

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the Coat of Arms of the City of Edinburgh. The crest is a shield divided into four quarters. The top-left quarter shows a castle tower. The top-right quarter shows a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quarter shows a sailing ship on the water. The bottom-right quarter shows a lion passant guardant. Above the shield is a crown with four fleurs-de-lis. A ribbon at the bottom of the shield contains the motto 'ANE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 3

Minutes

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Planning Committee held in St Margaret's Primary School, Salmon Inn Road, Polmont on Tuesday 27 March 2018 commencing at 7.00 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a pre-determination hearing in terms of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. When sitting in this capacity, the Planning Committee comprises all members of the Council.

Councillors:

David Alexander (Convener)	John McLuckie
David Balfour	Cecil Meiklejohn
Provost Buchanan	Malcolm Nicol
Joan Coombes	Alan Nimmo
Gordon Hughes	Lynn Munro
James Kerr	John Patrick
Adanna McCue	

Officers:

Ian Dryden, Development Manager
Iain Henderson, Legal Services Manager
Stephanie McGhee, Committee Assistant
Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer
Bernard Whittle, Development Management Co-ordinator

Also

Attending:

Kevin Collins, Transport Planning Co-ordinator
Sarah Colquhoun, Modern Apprentice (Governance)
David Gray, Environmental Protection Co-ordinator
Alex Lewis, Planning Officer
Russell Steedman, Network Co-ordinator
Richard Teed, Senior Forward Planning Officer
Philip Neaves, Hansteen Land Limited

P120. Apologies

Apologies were intimated on behalf of and Councillors Aitchison, Binnie, Bissett, Black, Blackwood, Flynn, Goldie and Grant.

P121. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

P122. Development of Land for Residential/Mixed Use and Commercial (Of Classes 1, 3, 4, 7 & 10) with Associated Landscaping, Services, Access and Car Parking at Land to the East of Gilston Farm, Gilston Crescent, Polmont for Hansteen Land Limited - P/17/0332/PPP

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services on an application for planning permission in principle for a mixed use development consisting of residential and commercial uses (classes 1, 3, 4, 7 and 10) with associated landscaping, services, access and car parking on land to the east of Gilston Farm, Gilston Crescent, Polmont, Falkirk.

1. The Convener formally welcomed those present and outlined the procedures relating to the meeting.
2. The Development Manager outlined the nature of the application.
3. The applicant's representative was heard in relation to the application. Mr Neaves outlined the proposals advising the Committee that the site would consist of residential and commercial uses with associated landscaping, access and parking. The proposals include shops, food and drink, business use, a hotel and non-residential institutions. The applicant had received no objections from Education or the Health Board. The site would provide 500 residential units and would meet the requirements of the Council's affordable housing policy. It would provide business facilities. A flood/air quality and noise impact assessment was being carried out.

It was stated that development of the site would assist in dealing with the current shortfall in effective housing supply and that the development was a natural extension to Polmont. It was stated that the Council's housing land supply should be 5 years but is sitting at 3.9 years or even less. Scottish Planning Policy would come into play with a presumption in favour of sustainable development. There would be a tilted land supply that would allow primacy of land supply in a way that could outweigh the Local Development Plan (LDP). The development would meet the relevant criteria – it lies adjacent to settlement, would meet local need and would be a natural extension to Polmont. The development would preserve the character of the landscape and be sustainable. There would also be no loss of recreational/amenity spaces. It would be a high quality development with a mix of house types. It would be deliverable with roadworks done at a cost of £1.5m.

In dealing with the submitted objections, Mr Neaves stated that with regard to departure from the LDP that the issue was land use and that there was a strong case to include residential without undermining the LDP. The development could be sited in an attractive way which was sympathetic to the surrounding area. He advised that the traffic consultant was still in discussion with Council officers regarding junction improvements on Main Street. The provision of affordable housing would comply with Council policies. He understood the

capacity for patients within Polmont was 1600. The additional patients generated by the development would be around 1100. There may be developer contributions required given other potential developments.

4. The consultees representatives present were heard in respect of their comments in relation to the application as follows:-
 - (a) Mr Hainey, on behalf of NHS Forth Valley, a statutory consultee, had no objection to the application in principle however raised the issue around the impacts that 500 housing units would have on the local NHS services. The development was considered to be an unplanned site as it was not in the LDP. The NHS were in discussion with the applicant and assessments would be required on NHS surgeries, number of patients to come from development and what additional support would be required to accommodate this. It was a complex process and protecting services was the NHS priority.
5. Questions were then asked by Members of the Committee as follows:-

Q(a) Clarification was sought on when the issues around patient numbers and NHS impacts would be firmed up.

Response by the Applicant's Agent:-

The applicant had met with NHS officials in November and asked for information which was still awaited. The patient numbers provided by the applicant arose from the 2015 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which was a statutory document, and they relied on these figures being correct. It was stated that there were other sites in the Polmont area that showed no signs of coming forward and that this would assist with providing capacity.

Q(b) Clarification was sought in relation to the number of children projected to come into the area and how the existing school could accommodate any required extension?

Response by the Senior Forward Planning Officer:-

Education's position was similar to that of the NHS and there was no objection in principle but there was a fair amount to resolve. The number of children projected to come into the areas schools was 200+. St Margaret's Primary School was recently extended and could accommodate two streams without modular accommodation. If the development generated a significant number of pupils, there would not be enough space and the school would need expanded by a stream. It can be done but if new development was in excess of 500 units, then it would be challenging. There would also be an impact on the other local primary schools, Graeme High School, St Mungos and St Andrews which would get contributions on a pro-rata basis. The scale of the proposed development would require investment to meet the

necessary demand and the contribution figure of £3.5m had been reached using Scottish Planning Guidance.

Q(c) Clarification was sought on the capacities of the Council's schools as the report was written before the level of provision required for children pre 5 was known.

Response by the Senior Forward Planning Officer:-

The Service was aware of the pre 5 situation during consultation and future developments would be expected to make a contribution in recognition of this.

Three questions were then taken concurrently and a response invited at their conclusion.

Q(d) Clarification was sought on matters relating to Air quality and the smell from the local landfill (adjacent to the site). Were the assessments carried out over 1 day in September?

Q(e) Clarification was sought on flooding issues in the area and whether rainfall for instance would have an effect on the development?

Q(f) Clarification was sought on whether the roads had a view on the traffic pressures on Gilston Crescent, Station Road and Station Road Car Park, Polmont?

Response by the Applicants Agent:-

On air quality, the issue lay with the site which generated the odour. Avondale was a different matter. There was no objection to the development from SEPA. Any nuisance caused by a landfill should not prevent a development taking place.

SEPA had asked questions about the site, not the wider area, in regard to flooding. SEPA's issues were with blockage points. The applicant had looked at this and the means of dealing with it. A response from SEPA was awaited.

With regard to roads, the principle of development of the site was established, albeit for a different type of development. A transport assessment had been carried out to look at the impact of the development and junction improvements were identified to mitigate the impact of the development. The Council's roads department were currently looking at the proposals. Issues at Polmont station were well known and there was not land available to increase the amount of parking.

Q(g) Clarification was sought on how many cars were likely to be generated from a 500 house development.

Response by the Transport Planning Co-ordinator:-

On average, combined trips in and out would be anticipated to be less than 1 per dwelling. This is based on national figures. It would be expected that the bulk of arrivals and departures would be in the AM and PM peak periods and that the majority of trips per household would be in the peak periods.

6. Section 38A of the Town and Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 together with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 give those persons who have submitted representations on relevant planning applications the right to be heard before a Committee of the Council before the application is determined. On this occasion, in addition to those persons who had submitted representations, some other members of the public in attendance at the meeting were permitted to address the Committee.
- (a) Ms Taylor, an objector, highlighted concern regarding pressure on NHS services and that there were other developments already underway which would also add pressure to these services. It was important to remember that the services covered the whole of the Braes area. Further there could be issues recruiting additional GPs to provide the required level of service. School capacity was noted to be a concern and the schools would have little to no playing areas left in order to accommodate the increase in roll arising from such a development. The smell from Avondale was an ongoing issue which SEPA had not dealt with in the course of the previous 20 years. When permission for a mixed use site had been granted there would not have been traffic going through Gilston Crescent and the route of this site.
- (b) Mr Cameron, an objector, raised concern relating to the additional pressure which would be created for parking at Polmont station. The situation was already bad and would be made worse. There were as many as 120 cars currently parking on the street all day. He highlighted that ScotRail was the beneficiary of this additional commuter travel and should have to work with the Council to assist in parking. Unless, and until, extra parking was in place the development should not be permitted.
- (c) Mrs Glen, an objector, highlighted that additional pressures on health services did not just require more GPs but more of all services. The health clinic car park was currently full of rail station users and local shops had little parking of their own. The residents of a new development might make more than one journey per day – for instance, in transporting their children.

- (d) Ms Niven, an objector, commented on the issue of effective land supply. The assessed requirement for additional homes was across Falkirk. Hansteen would allow a significant proportion of need to be met in one development and there were many other developments to fill the gap. There was also now an application for 400 units at Whitecross. Public transport provision was not suitable and the current F25 bus service operated on a two hourly basis. The Transport Planning Unit was of the opinion that the topography of the site would lead to residents driving to Polmont station. 50% of cars would exit directly onto Gilston Crescent. She asked that the Council get clarity on peak time traffic flows. On education, she raised concern over school capacities and noted that Graeme HS was predicted to reach a roll of over 100% of its capacity. She noted that she had been a resident for 34 years and it was a wonderful area for residents. She has not heard anything that would help her concerns over this development.
- (e) Mrs Reynolds, an objector, stated that she did not find the arguments over housing shortfall persuasive and that there were other ways to deal with it. The development was not a natural extension of Polmont. NHS may agree in principle but there were lots of issues to resolve with them. What she was hearing was all about impact assessments and financial contributions. She did not feel that the school could be extended appropriately. The impact of the increased traffic was frightening and already bad before this development. The Council would have to foot the bill for increased burden on local schools.

Questions were then taken from the floor.

- (f) Clarification was sought on what the car ratios would be. There were already significant traffic issues and if two cars per house this would be extremely detrimental to residential amenity.
- (g) Mr Bell stated that he was opposed and that the development was unacceptable in a number of ways. Development was contrary to the LDP therefore the Council was not obliged to agree to it. He disagreed with the applicant's argument on housing land supply and felt that was not sufficient reason for the Council to go against its LDP. There was not sufficient reassurance relating to flooding and roads issues and a decision should not be taken until that is fully clarified. He considered that development would have a significant adverse impact on local communities. He would urge members to refuse the application.
- (h) Ms Cochrane stated that the school's classrooms were so small that extra pupils would not be suitably accommodated. Green space would be eroded by the development and national priorities would not be met.
- (i) Mrs Nayar stated that the development would destroy the sense of community and would mean Polmont lost its character. In her lifetime, there has been a huge growth without a parallel growth in the sense of community. Traffic is already very busy and dangerous. There is a lack

of parking and there are constant problems of double parking and big lorries on the roads. There is a nasty area and dip on the road that is the main thoroughfare to Linlithgow and Falkirk. More houses would make this position worse.

- (j) Mrs McMahon highlighted the loss of green space and that this should be protected. She stated that schools were already near full and raised concern relating to recruitment of additional teachers.
- (k) Mr Belton stated that there was already a capacity struggle at the schools. He asked how you could develop and extra stream for £3.5m. He also highlighted traffic issues which he felt the development would generate along with impact on health services. He also raised concern over the impact on the health services in the area.
- (l) Mr Ross stated that he was very opposed due to car parking shortfalls, impact on education provision and pressure on local health services.
- (m) Mr Forth questioned how children would travel from the development site to the school.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Mr Neaves commented that there were no issues that had come up that had not been addressed. Consultees had no objections to the development proposal. The applicant was of the view that the determining issue was presumption in favour of sustainable development where there was a housing shortfall. Tilted balance is what the courts had come up with. The question was whether there were any unacceptable impacts of the development. Education believe they could accommodate the development and schools would receive financial contributions. The numbers used for impact on NHS services must be correct as drawn from the statutory SPG and other sites may not go ahead. SEPA had removed its air quality objection. The issue was for enforcement authorities to deal with. Station Road was a problem without a solution and would affect any development planned for the area. It was a suitable, available, viable and sustainable development.

7. Close of Meeting

The Convener concluded by thanking the parties for their attendance and advising that the matter would be determined by Falkirk Council at a future meeting.