

Draft

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Planning Committee held in Bo'ness Academy, Gauze Road, Bo'ness EH51 9AS on Monday 25 November 2019 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 Aitchison
David Alexander (Convener)
David Balfour
Robert Bissett
Gary Bouse
David Grant
Gordon Hughes
Lynn Munro
Alan Nimmo
Depute Provost Ann Ritchie

Officers: Kevin Collins, Transport Planning Co-ordinator
Ian Dryden, Development Manager
Iain Henderson, Legal Services Manager
Adeline Orr, Committee Services Assistant
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager
Alistair Shaw, Development Plan Co-ordinator
Russel Steedman, Network Co-ordinator
Brent Vivian, Senior Planning Officer

**Also
Attending:** Paul Godzik, The Place Store
Grant Hartree
Adam Henry, Savills
Grant Thomas, Stewart Milne Homes
Shelley Thomson, Stewart Milne Homes
Colin Weir, Dougall Baillie Associates

PDH19. Apologies

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors Binnie, Black, Blackwood, Coleman, Collie, Garner, McCue, Meiklejohn and Murtagh.

PDH20. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PDH21. Pre-Determination Hearing Procedures

The Convener formally welcomed those present and outlined the procedures relating to the meeting.

PDH22. Development of Land for Residential Development with associated Landscaping, Access and Infrastructure at Land to the South of Inner Lodge Carriden, Carriden Brae, Bo'ness for Stewart Milne Homes & John Paul, Malcolm Paul & Graeme Paul - P/19/0566/PPP

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services on an application for a major development and sought planning permission in principle for the development of land for residential development with associated landscaping access and infrastructure at land to the South of Inner Lodge Carriden Brae, Bo'ness.

1. Brent Vivian, Senior Planning Officer outlined the nature of the application and the consultations carried out.
2. The applicant's representative (S Thomson) was heard in relation to the application:-

The vision for Muirhouses was that it would have 6 qualities of successful placemaking which were: welcoming, distinctive, resource efficient, easy to move around, safe & pleasant and adaptive. Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) was established in 1975 and runs as a family business. 20 new jobs had been created in 2019 in Grangemouth and there would be a new timber systems factory in Falkirk in 2021 creating a further 80 new jobs. SMH had been an award winner for design and quality placemaking. The economic benefits were that home building supported over 80,000 jobs in Scotland and provided £570m to central and local government. Information on the surrounding designations was provided. Part of the application site was identified by the Council in the Main Issues Report 2011 (MIR) as a preferred new housing site for 30 homes. In the MIR 2017 the site was identified as an alternative release to the Council's preferred site at Crawfield Road, Bo'ness. The planning application had been submitted as there was a demand for new homes in the area. SMH launched at the Drum in November 2018 selling 31 of 41 homes in less than 12 months. Over 65% of those homes were purchased by existing residents of Bo'ness. There was a shortfall in housing land supply. The proposal sought to meet the Local Development Plan (LDP) objective of Thriving Communities. A

landscape capacity study had been carried out. The design evolution had been community informed through public engagement. The consultation responses were listed. The feedback from consultation had led to changes with improved access arrangements and connectivity. Also the football pitch would be brought into the heart of the community.

3. Questions were then asked by Members of the Committee as follows:-

Q(a) Clarification was sought on where education would be provided for children living at the development.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

An education assessment was part of the planning application process. The catchment school was Grange Primary School currently at around 80% capacity. It was anticipated that in 5 years this would reach 100%. Accordingly a developer contribution had been asked for which was under consideration. Children's Services were not objecting on the basis of a contribution.

Q(b) Clarification was sought on whether an archaeological assessment had been carried out due to the proximity to the Antonine Wall.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

A heritage assessment had been undertaken. There was a high chance of archaeological discovery at the site. The Heritage Engagement Officer based with the Community Trust had not objected but had requested intrusive checks in advance of the decision. The checks would be undertaken over a period of 7 days in December. Any artefacts uncovered would form a need for further works.

Q(c) Clarification was sought on the impact on the NHS and local GP services.

Response by the Convener:-

The Council was seeking comments from NHS and would ask officers to cover that in the report.

Q(d) Clarification was sought on any concerns arising from the history of coal mining in the area.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The application was for planning permission in principle at this stage. A desktop study of historical mining had been carried out. Substantial works in the area were known of but there were no known mine entries in the red line boundary. If the development progressed to the next stage a full site investigation would be undertaken.

Q(e) Clarification was sought on the lack of information referred to in the objection from SEPA and when this information would be available.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The objection from SEPA was a holding objection on the basis of a lack of information which was provided 4 weeks before the meeting. The information related to underground drainage and as that had now been provided she hoped that by the time the Committee determined the application SEPA would have retracted their objection.

Q(f) Clarification was sought regarding alternative walkways at Carriden Brae.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Aware of concerns about the road. A transport assessment had been carried out and fed into the planning submission. The Safer Routes initiative sought to create safe passage through development. Options were being discussed with the Council. There was a desire to link into the core paths network.

Q(g) Clarification was sought on the access to the site and if this was to be from the A904.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The A904 existing access track to Carriden House would be upgraded to give access to the development site. As part of the transport assessment there had been scoping of the junctions along with the Council. Any improvements would be set out in a future detailed application.

4. Madelene Hunt, on behalf of Bo'ness Community Council, an objector, was heard in relation to the application. She asked how traffic calming on Carriden Brae would work as it was a very narrow road. She raised that there were lots of rights of way through the site and asked if they would be kept open. She stated that thousands of lorries use the road every day. The objection had been made on the

grounds of increased traffic and that it would be impossible for people to get to the houses. She stated that each time it rained there was a huge puddle and asked how this would be dealt with once the development started as there would be a drainage problem. She stated that the entrance was a problem as it was too narrow and dangerous with current traffic levels.

5. 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 2013 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) Katherine Nikolai, an objector to the application stated that currently the area felt like a village. There was no crime in the area as people looked out for each other. However, development would have a terrible effect on community, wildlife and the environment. She stated that it would be a catastrophe to destroy the woodland environment. There was a high volume of traffic already and parking was difficult which would be exacerbated by development. She stated there would be a negative impact on mental health as greenspace was important and should not be taken away. She stated that the 120 houses would not enhance the landscape or add anything to the community. She questioned how safer routes to school could be created when there were massive issues with Carriden Brae currently where the pavements could not be widened. She questioned the value of a financial contribution to Grange Primary School when there was no capacity for it to expand. She stated that the community were strongly against the development.
 - (b) Eunice Hannah, an objector to the application asked where cars would park when football was on.
 - (c) Jen Greenhow, an objector to the application stated that she loved the village which was a nice place with a long established community. The character would be adversely affected. She commented on the extremely high levels of traffic and how bad the roads were. She questioned the timing of the road survey and considered it was done when the roads were not busy.
 - (d) Brian Greenhow, an objector to the application stated that a local senior partner in the GP practice had written in the Journal about already operating at capacity. He was concerned

that GP services would be placed at over capacity. He stated that in 2015 the Reporter had noted a traffic increase which was not appropriate then and would be worse now. He stated that the situation was very dangerous. He advised that residents had issues accessing their driveways.

- (e) Ian McKay, an objector to the application stated that the access was via Gledhill Avenue and that he had been told at a meeting this was for emergency access only but it now seemed to be the main access.

Colin Weir advised that the Gledhill Avenue access was not to be the primary access and would be used for emergencies only. The main access was off Carriden Brae.

In response to a question the Network Co-ordinator advised that the guidance discouraged cul-de-sacs therefore a secondary access was desired. In response to a further question on how the Council would stop people using the emergency access he stated that it would not stop anyone.

- (f) Ronald Hamilton, an objector to the application stated that countryside greenspace lowered stress and encourages exercise and was an amenity for all. He expressed concern for roman artefacts, protected species, GP capacity and the site access.
- (g) Gary McLean, an objector to the application stated that to widen the access would impact on mature trees which were home to bats and other mature wildlife in the area. He questioned how with farm equipment often moving there this could be done safely. There was a conservation area issue. He questioned how a suitable line of sight for cars at the junction would be achieved safely.
- (h) Janice McKay, an objector to the application stated that the new houses may be used predominantly by communities accessing the motorway and therefore not generating economic benefit to Bo'ness.
- (i) David Blackwood, an objector to the application stated that the road was unsafe. He expressed concern as a coach at Bo'ness United which saw hundreds of children use the open space each week. It is the community's safe space to use.
- (j) Rae Manger, an objector to the application referred to the housing land supply being 180 houses short in Bo'ness and questioned if that took into account all the other houses already planned in Bo'ness. The secondary access at Gledhill had a swing park nearby and would be dangerous for children.

The Development Plan Co-ordinator stated that the housing land shortfall audit was across the whole district. The sites mentioned were already taken into account.

- (k) Ian Shearer, an objector to the application stated that the history and heritage concerns were not only about the Antonine Wall and Roman site. He supported the comments made by Falkirk Community Trust about the history of Carriden going back 2000 years. He stated the development would be disastrous for the economic development opportunities through tourism. He stated that, as a historic estate, it was a whole designed landscape and building on it would be like building on Kinneil Estate.

Response by the applicant's representative (S Thomson):-

She stated that the effect of taking Carriden Brae into Carriden House was being looked at regarding the number of trees impacted, it was thought it would be 2 or 3 with the rest of the woodland being retained.

Safer routes to school had been discussed at a community event but there would be liaison with the Council to see what could be improved. The transport assessment was conducted over a period of time. Details of the traffic calming proposals for Carriden Brae were currently being considered and would develop prior to the committee.

Current footways were not up to regulation standard. There was a desire to enhance this but lorries could not be stopped from using the road.

She agreed that using money at a school which could not be extended was problematic but had looked at the wider estate and said to the Council about catchment areas. If the Council wished to look at alternative solutions the developer would work with the Council.

The site layout was indicative and would be mindful of the surrounding environment.

She acknowledged the comments on health provision and awaited comments from NHS Forth Valley. It was common to make contributions.

The developer would work with the Council to ensure that car parking requirements were met. The football facility would sit at the heart of the proposal and would offer extra parking over the normal requirement.

Regarding incomers from other areas her experience at another local site had been successful with 63% of sales to Bo'ness residents showing there was a local need.

Regarding play park safety the village views had been considered and listened to and ways to maximise the open/green space including woodland were being looked at.

Colin Weir then spoke regarding transport assessment points. The assessment had been fully scoped with the Council from Tuesday 4 June to Monday 12 June. An automatic counter had been used. A full secondary access had not been proposed. The proposal had involved use of bollards. The Council had asked them to consider a fuller access. 90m sightlines were provided for which is more than required by Designing Streets.

6. Members asked that the following matters be addressed in the report to the meeting of Council:-
 - a. A drawing showing traffic calming and junction treatment.
 - b. Clarification on the officer view on Gledhill Avenue.
 - c. Clarification of the position on education contributions.
 - d. Clarification on drainage.

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 on a date yet to be determined.