with a larger site (and a brownfield one)?

The requirement for a minimum site area of 14,000m² identified through the process to date is considered a sufficient area to accommodate the requirements of the school, both in terms of buildings and external spaces. Of all sites considered, the Waterside site given its size offers the only realistic opportunity for expansion in the future should that be required however given the type of school being proposed, this is not anticipated.

Waterside Community Council, its subcommittees, and Luggiewatch have been making great strides in promoting increased pride in our local community, improving the village, increasing interaction with the local primary school, getting involved in a Waterside leg of EDLC 's Trails and Tales (which will create a valuable resource for East Dunbartonshire as a whole), and putting on events such as our up-and-coming community gala on the football field. Were you aware of these activities? How are we to continue going from strength to strength if there is in future no large outdoor community space on which to gather as a community?

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal would require to demonstrate through the statutory planning process how the reduction in open space would be mitigated.

As discussed through the consultation process to date, the Council has a track record of working successfully to engage local communities and other stakeholders in the design process for Major Projects.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the needs and aspirations of the community for the development would be considered from the early stages of the design process and consulted on throughout the process with a view to accommodate the communities aspirations both within any facilities in the school and other areas within the development.

Can you explain why you think Waterside is a viable option in view of the council's aspirations to industrial and natural heritage conservation, health and wellbeing? In our view building on the field is likely to undermine the hard work and effort of our community groups to enhance village life and our environment (a visually pleasing environment through which Kirkintilloch's "welcome walkers" pass as they complete the Heritage Trail and other walks).

The site option appraisal information and responses are referenced above.

The Council is committed to working with the local community and all stakeholders to maximise the potential benefits of the project, including the design of external areas, landscaping and planting to ensure these reflect community and stakeholder aspirations. A number of Council services already work in partnership with the local community and the Council is committed to maintaining and building on this in the future.

ENVIRONMENT (JC)

East Dunbartonshire's green-space policies lay heavy emphasis on involving local communities in preserving and improving green spaces. How do planning officials intend to support the renewed enthusiasm and commitment of people in the Waterside and Rosebank communities for environmental enhancement and improvement, when their actions in targeting the football field are in fact likely to cause resentment, a sense of disempowerment and to create the impression of official indifference to the interests and needs of the local community?

It is incorrect to suggest that Planning officials have targeted the football field for development.

A number of options have been considered and Waterside identified as the most suitable site.

Subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, any formal development proposal would require to demonstrate through the statutory planning process how the loss of the open space would be mitigated.

As discussed through the consultation process to date, the Council has a track record of working successfully to engage local communities and other stakeholders in the design process for Major Projects.

"The East Dunbartonshire Greenspace Strategy recognises that Greenspace is an essential element of liveable towns and cities and serves to enhance and support the

ecology and biodiversity of the built environment, while at the same time enabling healthy living and fostering local pride and community cohesion.” Given that this is council policy, how do the planning team intend to meet the requirements of this policy, and how is it possible to reconcile this policy with the intention to destroy what is likely to be the only fully accessible green space that will be left to the local community in the very near future?

As previously stated there is no development proposals at this time and any proposals would require to consider this impact.

“Good-quality public greenspace provides many environmental, social and economic benefits. They offer opportunities for recreation, sport and play, social interaction, encourage healthy lifestyles, contribute to a sustainable natural environment and visually enhance the general attractiveness of an area. Many people assume that biodiversity is very much linked to the countryside, however urban areas play host to a great number of species that have adapted to our modern-day living. Green open spaces therefore make it possible for people to maintain contact with nature on a daily basis.” These aspirational statements by East Dunbartonshire Council are nothing more than empty rhetoric if it is the case that as soon as it is expedient, the council sets aside these principles in order to follow the ‘easy option’ of building on green park land. How do planning officials intend to compensate for the loss of this valuable resource and how will those plans help to support biodiversity?

As previously stated, subject to the outcome of the current statutory consultation, the formal development proposal would require to demonstrate through the statutory planning process how the development would mitigate against any potential impact on biodiversity and protected / enhance biodiversity in the area in future.

This would include proposals to maximise and retain green space through the layout and general arrangement proposed for the site.

GENERAL

Can you explain why the children of Waterside and Rosebank matter less than those of other communities in that you see it as acceptable to deprive them of their only large, natural and safe area for play?

Please note that the council had previously deprived them of their swing park for use in housing development while promising a replacement. Waterside children are still waiting, since the so-called replacement (tiny) serves only under-fives.

It is not the case that the children of Waterside and Rosebank matter less than any other child in East Dunbartonshire.

The proposal would seek to introduce new community facilities and maintain elements of green space as part of the design process, with officers committed to working with the community to delivering on this aspect of the development at all stages of the proposal.

Given that Waterside is firmly against this proposal and it appears that you have breached many of your own policies along with other government ones during the options appraisal process, what is your intention if this site is not given approval?

No Council policies have been breached as part of the consultation process and it is unclear what Government policies are being breached as per the suggestion above

The results of the statutory consultation will be subject of a report to Council later in the year. Should Council be minded not to proceed with the proposal for Waterside Road, officers will be required to review the implications of that decision and provide a further update report to Council.

Should the Council consider another site was available and appropriate then it would require to undertake a further and separate consultation.

Your vacant and derelict land sites document online highlights many available sites with the required size (m²), it includes existing school sites, why were these sites not included in feasibility study first as your policies state?

Information relating to site option appraisal is included above and was part of the options appraisal. The Vacant and Derelict Land Survey includes sites out-with Council ownership which would not be considered feasible for development for reasons referenced above.

There is lots of space at the bottom of Boghead Rd. Even if there is a sewer underneath, couldn't this be moved and this site used rather than take away Waterside's one area for games, community gathering and fitness (affecting the health and wellbeing of generations of Watersiders to come)?

The site at Boghead Road was considered through the options appraisal and was assessed to be less suitable than the site at Waterside Road, as is reflected in the scores provided for both.

Rather than it being a sewer, there is a tunnel running beneath the Boghead Rd site which acts as the overflow for the Gadloch when water levels reach a certain point. This tunnel is over 30m deep at some points and the cost to re-route this would be prohibitive.

Where would the Council suggest Waterside hold future galas if we lose this space? The Waterside community has been becoming more active and community-spirited again in recent years. Are the Council aware that by taking away this space for community activities they could destroy this positive development?

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the needs and aspirations of the community for the development would be considered from the early stages of the design process and consulted on throughout the process and as part of this incorporating space in the design for use by the community for community activities..

What about Whitegates (behind Monkland Ave.)?

Officers are reviewing this site which is known to have significant issues in relation to access, ground conditions and the availability of utilities.

Aren't parents being short-changed if the Council has knowingly selected a site that will pit the interests of their children against those of the existing community? Hasn't the Council failed in their duty to find more appropriate sites?

The Options Appraisal demonstrates the process undertaken by the Council to shortlist and select a preferred site for the development.

Both school communities and the Education service are aware that the proposal to close and merge the two existing ASN schools is subject to a statutory consultation process; and that any future development proposal for the site will be subject to a further statutory consultation through the planning process.

Both processes have a risk of objection from neighbours, local residents, the wider community or statutory bodies. At no point has the Council sought to “pit” sections of the community against one another. The reaction of sections of the community is not something the Council has control over.

Do the local schools have the capacity to support the ASN pupils in view of the additional families coming in from Braes O' Yetts development?

The Education service have identified a requirement for the new ASN School to host up to 200 pupils – this accounts for future role changes.

Sports Scotland have told me we have 9 3G pitches in the Kirkintilloch and Lenzie area. The Scottish Ministers request an open space analysis take place to demonstrate that our recreational land is surplus to requirements, taking account of both its recreational and amenity value.

This is a statement is noted. Council has both a pitches strategy, developed in partnership with the East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust, and an Open Space Strategy referenced in previous questions.

It is hard to see that there will be much space for any shared exercise facilities once parking is properly factored in, since a) ASN schools have a far higher ratio of staff to pupils than other schools; b) there are also visiting specialists; and c) all children are likely to arrive by cars, minibuses or coaches. If there are insufficient parking spaces at the school in line with parking policies, staff and others may try to park elsewhere in Waterside, which already suffers from a lack of parking. Please can you comment on this aspect?

Issues of parking and wider traffic and transport issues would be considered as part of any design and development process as well as assessed through Planning and Roads Construction Consent processes. The design of any development would seek to address traffic issues and where possible consider existing problems with a view to improving these.

What facilities do you envisage for the community if the proposed development goes ahead?

Any additional facilities or community benefits would be subject to discussion with the wider community as part of the development process itself. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the needs and aspirations of the community for the development will be considered from the early stages of the design stage and consulted on throughout the process.

The detail of any facilities would seek to reflect the communities aspirations, both local and school, as well as the ability to accommodate the various aspirations within the site.

How many hours would any café, for instance, be likely to be open to the community and during what times of day? Can you provide details of similar schemes?

The project is only at consultation and no details of community facilities have been considered at this stage.

What PEST (political, economic, socio-cultural and technological) analysis was undertaken during the options appraisal process?

Officers undertook a technical exercise to establish the viability of each site on the short list. The Options Appraisal shortlisted and assessed sites against eight criteria to assess the technical suitability for development. The results of this exercise were then reviewed by the Education service to consider compatibility / suitability of sites. The options appraisal has been sent to the Community Council separately.

According to a Bankhead Site appraisal, one of the “perceived site opportunities” is “the extent of mature trees and extensive views across landscape [which] gives the site a strong connection to the surrounding green space.” Does this statement mean that there is a strong intention for the Wimpey-owned field between the football field and Gartconner Primary School to remain undeveloped if the school build should go ahead?

This may be a matter for future consideration by Planning as part of the Local Development Plan process or a future development proposal and as such has not been considered in the development of the options which consider the current area.