

North Ayrshire Council (Pre-Determination Hearings)
24 February 2016

IRVINE, 24 February 2016 - At a Special Meeting of North Ayrshire Council
(Pre-Determination Hearings) at 10.00 a.m.

Present

Joan Sturgeon, Robert Barr, Matthew Brown, John Bruce, Marie Burns, Ian Clarkson, Anthea Dickson, John Easdale, John Ferguson, Alex Gallagher, Willie Gibson, Alan Hill, John Hunter, Ruth Maguire, Tom Marshall, Grace McLean, Catherine McMillan, Peter McNamara, Ronnie McNicol, Donald Reid and Robert Steel.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive, A. Fraser, Head of Democratic Services, A. Craig, Team Manager (Litigation), Y. Baulk, Head of Physical Environment, Y. Holland, Project Manager, and V. Niven, Project Officer (Place); K. Yeomans, Executive Director, C. McAuley, Head of Service (Economic Growth) and J. Miller, Senior Manager Planning (Economy and Communities); G. Hamilton, Provost's Office Co-ordinator, M. Sugden, Communications Officer (Media and Internal Communications) and A. Little, Committee Services Officer.

Chair

Provost Sturgeon in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Bell, Jean Highgate, Jim Montgomerie and Irene Oldfather.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Pre-Determination Hearings

The Head of Service (Democratic and Administration) summarised the purpose of the Pre-Determination Hearing process and the procedure which would be followed.

The Council was advised that two additional late objections had been received in respect of Agenda Item 4. 15/00642/PPM: Site to east of Alexander Avenue, Largs. Copies of the objections and the Planner's responses were circulated.

3. Irvine/Kilwinning

15/00705/PPPM: Dundonald Links, Ayr Road, Irvine

Mr Bill Donald, Loch Lomond Golf Club, Chris Husband, HUSH Project Management and Chris Mitchell, Keppie Planning, addressed the Council in support of the application for planning permission in principle for a residential development and visitor accommodation to include associated access, parking, landscaping and ancillary works at Dundonald Links, Ayr Road, Irvine.

Mr Donald provided background information in relation to the acquisition of Dundonald Links golf course by Loch Lomond Golf Club in 2003. He referred to the course's growing reputation as an international golfing destination, hosting the Ladies Open in 2015 and various international amateur events. The Club is seeking to host the Scottish Open in 2017, with spectators of around 80,000 expected over the 4 day event.

Mr Husband of HUSH Project Management outlined the business case for the development that would improve the facilities available at the course and wider economic benefits to the area. He described the proposed housing which would be unique, bespoke and not of a type currently available in the area. The housing would be based on a series of housing clusters, located within a low density layout, connected to a spine road. The land between the clusters would remain as open space.

Mr Mitchell of Keppie Planning advised that there were no objections to the application. He considered that the proposed housing development would represent enabling development in terms of the spatial strategy. He referred to the positive regeneration and economic benefits the development would bring, including the creation of 30 jobs in the construction and tourism sector.

Members then asked questions, and received responses (shown in italics) from the parties in attendance, in relation to the following:-

- the unique housing design:
the application is for planning permission in principle and the detail has not yet been finalised. The housing development will be a low density development, taking account of the location and landscape setting. The focus will be on high quality homes that will be compatible and enhance the environment of a modern links golf course.

The Provost closed the Pre-Determination Hearing by thanking the applicants, objectors and Elected Members for their contribution to the meeting and advising that the application would be considered by the Determination Meeting later in the day.

4. North Coast and Cumbraes

15/00642/PPM: Site to east of Alexander Avenue, Largs

Henry McKeown, JM Architects, accompanied by Crawford Forsyth and Steven Quinn (North Ayrshire Council) addressed the Council in support of the application for planning permission for the erection of an educational campus comprising a nursery, primary and secondary schools including associated pedestrian and vehicle access points, parking areas, outdoor sports/play areas and landscaping at the site to the east of Alexander Avenue, Largs.

Mr McKeown, JM Architects provided information in relation to the location of the proposed campus which had been selected following consideration of the environmental and topographic constraints and the accessibility and availability of sites within the Largs area. The site was large enough to accommodate the four existing schools and an early years establishment at one location and also offered a unique opportunity to work in partnership with sportscotland. A presentation was provided which illustrated the location of the campus, the extent of the variation of building scale used to breakdown the potential mass and create a varied and animated skyline and how the building silhouette would change as it rises up the hill with large volumes located in the heart of the campus thereby diminishing their mass. Maps showing the access, amenity and open space areas, traffic management, accessibility and child safety arrangements were also displayed.

A range of statutory and public consultations had taken place, including two public drop-in events and follow up meetings with local residents. Traffic surveys have been undertaken at the existing schools at different times of the day to help inform the arrangements for vehicle and pedestrian access and parking and drop-off provision at the campus.

Mr Forsyth, Team Manager (Traffic and Transportation) provided details of the proposed Twenty's Plenty Zone and associated signage. He provided information on the location of a Toucan crossing in Alexander Avenue, consultation that will take place with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and bus companies in respect of the provision of services, bus timetables and the location of bus stops and discussions will take place with Sustrans in respect of lighting and upgrading the path through the adjacent area of open space. He advised that traffic and pedestrian arrangements will be monitored during the first year to ensure any issues are identified and resolved.

Mr Macdonald, a resident of Alexander Walk, Largs then addressed the Council in objection to the application. He considered that there were insufficient parking and drop-off spaces within the campus for staff, parents and visitors, that parents parking to take young children into nursery had not been taken into account and the overall parking and drop-off provision is unlikely to meet the demand. The existing traffic congestion that occurs on Alexander Avenue at school start and finish times will be exacerbated by the increased volume of traffic, with around 400 vehicles travelling to and from the campus each school day. Access issues to the campus and local area could also arise for emergency vehicles. He concluded by expressing the view that road safety issues had not been resolved and added that an application for housing had previously been refused on road safety and traffic issues.

Mr Blair, Largs Community Council, also addressed the Council. He described the engagement with the local authority as part of the consultation process, but advised that residents considered this process had not been adequate. Alternative options to alleviate traffic congestion had been provided to the local authority but had not been taken on board. The Council have not addressed road safety issues identified by the Community Council and local residents, such as the reduced visibility at the proposed entrance to the campus and Toucan crossing as a result of a dip in the road. He referred to a previous speeding survey in the local area, undertaken by the Council, which demonstrated the traffic and speeding issues. Overall it was felt that solutions had not been found to the road safety and traffic issues.

Members then asked questions and received responses (shown in italics) from the parties in attendance, in relation to the following:-

- the requirement for free transport to the campus;
the numbers of pupils requiring free transport to and from the campus are approximately:- Fairlie 70, Skelmorlie 90, Millport 60. The confirmed numbers would be provided at the Determination Meeting.
- whether Alexandra Avenue and surrounding streets are suitable for a one way system;
it was considered that a one way system would have an adverse impact on traffic movement in this area.
- Whether Largs Community Council were objecting to the development in the sense of wanting planning permission to be refused
The Community Council appreciated this was the only site for the school but neighbours had unresolved concerns over road traffic and access issues
- the provision for cycle paths and cycle stores;
use will be made of the existing road network. A funding bid will be made to Sustrans to undertake an Active Travel Study to identify opportunities to improve path networks for walking and cycling. Consultation will take place in respect of the location of the cycle stores.
- the visual impact of the buildings that will make up the campus;
samples of the high quality materials chosen to make a distinctive and important building will be provided for inspection by the Members.

- whether there would be an opportunity to alter the drop-off facilities and if funding would be available to undertake any changes;
traffic, parking, drop-off and pedestrian arrangements will be monitored during the first year to ensure any issues are identified and resolved.
- the start and finish times of the schools within the campus;
it is planned to stagger the start and finish times of each of the schools.
- if there will be designated parking areas within the campus;
specific parking areas will be clearly designated and will include staff areas, disabled areas, general areas and drop-off points. Parking areas nearest to the nursery will be designated for parents to drop-off nursery children.
- pedestrian access to the campus from Greeto Falls Avenue;
pedestrian access via Greeto Falls Avenue had been planned, however the local residents were concerned about residential parking and pick-up conflicts and this element of the proposal was removed.
- access to the campus via the Brisbane school site;
the ground levels did not make access to the campus from this site a viable option.
- the number of buses that will travel to the campus each day;
Six buses will enter the campus via the designated bus access, the buses will exit the campus on a left turn onto Alexander Avenue.

The Provost closed the Pre-Determination Hearing by thanking the applicants, objectors and Elected Members for their contribution to the meeting and advising that the application would be considered by the Determination Meeting later in the day.

The meeting ended at 11.05 a.m.