
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

2nd September 2020

Planning Committee

Locality	Garnock Valley
Reference	19/00903/PPM
Application Registered	4th December 2019
Decision Due	4th April 2020
Ward	Kilbirnie And Beith

Recommendation	Approved subject to Conditions
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Location	Site To South East Of Moorpark Primary School Milton
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	Road Kilbirnie Ayrshire
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Applicant	North Ayrshire Council
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Proposal	Erection of primary school to include associated access, parking, playground and sports pitch
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1. Description

Planning permission is sought to erect a replacement primary school with pre-school facilities on land formerly occupied by Garnock Academy at School Road, Kilbirnie. The application site would take up approximately half of the former secondary school site, providing a school building together with associated parking facilities, road and footpath connections, playground areas and two outdoor sports pitches. One of the pitches would have an artificial playing surface, with the larger of the two having a grass surface. The site boundary would be fenced from the surrounding area, as at present.

The remainder of the former Garnock Academy site, as well as the site of the existing Moorpark Primary School (to the north) would be retained for future housing development and is outwith the scope of this application.

The design of the proposed school would take the form of a two-storey circular hub or core with three main single storey classroom wings radiating from it. There would be 12 classrooms in total, as well as three general purpose rooms. In addition, two smaller projecting wings (also single storey) would adjoin the hub to provide accommodation for the nursery area, the admin office and main reception area. Between each wing would be secure outdoor play areas for use by the children in the adjoining classrooms. Covered learning areas would be provided within each of the secure outdoor spaces. Within the

circular hub would be the dining hall, gym hall, stage and all associated facilities. The building has been designed to cater for 231 pupils and 30 pre-school children.

Externally, the circular hub would be finished with aluminium shingle cladding at first floor level. Otherwise, the school would be finished using a light coloured facing brick throughout, with grey coloured aluminium pitched roofs, single ply membrane for flat roofs and aluminium/timber windows (grey metal frames outside, timber inside).

The car park would provide spaces for both staff and visitors and would include drop-off and pick-up areas with a turning circle. Access would be taken from a new junction to be formed on School Road. The original Garnock Academy exit road would be stopped up with the current Moorpark Primary School access (outwith the application site) retained.

A footpath link would be provided across the north of the site leading to the existing path and footbridge which crosses over the Pundeavon Burn. The footbridge and path connect the Milton Road area of the town to the current Moorpark Primary School. Pedestrian access would also be available from School Road, as at present, providing access to the Largs Road area and southwards towards the town centre.

The existing gates at the southeast of the site, leading from Townhead, would be removed and infilled with fencing. (Note: these gates were used as a pedestrian and secondary vehicular access to Garnock Academy, not the current Moorpark Primary School. There is presently no pedestrian or vehicle link from Townhead to Moorpark Primary School).

Extensive landscaping works are proposed throughout the site, including new tree planting to replace a number of trees which require to be felled within the boundary of the site.

In addition to the submitted plans and drawings, the application is supported by the following documents and reports:

Pre-application consultation (PAC) report

The PAC report summarises the background to the project and pre-application consultation. It highlights that a public consultation event was held by the applicant on 28th August 2019. It notes that advance publicity included a notice in a local newspaper and the distribution of 200 leaflets to residential properties and businesses near the site. 33 people attended, including representatives of the school community, local residents, councillors and community councillors. Representatives of the applicant and design team attended both events to answer questions raised by members of the public. A total of 6 responses were submitted in relation to the proposal, mostly providing positive feedback. There were some concerns received in respect of increased traffic and on-street parking, as well as a request made for the removal of boundary trees. The PAC report has given consideration to each of the issues raised.

Design and access statement

The statement outlines the various elements contained in the proposal and explains how the design team sought to address the project. Emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the proposed school would meet the Council's educational objectives by creating an inspirational and memorable learning environment.

Planning supporting statement

The report summarises the background to the project, including the reasons this particular site was chosen from a short list of 5. It describes the site and explains the rationale for the siting and design of the school and the associated access, parking and open space. The statement also provides an assessment of the proposal against the previous and current LDP, giving significant weight to Placemaking Principles as set out in Strategic Policy 2.

Protected species survey for Pundeavon Burn Corridor and Extended phase 1 habitat survey

Both reports list the European Protected Species that were investigated during a survey undertaken on 19th September 2019. The species considered included bats, otters, badgers, water voles, potential breeding birds as well as plant species. The survey found no evidence of any of the above protected species although the report highlights that there are trees with potential bat roost features alongside the Pundeavon Burn corridor (which is outwith the site boundary). This also applies to trees within the site. A separate bat survey was therefore undertaken. Within both reports, recommendations were made in relation to measures which should be adopted during land engineering and construction operations to safeguard any protected species which may be using the site for foraging or commuting purposes.

Bat survey

A bat survey was undertaken during November 2019, which found that there was bat roost potential in a number of trees within the site and also in a small utility building nearby. However, no evidence of roosting bats was found. Recommendations were made in relation to the potential presence of bat roosts. The report includes a bat protection plan for implementation during the development.

Flood risk assessment

A revised flood risk assessment was requested by SEPA, which has led to a lengthy delay in the processing of this application. Scottish Planning Policy is based on the principle that "the planning system should prevent development which would have a significant probability of being affected by flooding or would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere." The site does not have a history of flooding. The review of potential flooding at the site concluded that the only potentially significant flood risk would be from the adjacent watercourse, the Pundeavon Burn. The building would need to be protected against 1 in 1000-year flood events with the remainder of the site a 1 in 200 year level of protection. Flood risk from the burn would be limited to the overtopping of the existing footbridge which is located northeast of the site (as at present). The development is not, however, reliant on access from the footbridge and could also be reached from School Road which is not at risk of flooding from the burn. Playing fields within the site could be subject to flooding and a freeboard level of 600mm should be applied when setting the finished floor level of the building (55m AOD). This level has been applied in the site layout drawings. The playing fields should be designed to cope with occasional inundation and flow across them.

Drainage and SuDS Strategy Report

All foul water from the school building would be drained to the public sewer. Rainfall (surface water and roof water) drainage would be drained under gravity separately from foul water, attenuated and discharged to the Pundeavon Burn. The drains would have a 30% allowance for climate change (i.e. taking account of the potential for increased rainfall). During a 1 in 200-year flood event, surface water flood storage would be stored below the ground in crate systems (e.g. stormcell), then discharged to the Pundeavon Burn. For the

safety of school children, there would be no above ground SuDS detention basins within the development.

Noise assessment

The noise assessment considers baseline conditions, construction noise and noise during the operation of the school once completed. Baseline noise levels were predominately from traffic on the surrounding roads. Noise generated by construction activities would take account of the relevant British Standards. In terms of the completed development, the report notes that proposed air conditioning units would be a potential source of noise. These units would only operate during the daytime period (seasonally). The only other source of potential noise would be from the playground and sports pitches during school hours. It is not intended that the school's outdoor facilities would be available for public use outside of school hours.

Transport statement

The transport statement considers the location of the site, the school catchment area, staffing levels, routes to school and public transport provision in the area. It notes that the site would be marginally closer to the resident catchment population than the existing site for Moorpark Primary School. The existing path link to Milton Road, via the footbridge, would be retained with a new connection formed into the school. The new access onto School Road would be more direct in comparison with the existing arrangements. An existing access onto Townhead, which formerly served Garnock Academy, would be permanently closed off. The statement concludes with various recommendations relating to the level of parking provision, footpath connections and cycle parking.

The application site is located within a general urban area of Kilbirnie in terms of the adopted Local Development Plan. The following LDP policies are relevant to the proposal:

Strategic Policy 1 - Towns and villages objective
Strategic Policy 2 - Placemaking
Policy 14 - Green and blue infrastructure
Policy 20 - Outdoor sports facilities
Policy 23 - Flood Risk Management
Policy 27 - Sustainable transport and active travel
Policy 29 - Energy Infrastructure Development
Policy 31 - Future proofing for heat networks

Strategic Policy 1 - Towns and Villages Objective

Our towns and villages are where most of our homes, jobs, community facilities, shops and services are located. We want to continue to support our communities, businesses and protect our natural environment by directing new development to our towns and villages as shown in the Spatial Strategy. Within urban areas (within the settlement boundary), the LDP identifies town centre locations, employment locations and areas of open space. Most of the remaining area within settlements is shown as General Urban Area. Within the General Urban Area, proposals for residential development will accord with the development plan in principle, and applications will be assessed against the policies of the LDP. New non-residential proposals will be assessed against policies of this LDP that relate to the proposal.

In principle, we will support development proposals within our towns and villages that:

- a) Support the social and economic functions of our town centres by adopting a town centre first principle that directs major new development and investment to town centre locations as a priority including supporting town centre living.
- b) Provide the right new homes in the right places by working alongside the Local Housing Strategy to deliver choice and variety in the housing stock, protecting land for housing development to ensure we address housing need and demand within North Ayrshire and by supporting innovative approaches to improving the volume and speed of housing delivery.
- c) Generate new employment opportunities by identifying a flexible range of business, commercial and industrial areas to meet market demands including those that would support key sector development at Hunterston and i3, Irvine.
- d) Recognise the value of our built and natural environment by embedding placemaking into our decision-making.
- e) Prioritise the re-use of brownfield land over greenfield land by supporting a range of strategic developments that will deliver:
 - o regeneration of vacant and derelict land through its sustainable and productive re-use, particularly at Ardrossan North Shore, harbour and marina areas, Montgomerie Park (Irvine) and Lochshore (Kilbirnie).
 - o regeneration and conservation benefits, including securing the productive re-use of Stoneyholm Mill (Kilbirnie) and supporting the Millport Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.
- f) Support the delivery of regional partnerships such as the Ayrshire Growth Deal in unlocking the economic potential of the Ayrshire region.

Strategic Policy 2 - Placemaking

Our Placemaking policy will ensure we are meeting LOIP priorities to make North Ayrshire safer and healthier by ensuring that all development contributes to making quality places. The policy also safeguards, and where possible enhances environmental quality through the avoidance of unacceptable adverse environmental or amenity impacts. We expect that all applications for planning permission meet the six qualities of successful places, contained in this policy. This is in addition to establishing the principle of development in accordance with Strategic Policy 1: Spatial Strategy. These detailed criteria are generally not repeated in the detailed policies section of the LDP. They will apply, as appropriate, to all developments.

Six qualities of a successful place

Distinctive

The proposal draws upon the positive characteristics of the surrounding area including landscapes, topography, ecology, skylines, spaces and scales, street and building forms, and materials to create places with a sense of identity.

Welcoming

The proposal considers the future users of the site and helps people to find their way around, for example, by accentuating existing landmarks to create or improve views (including sea views), locating a distinctive work of art in a notable place or making the most of gateway features to and from the development. It should also ensure that appropriate signage and lighting is used to improve safety and illuminate attractive buildings.

Safe and Pleasant

The proposal creates attractive places by providing a sense of security, including by encouraging activity, considering crime rates, providing a clear distinction between private and public space, creating active frontages and considering the benefits of natural surveillance for streets, paths and open spaces.

The proposal creates a pleasant, positive sense of place by promoting visual quality, encouraging social and economic interaction and activity, and by considering the place before vehicle movement.

The proposal respects the amenity of existing and future users in terms of noise, privacy, sunlight/daylight, smells, vibrations, glare, traffic generation, and parking. The proposal sufficiently investigates and responds to any issues of ground instability.

Adaptable

The proposal considers future users of the site and ensures that the design is adaptable to their needs. This includes consideration of future changes of use that may involve a mix of densities, tenures, and typologies to ensure that future diverse but compatible uses can be integrated including the provision of versatile multi-functional greenspace.

Resource Efficient

The proposal maximises the efficient use of resources. This can be achieved by re-using or sharing existing resources and by minimising their future depletion. This includes consideration of technological and natural means such as flood drainage systems, heat networks, solar gain, renewable energy and waste recycling as well as use of green and blue networks.

Easy to Move Around and Beyond

The proposal considers the connectedness of the site for people before the movement of motor vehicles, by prioritising sustainable and active travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport and ensuring layouts reflect likely desire lines, through routes and future expansions.

Detailed Policy 14 - Green & Blue Infrastructure

All proposals should seek to protect, create, enhance and/or enlarge our natural features and habitats which make up our green and blue infrastructure (including open space), ensuring no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts occur.

Green and blue infrastructure should be multi-functional, accessible and integral to its local circumstances. For example, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) have the

potential to play a key role in the delivery of meaningful blue and green infrastructure, providing amenity and improving biodiversity as well as providing a sustainable flood risk solution. We will require details of the proposed arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure, and associated water features, to form a key part of any proposal.

Our Open Space Strategy (2016-2026) highlights the need for an audit which identifies valued and functional green and blue infrastructure or open space capable of being brought into use to meet local needs. We will support the temporary use of unused or underused land as green infrastructure including where it consists of advanced structure planting to create landscape frameworks for future development. Support will be given to proposals which seek to enhance biodiversity from new development where possible, including the restoration of degraded habitats and the avoidance of further fragmentation or isolation of habitats. We will also support proposals that are in accordance with the vision and outcomes of the Central Scotland Green Network as well as those of the Garnock Connections Project.

Detailed Policy 20 - Outdoor Sports Facilities

Development involving the loss of outdoor sports facilities will only be supported in the following exceptional circumstances:

- o it is ancillary to the principal use of the site as outdoor sports facility, or;
- o it involves only a minor part of the outdoor sports facility and would not affect its use and potential for sport and training, or;
- o the outdoor sports facility which would be lost would be replaced either by a new facility of comparable or greater benefit for sport in a location that is convenient for users, or by the upgrading of an existing outdoor sports facility to provide a facility of better quality on the same site or at another location that is convenient for users and maintains or improves the overall playing capacity in the area, or;
- o there is a clear excess of provision to meet current and anticipated demand in the area (quantity), and that the site would be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision as informed by a relevant strategy and in consultation with sportscotland*

*In the absence of an up to date Pitches and Facilities Strategy, it is unlikely that development proposals would be able to satisfy the fourth bullet point, until a relevant Strategy is in place and/or in consultation with sportscotland.

Detailed Policy 23 - Flood Risk Management

We will support development that demonstrates accordance with the Flood Risk Framework as defined in Scottish Planning Policy and shown in schedule 7, relevant flood risk management strategies and local flood risk management plans. We will also support schemes to manage flood risk, for instance through natural flood management, managed coastal realignment, wetland or green infrastructure creation.

Generally, development should avoid locations of flood risk and should not lead to a significant increase in the flood risk elsewhere. Land raising and elevated buildings will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where it is shown to have a neutral or better impact on flood risk outside the raised area.

Development proposals should:

- o Clearly set out measures to protect against, and manage, flood risk.

- o Include sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) where surface water is proposed to be discharged to the water environment, in accordance with the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 as amended.
- o Include provision of temporary/construction phase SuDS.
- o include appropriate long-term maintenance arrangements.
- o Be supported by an appropriate flood risk assessment where at risk of flooding from any source in medium to high risk areas and for developments in low to medium risk areas identified in the risk framework (schedule 7).
- o Take account of SEPA's flood risk and land use vulnerability guidance (2018) and any relevant updates to, or replacements of this guidance.

Detailed Policy 27 - Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

We will support development that:

contributes to an integrated transport network that supports long term sustainability

- o reduces inequality by improving the accessibility and connectivity of employment opportunities and local amenities
- o provides safe and convenient sustainable transport options and supports modal shift to sustainable transport and active travel.
- o reduces the need to travel or appropriately mitigates adverse impacts of significant traffic generation, road safety and air quality, including taking into account the cumulative impact.
- o takes a design-led, collaborative approach to street design to provide safe and convenient opportunities for integrated sustainable travel in the following order of priority: pedestrians, people on cycles, people using collective transport (buses, trains etc.) and people using private transport.
- o considers the potential requirements of other infrastructure providers, including designing for the potential development of district heat networks by for example incorporating access points into the transport network to allow for future pipe development or creating channels underneath the road/infrastructure to enable pipe development with minimal disruption to the networks.
- o enables the integration of transport modes and facilitates movement of freight by rail or water (in preference to road). This would include, for example, the provision of infrastructure necessary to support positive change in transport technologies, such as charging points for electric vehicles and the safeguarding of disused railway lines with the reasonable prospect of being used as rail, tram, bus rapid transit or active travel routes.
- o considers the impact on, and seeks to reduce risk to level crossings, including those located within Ardrossan, Stevenston and Gailes.

Proposals are expected to include an indication of how new infrastructure or services are to be delivered and phased, and how and by whom any developer contributions will be made.

We will take account of:

- o the implications of development proposals on traffic, patterns of travel and road safety.
- o Significant traffic generating uses should be sited at locations that are well served by public transport, subject to parking restraint policies, and supported by measures to promote the availability of high-quality public transport services. Where this is not

achievable, we may seek the provision of subsidised services until a sustainable service is achievable.

- o the potential vehicle speeds and level of infrastructure provided for the expected numbers of trips by all modes.
- o the relationship between land use and transport and particularly the capacity of the existing transport network, environmental and operational constraints, and proposed or committed transport projects.
- o committed and proposed projects for the enhancement of North Ayrshire's transport infrastructure, including improved park and ride provision.
- o specific locational needs of rural communities. We recognise that in rural areas we need to be realistic about the likely viability of public transport services and innovative solutions such as demand-responsive public transport and small scale park and ride facilities at nodes on rural bus corridors will be considered.
- o The Council's adopted Local Transport Strategy, Core Paths Plan, Town Centre Parking Strategy and parking requirements.
- o The need to mitigate and adapt to climate change with regard to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.
- o The provision of new and improved links to existing and proposed active travel routes which are integrated with the wider strategic network, including the National Walking and Cycling Network, core paths and the Ayrshire Coastal Path.

Developments likely to generate significant additional journeys will be required to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, Air Quality Assessment and a Travel Plan. A Transport Statement will be required for smaller scale developments that will not have a major impact on the transport network, but are still likely to have an impact at a local level on the immediate transport network.

National Development:

The National Walking and Cycling Network (NWCN) was designated as a national development within the National Planning Framework (NPF3). This is an ambitious project which aims to grow Scotland's network of paths from 6,000 to 8,000 km by 2035. Key routes in North Ayrshire which will contribute to this network are detailed below. These are being developed in partnership with Sustrans and Scottish Natural Heritage as lead organisations for the delivery of the NWCN.

These include the development of an off-road alignment for:

- o National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 73 (North) between Brodick and Corrie on the Isle of Arran
- o NCN Route 753 between Skelmorlie and Ardrossan
- o While not explicitly referenced in NPF3, support will be given to development of an off-road alignment for NCN Route 7 between Kilwinning and Kilbirnie.

Detailed Policy 29 - Energy Infrastructure

We will support development proposals for energy infrastructure development, including wind, solar, tidal, cropping and other renewable sources, where they will contribute positively to our transition to a low carbon economy and have no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts, taking into consideration (including cumulatively) the following:

Environmental

- o Communities and individual dwellings - including visual impact, residential amenity, noise and shadow flicker;
- o Water quality;
- o Landscape - including avoiding unacceptable adverse impacts on our landscape designations;
- o Effects on the natural heritage - including birds;
- o Carbon rich soils including peat;
- o Impacts on the historic environment - including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings.

Community

- o Establishing the use of the site for energy infrastructure development;
- o providing a net economic impact - including socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities;
- o Scale of contribution to renewable energy generation targets;
- o Public access - including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes identified in the National Planning Framework;
- o Impacts on tourism and recreation;
- o Specific locational opportunities for energy storage/generation.

Public Safety

- o Greenhouse gas emissions;
- o Aviation and defence interests and seismological recording;
- o Telecommunications and broadcasting installations - particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised; radio telemetry interference and below ground assets;
- o Road traffic and adjacent trunk roads;
- o Effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk including drinking water quality and quantity (to both the public and private water supplies);
- o Decommissioning of developments - including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration and aftercare.

Proposals should include redundancy plans which will demonstrate how apparatus will be timeously removed as reasonably soon as the approved scheme ceases operation. There may be a requirement for financial bonds to ensure that decommissioning can be achieved. Taking into consideration the above, proposals for wind turbine developments should accord with the Spatial Framework (as mapped) and consider the current Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Farm Development in North Ayrshire. This study will be used as a point of reference for assessing all wind energy proposals including definitions of what small to large scale entails.

Buildings: Low and Zero Carbon Generating Technology

Proposals for all new buildings will be required to demonstrate that at least 10% of the current carbon emissions reduction set by Scottish Building Standards will be met through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies. A statement will be required to be submitted demonstrating compliance with this requirement. The percentage will increase at the next review of the local development plan.

This requirement will not apply to:

1. Alterations and extensions to buildings
2. Change of use or conversion of buildings

3. Ancillary buildings that stand alone and cover an area less than 50 square metres
4. Buildings which will not be heated or cooled, other than by heating provided solely for frost protection.
5. Buildings which have an intended life of less than two years.

Detailed Policy 31 - Future Proofing for Heat Networks

We will support proposals for the creation or enhancement of district heat networks in as many locations as possible in North Ayrshire (even where they are initially reliant on carbon-based fuels if there is potential to convert them to run on renewable or low carbon sources of heat in the future).

We will seek to identify and safeguard existing and future heat network generation and distribution infrastructure, including piperuns and pipework within, and to the curtilage of, new developments.

Proposals for development that constitute a significant heat source or substantial development* which would not result in the creation or enhancement of district heat networks should include:

- i) provision for on-site heat recovery and re-use infrastructure; or
- ii) a heat network generation and distribution infrastructure plan (a district heating plan), taking into account the potential to connect to future heat demand sites; or
- iii) demonstrable evidence that district heating or other forms of renewable generation storage have been explored but are not feasible for technical (proximity, geography, safety etc) or economic reasons.

* 'Substantial' developments consist of urban extensions, large regeneration areas or large development sites subject to master planning or large mixed-use developments and major sites (50 residential units and above). There is, however, an element of judgment that will need to be applied here and it might be that some other locations offer significant potential for heat networks due to their local context, support from the local authority, and 'buy in' from developers.

2. Consultations and Representations

The application was subject to the statutory neighbour notification procedures, which included an advertisement in a local newspaper on 11th December 2019. No representations were received.

Consultations

NAC Active Travel & Transportation - a number of points were raised in the consultation response dating from December 2019, all of which were technical points. These have all been addressed and are now satisfactory.

Response: Noted.

NAC Environmental Health - no objections subject to conditions regarding significant unsuspected contamination and a range of other environmental protection matters.

Response: A condition could be attached regarding any significant unsuspected contamination, if found on the site. The other matters fall outwith the remit of the planning application and would require to be addressed during construction by the contractor. The specific matters raised have been sent directly to the applicant's agent for them to note. A condition requiring the preparation of a site waste management plan could be attached, which would apply to the completed development.

NAC Flooding Officer - no objections subject to confirmation of several technical details relating to floor levels, overland flows, land drainage and SuDS.

Response: This consultation response was provided during the early part of January 2020. Due to the additional flood risk and drainage information requested by SEPA in the first two consultation responses (late January 2020 and mid-April 2020), these matters have now been provided and satisfactorily resolved.

SEPA - objected to the application on two separate occasions since additional flood risk and drainage information was considered to be necessary. Following consideration of the additional information submitted on behalf of the applicant in June 2020, SEPA withdrew the objection on 9th July 2020.

Response: Noted. The submitted drainage and flood risk information has informed the site levels and design of the proposed school, parking areas and access routes.

NAC Arboriculture Officer and Kilbirnie Community Council - no comments.

3. Analysis

In accordance with statute, planning applications require to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As noted above, there are six relevant development plan policies, the first of which is Strategic Policy 1 - Towns and Villages Objective. This strategic policy states that the Council will support development proposals within our towns and villages that prioritise the re-use of brownfield land over greenfield land and will embed placemaking into our decision making. The site for the proposed school would re-use land formerly occupied by Garnock Academy. It has been disused for over three and a half years since the pupils transferred to the Garnock Community Campus in Glengarnock. Placemaking is at the heart of the proposal, and the design has evolved through careful consideration of both the site and the educational requirements of the school community. The proposal therefore accords with Strategic Policy 1, in principle.

The assessment of the proposal against Strategic Policy 2 - Placemaking will take place after consideration of the detailed topic based policies.

Policy 14 addresses the topic of green and blue infrastructure and is concerned with habitats and open space (green infrastructure) and the water environment (blue infrastructure). It requires proposed developments to protect, create, enhance and/or enlarge these assets. In this proposal, the green infrastructure includes the provision of a

large area of open space to serve the new primary school. Many of the existing trees within the site would be retained, with additional landscaping provided for amenity, habitat and educational benefits. A condition would require a revised scheme to be prepared, following the implementation of tree protection works on site, to ensure the inclusion of trees T25 and T26 within the development. Pedestrian connections would be included within the proposal to enhance the green infrastructure, reduce reliance on motorised travel and encourage more use of the outdoor spaces within the development. In terms of the blue infrastructure, the development would not include any above ground SuDs water features as this is not considered appropriate within a primary school for safety reasons. However, the site is adjacent to the Pundeavon Burn which has its own natural woodland either side of the watercourse.

The proposed development would not encroach onto this area nor cause any adverse impacts on either the watercourse or the associated riparian woodland. As noted above, a bat survey has been undertaken to establish if any of the trees within the site boundary are used by bats for roosting. The survey, undertaken in September 2019, established that bat roost potential was present in a number of trees within the application site and adjacent to it, as well as a small utility building nearby. A habitat survey for the overall site was subsequently undertaken. Conditions could be attached to ensure that the recommendations of the various wildlife and habitat surveys are implemented during the course of the development, including a further bat survey inclusive of a protection plan, and that the proposed landscaping works are fully implemented. The future maintenance of all green spaces within the site would be the responsibility of the Council. In summary, the proposal accords with Policy 14.

Policy 20 is chiefly concerned about the loss of outdoor sports facilities to new development. The development would include substantial areas of open space that would be significantly improved in comparison with the current situation. For example, the red blaes pitch at the southern end of the site would be replaced with a modern all-weather playing surface. A new grass pitch would be provided to the north of the school building, replacing an area of brownfield land. Beyond, areas of hardstanding would be retained as open space within the school boundary with enhanced pedestrian access in the form of a new footpath. In addition, the footprint of the proposed school would be smaller than that of the former Garnock Academy buildings, resulting in a net increase in open space at the site once the playground and sports pitches are taken into account. In summary, the proposal accords with Policy 20.

Policy 23 relates to Flood Risk Management. As noted above, the application has been supported by a flood risk assessment in addition to a further report on drainage and SuDS. This particular issue has caused significant delay to the processing of the application due to a series of objections from SEPA in the six-month period between January and June 2020. A final version of the flood risk assessment, following further modelling work at the request of SEPA, was received on 25th June 2020, which was subject to consultation with SEPA resulting in the removal of the objection on 9th July 2020. Given the robust and detailed consideration of flood risk, it is concluded that the proposed development is not at risk of flooding. In summary, the proposal accords with Policy 23.

Policy 27 addresses sustainable transport and active travel. The existing catchment area for Moorpark Primary School would be unchanged by the proposed development, since the school would only be relocated a short distance from its present location to the north of the application site. Existing footpath networks would be retained with a new access formed from School Road and new footpath across the north of the site to link with the footbridge to

Milton Road. The access onto Townhead (which served Garnock Academy only) would be stopped up for security reasons. It is considered that the site is well located for the catchment area, covering the northern part of Kilbirnie as well as the rural area beyond, and that provision has been made for the promotion of sustainable transport and active travel in the form of covered scooter and bike stands within the proposed development, which would cater for up to 38 cycles (or scooters). In terms of road access, there would be no change to the present arrangements, with all vehicular traffic routed to the site via School Road, north of the A760. The level of parking provision within the site would be adequate for the 36 staff and drop-off and pick-up arrangements would also be put in place. A turning facility would enable drop-offs and pick-ups to take place without vehicles having to enter the main parking area. In summary, the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy 27.

Policy 29 (Energy Infrastructure Development) is relevant to the proposal since it involves the erection of a new building. In addition, Policy 31 requires that proposed developments are 'future proofed' for heat networks. Both policies are considered together, below.

Policy 29 seeks to ensure that new buildings include low or zero carbon technologies to demonstrate that at least 10% of the current carbon emissions reduction set by Scottish Building Standards will be met. Policy 31 is aimed at decarbonising the type of energy used for heating buildings and that consideration is given to district heat networks during the planning process. In this instance, the proposed school would initially be heated using a high efficiency gas boiler system, delivering both hot water and space heating. Over time, it is intended to develop a district heating network for both the school and the adjacent housing development which is being planned by the Council for the neighbouring land. The applicant is working towards this aim and has confirmed that a low or zero carbon district heating system would be developed in tandem with the new housing on the neighbouring vacant land in the years ahead. In order to meet the requirements of Policy 29, a condition could be attached in respect of low or zero carbon technologies which could be included within the school from the outset, such as solar PV panels for electricity generation, and therefore would meet the requirements of Policy 29. In view of the wider plans for the surrounding area, it is considered that the information provided about future district heating networks, this would meet the requirements of Policy 31.

Turning to Strategic Policy 2 (Placemaking), all six qualities of a successful place are relevant to this proposal. A comment on each follows below:

Distinctive

The design of the school building has been carefully considered to meet the requirements of the school. Its built form and external finishes would result in a modern school which would sit comfortably in its landscape setting, with a backdrop of woodland on the banks of the Pundeavon Burn. The building would be unique within Kilbirnie and is considered an excellent response to the site.

Safe and Pleasant

The entire site would be landscaped with as many mature and established trees retained wherever possible. There would be numerous opportunities for outdoor learning created by the numerous features that have been embedded into the design. The building itself would benefit from significant levels of natural light which would also enhance the learning experiences for the pupils and contribute to wellbeing.

Resource Efficient

As discussed above, a condition could be attached with regard to Policy 29 and consideration is being given to district heating for the area in the longer term.

Welcoming

The siting of the school has been carefully considered and the building would be approached from a tree lined avenue leading from School Road. It is considered that the setting and design of the school would be welcoming and create a positive environment for a primary school.

Adaptable

Whilst the proposed school is designed primarily for educational use, it would provide various internal and external high-quality spaces that could be used by the wider community for learning, community and leisure purposes if so required.

Easy to move around and beyond

As discussed above, the site is on the land previously occupied by Garnock Academy and is adjacent to the existing Moorpark Primary School. As such, the site is well located for the catchment area and can easily be reached on foot, bicycle or scooter from the surrounding area as well as being accessible by car. The catchment area for Moorpark is such that school transport is not provided by the Council, with the exception of children resident in the rural area beyond the town who are provided with a taxi service. Given that most pupils live within walking or cycling distance, facilities for securely storing bikes and scooters would be provided as part of the development. These measures would support and encourage active travel to and from school. Since the proposal is for the relocation of the existing primary school on the adjacent site, which pupils would transfer from, the proposed development would not result in any significant change to the previously established school travel and transport patterns within this part of Kilbirnie. In these circumstances, there is no justification for a planning condition in respect of a travel plan. In summary, the proposal is acceptable in terms of Strategic Policy 2 (Placemaking).

There are no other material considerations. In conclusion, the proposed replacement primary school for Moorpark would offer significant benefits to the school and wider Kilbirnie community. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to the undernoted conditions.

4. Full Recommendation

Approved subject to Conditions

Reasons for Decision

Condition

1. That the development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations contained in the supporting documentation submitted with the planning application unless otherwise agreed in terms of the conditions to the consent, all to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interest of the proper planning of the area.

Condition

2. That, prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of the heat and power systems for the school, which shall include low or zero carbon technologies to demonstrate that at least 10% of the current carbon emissions reduction set by Scottish Building Standards will be met, shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved unless otherwise agreed in writing with North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interests of environmental protection in accordance with Policy 29 of the adopted Local Development Plan.

Condition

3. That, prior to the commencement of site clearance works, a further bat survey shall be undertaken. The findings of the survey together with details of measures to protect any bats and any bat habitats that are found within the site shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented only in accordance with such details as may be approved.

Reason

In the interests of nature conservation.

Condition

4. That, prior to the commencement of site clearance works, all trees to be retained (including T25 and T26) shall be enclosed with protective fencing in accordance with BS 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations). The tree protection measures shall require to be inspected by the Planning Authority before the commencement of site clearance works. Thereafter, unless otherwise agreed, the tree protection measures as approved shall be retained in a satisfactory condition throughout the duration of the land engineering and building works required to implement the development to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interests of nature conservation and amenity.

Condition

5. That, notwithstanding the scheme of landscaping hereby approved, a revised scheme shall be prepared following the implementation of tree protection works on site to ensure the inclusion of trees T25 and T26 within the development. The revised scheme shall be submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority prior to the implementation of any landscaping works on the site. Thereafter, the revised scheme of landscaping as may be approved shall be implemented to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council not later than the first planting and seeding season following the opening of the school for education purposes. Unless otherwise agreed, any trees, plants or areas of seeding which subsequently fails shall be replaced with others of a similar size and species until successfully established.

Reason

In the interest of the amenity of the area.

Condition

6. That, prior to the commencement of any building operations, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority a detailed schedule of the proposed external finishes to be used on the school building. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented only in accordance with such details as may be approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing with North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interest of the amenity of the area.

Condition

7. That the presence of any significant unsuspected contamination that becomes evident during the development of the site shall be brought to the attention of Environmental Health. Thereafter a suitable investigation strategy as agreed with North Ayrshire Council shall be implemented and any necessary remediation works carried out prior to any further development taking place on the site, all to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interests of environmental protection.

Condition

8. That, within 12 months of the date of approval, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority a biodiversity action plan, which shall include details of bat hibernacula, bird boxes, wildflowers and other measures to promote/safeguard biodiversity and nature conservation. Thereafter, the action plan as may be approved shall be implemented prior to the school becoming operational to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interests of nature conservation and amenity.

Condition

9. That, within 12 months of the date of approval, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority details of all external lighting and signposting within the site. Thereafter, the external lighting and signposting scheme as may be approved shall be implemented prior to the campus becoming operational to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interests of ensuring that an appropriate balance between amenity and public safety is achieved.

Condition

10. That prior to the development becoming operational, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority details of a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP). Thereafter, the SWMP as may be approved shall be implemented upon the campus becoming operational to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire

Council as Planning Authority and reviewed at 5 yearly intervals thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interests of environmental protection.

Russell McCutcheon
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact Mr A Hume Planning Officer on 01294 324318.

Appendix 1 – Location Plan

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