

P93. Proposed Residential Development, Access, Landscaping, Open Space and Associated Works on Land to the North of Loch View, Stirling Road, Larbert for Gladman Developments Ltd - P/17/0632/PPP

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services on an application for planning permission in principle for the proposed residential development, access, landscaping, open space and associated works on land to the north of Loch View, Stirling Road, Larbert.

1. The Convener formally welcomed those present and outlined the procedures relating to the meeting.
2. The Senior Planning Officer outlined the nature of the application.
3. The applicant's representative was heard in relation to the application. Ms L Fraser explained to the committee that the site was part of a larger landholding. Following analysis, the site of the application was considered to be the most suitable area for development. The initial proposal had been for 100 units. The feedback from this was considered and an amended proposal was submitted reducing the numbers to 60 units. Benefits included site drainage development, improved footways, differing house types, economic benefits from construction and Council tax, the bringing of a range of house types to the area, links to parkland, a pedestrian crossing facility and it would assist in meeting the shortfall in the housing land audit. She stated that it is a good site to provide housing and it is a modest scale of development. It is a sustainable location and in line with the scale and character of the surrounding area.
4. The consultees representatives present were heard in respect of their comments in relation to the application as follows:-
 - (a) Mr G Hainey, on behalf of NHS Forth Valley, a statutory consultee and an objector, raised concern that the site was greenfield and it had not been allocated for housing within the Local Development Plan. There would be unknown impacts on the local infrastructure including education and NHS services. The primary objection related to the impact on the NHS facility at Loch View and its residents as detailed in the report.
 - (b) Ms C Gill, Lead Nurse, on behalf of NHS Forth Valley, a statutory consultee and an objector, provided a summary of the services provided at Loch View and its purpose which was to provide a therapeutic and caring environment for its residents, many of whom had complex needs including learning difficulties, mental illness and complex behaviour. The site was purposefully chosen for its countryside setting. It had a quiet, therapeutic and peaceful outside space with a garden for relaxing and for growing vegetables. This environment would be eroded should the development be approved.

The patients could be adversely affected by a construction site and the additional noise at such close proximity.

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

Q(a) Clarification was sought on whether there would be a housing shortfall over the next five years.

Response by the Development Plan Co-ordinator:-

The Scottish Planning Policy stated that the Council was required to have a 5 year supply of housing land and 3375 units was the target. This was monitored through Housing Land Audit. The Audit current showed a total of 2615 units. This meant that there was a 3.9 years supply as opposed to 5 years hence the shortfall.

Q(b) Clarification was sought in relation to Larbert as an area for additional housing.

Response by the Development Plan Co-ordinator:-

The Strategy for housing in Larbert within the 2015 Local Development Plan (LDP) was one of consolidation. This work identified a significant amount of land at Kinnaird on which to build but that there should be no more development beyond that. The Local Development Plan is being reviewed at present. The Main Issues Report (MIR) acknowledged that there was a need for more housing land across the area albeit it did not specifically include Larbert and Stenhousemuir.

Q(c) Clarification was sought on the number of children projected to come into the area and schools.

Response by the Senior Forward Planning Officer:-

Based on the current ratio of 0.25 pupils per house it was envisaged that approximately 15 children from the proposed development would enrol at Larbert Village Primary School. Based on the current ratio of 0.09 pupils per house, it was envisaged that 5-6 children would enrol at St Bernadette's RC Primary School. Based on the current ratio of 0.14 pupils per house, it was envisaged that 8-9 children would enrol at Larbert High School. The scale of the proposed development would require investment in local nursery provision to meet the necessary demand.

Q(d) Clarification was sought on matters relating to the operation of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) Pond and whether this would involve going under the road.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The work would be undertaken by crossing under Quintinshill Drive to get to the SUDS area.

Q(e) Clarification was sought on whether the development would result in overdevelopment in Larbert.

Response by the Development Plan Co-ordinator:-

The term overdevelopment relates to infrastructure. You need to look across the area and assess what is available. Some areas have more infrastructure than others. This will be looked at but it can't be gone into in detail at this meeting.

Q(f) Clarification was sought on whether applicant had consulted with NHS Forth Valley and the impact on the area in relation to the physical and developmental wellbeing of the residents of Loch View.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Consultation had taken place with NHS Forth Valley and as a result of discussions the proposals had been updated. The new proposal had resulted in the proposed development being moved further away from the Loch View facility and it included substantial landscaping and a buffer.

Q(g) Clarification was sought as to whether the applicant had considered other parts of the Falkirk Council area for development where there is more capacity in schools etc for additional houses.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

We do look at all areas but this particular site came onto the market. A bid was put in and the bid was successful.

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 Y Weir, an objector to the development, and on behalf of a number of local residents, thanked the committee for hearing from her. She stressed that the development was contrary to the Local Development Plan (LDP). She raised concern that the site was not identified for housing and it was contrary to policy CG03 'Housing in the Countryside'. She stressed that the development was not in

accordance with sustainable housing growth. The Masterplan for the new hospital had identified the land for greenspace/agriculture and for NHS Forth Valley/healthcare use. In terms of the housing supply, there was already a level of unsustainable growth within Larbert and there was a substantial amount of housing in the Larbert and Stenhousemuir area. The area had more than met its contribution to the overall land supply. There were a range of new large developments such as slip roads, Larbert Royal Hospital and the town centre. The local road network was experiencing extreme pressures and they were currently unable to cope with the already heavy traffic volumes and congestion. Main Street was down to a single lane on the majority of days. Furthermore, the traffic flow assessment noted in the report was underestimated. The transport assessment undertaken by NHS Forth Valley in 2016 had shown the heavy traffic that would require to access the hospital site. The projection figure had in fact doubled from that envisaged when the hospital was originally built. There was a high level of access required at the development's proposed access opposite Torwood Avenue with the nearby bus stop and the Ambulance Service's entrance. There was also no pavement on the southbound stretch and no safe cycle routes. In terms of parking, there was already an overspill at Larbert Station as the area was at overcapacity. The impact on the quality of education, from larger classes, would be significant with more demands placed on staff. Larbert High School is set to be the largest High School in Scotland. It is important to protect the quality of education. The primary schools currently also have capacity issues. The projection of number of children seems to be on the low side. There would be a loss of greenspace in the area and a detrimental effect on the wildlife. The site was included in the Open Space Strategy. The amount of open space in the area was lower than the Falkirk Council average. Other impacts included the increase in anti social behaviour, the local ecology, the local heritage such as at the 'B' listed Larbert House, the sensitive setting of Loch View and the Maggie's Centre. There would, in addition, be an adverse impact on the already unacceptable GP waiting times as well as flooding and drainage concerns. The proposed development did not complement the principles of 'placemaking' and most properties in the area were incompatible in terms of style as most properties were currently single storey bungalows. In short, this was not a sustainable site for housing and any benefits would be outweighed by the detriment.

- (b) Mr R Haig, an objector to the development, raised concern at the effect on the Maggie's Centre and stressed the value of the facility. He indicated that it would be criminal to impact on that. He recognised that Larbert House had been regenerated well. This regenerative work had not however impacted negatively on the area and in this case the greenspace must be retained. He strongly criticised the development being moved nearer to the Maggie's Centre.
- (c) Mr P Deans, an objector to the development, re-iterated the issues previously highlighted on the impact on the Maggie's Centre and

that this was a valued charity providing valued rehabilitation and support to cancer patients. He believed that it was a disgrace not to consider the negative effect on the patients of the Maggie's Centre. The proposed development was totally inappropriate.

- (d) Ms S Constable, an objector to the development, raised concern at the negative impact on patients attending the Maggie's Centre. She referred to the peace which patients enjoyed at the centre where they able to experience the countryside and relax. If there were a large housing scheme next to the centre, this would be detrimental to patients and their recovery.
- (e) Mr W Kidd, an objector to the development, raised the concern over the number of new houses built in the area since 2014 and that that seemed set to rise further. There was an insufficient infrastructure capacity to accommodate the current pupils and any additional pupils would place a significant strain on an already stretched infrastructure. The substantial level of commuter parking at Larbert train station and on local roads for those travelling to Glasgow and Edinburgh had also placed a strain on the area and this would be exacerbated by the development. He indicated that the applicants alone would gain from the proposed development and not the local community.
- (f) Mr D Davies, an objector to the development, referred to the golden triangle of facilities enjoyed in the area including the Maggie's Centre, Larbert Hospital, Loch View and the open space. The area was an oasis to the local community including dog walkers, children, walkers and those enjoying local physical exercise. The recognised benefits for mental health was paramount. The proposed development included flats with no decent play areas or leisure facilities. The validity of the development and the resultant loss of space and the amenity of the local and precious gem currently enjoyed had to be questioned.
- (g) Mr N Colman, an objector to the development, raised concern at the increased traffic impact from the development and the additional congestion, particularly at Larbert Cross, and that this was not sustainable. There would be a saturation of parking and this would place stress on an important main road.
- (h) Ms M McIntyre, an objector to the development, raised concern at the impact of additional traffic on the Ambulance Service. She questioned how the ambulances could get through in circumstances where the roads were congested.
- (i) Ms L Findland, an objector to the development, highlighted that shortly after Larbert Hospital had opened the cars had moved further over and this had resulted in a wide channel opening up in the centre of the road. A long period had passed until the road was repaired. This could happen again and the condition of Stirling Road was appalling.

- (j) Mr A Penman, an objector to the development, raised concern that Foundry Loan was a disgrace with traffic at the moment. The road was being dug up through development.
- (k) Ms E Barron, an objector to the development, raised concern that there would be a detrimental effect on the family of deer grazing nearby. The development would scare away the significant wildlife in the local area. The hospital construction had previously had a huge impact. The deer only recently returned to the area. The construction of the proposed development would undoubtedly scare the deer away again. The development would also destroy the beautiful area.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

A Stage 1 Transport Assessment had now been carried out. This was currently being considered by Council officers.

7. Further questions were then asked by Members of the Committee as follows:-

- (a) Clarification was sought on what was the anticipated traffic at the time of the building of Larbert Hospital as compared to the actual figures now (as a percentage).

Response by the Transport Planning Co-ordinator-

There was a Travel Plan for Larbert Hospital. The information was not available at this meeting. The information would however be included in the report to the Council when the application would be considered.

- (b) Clarification was sought on the Transport Impact Study.

Response by the Transport Planning Co-ordinator-

The Road Safety Audit was currently being analysed by officers. The details of the analysis would be included in the report to the Council.

- (c) Clarification was sought on the environmental impact of possible pollution created from the development.

Response by the Transport Planning Co-ordinator-

This was a matter for the Council's Environmental Protection Unit to answer in terms of air quality. Officers from that Unit would be available to respond to members questions at the Council meeting.

Response by the Senior Planning Officer-

Part 4.6 of the report referred to consultation which had taken place with the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) in relation to the proposed

development. There were no comments received in relation to air quality. Further consultation would however now take place with the EPU to provide a response for members at the Council meeting.

- (d) Clarification was sought on whether the urban limit was at Stirling Road and that the area to the west was greenfield.

Response by the Development Plan Co-ordinator:-

Yes this would run behind the houses to the west of Stirling Road. All the of the sites in the application area fall outwith the urban limit as defined in the LDP proposals map.

- (e) Clarification was sought Clarification was sought on the open space in the area falling short of the Council average and whether the proposed development would reduce this further.

Response by the Development Plan Co-ordinator:-

The site was included in the Open Space Audit. There was currently no public access to the site. It is a setting but not an actual recreational site in itself. It was private farmland which provided a view for the housing development's residents.

- (f) Clarification was sought if the development met the criteria set out in policy CG03 'Housing in the Countryside'..

Response by the Planning Officer (J Milne):-

This report prepared for the Pre Determination Hearing did not provide an assessment of the weight given to the policies. The report to the Council would provide this assessment for consideration.

- (g) Clarification was sought on the way in which nursery provision would be provided in the area as a result of the current legislation and from the proposed development.

Response by the Senior Forward Planning Officer:-

At Larbert Village Primary School all the capacity would be used to meet the legislative requirements. Further nursery provision would be required in the Larbert area and substantial financial investment was necessary. This proposed development would add to the pressure and this was the reason for seeking a developer contribution. .

- (h) Clarification was sought on whether there would be crossing points for children crossing Stirling Road.

Response by the Convener:-

The current application was for planning permission in principle and at this stage no such detail was required in relation to the application.

8. 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 7 March 2018.