

Comments for Planning Application TP/ED/26/0104

Application Summary

Application Number: TP/ED/26/0104

Address: Whitegates Park Middlemuir Road Lenzie East Dunbartonshire

Proposal: Erection of a secondary school including road access, landscaping, car parking, sports pitches, recreational areas and associated development.

Case Officer: Fraser McNair

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I wish to register my objection to the proposed development at Whitegates Park. This proposal is fundamentally flawed, noncompliant with planning policy, and poses significant, unmitigated risks to public health, climate resilience, and community wellbeing. My objections are detailed below.

1. Severe, Unmitigated Contamination and Public Health Risks

The Council's own reports (Curtins Consulting, 2025) confirm significant contamination of the site, including:

- Lead: 1,400 mg/kg (over four times the school threshold of 310 mg/kg).
- Benzo(a)pyrene: A carcinogen, found above safety limits.
- Asbestos: Fibres detected in two locations - no safe level of exposure exists.

Nickel: Exceeded health thresholds in multiple samples.

Cyanide

Despite these extreme levels, inadequate physical remediation is proposed. Contaminated soil will be reused onsite, with risk downgraded to "Low" via computer modelling that ignores realworld scenarios such as flooding, future repairs and damage due to standard child play. This is an unacceptable risk management strategy that prioritises cost savings over child safety.

2. Loss of Protected Green Space & Fundamental Policy Breach

Whitegates Park is designated protected green space under LDP2 Policy 4 (Community Facilities) and Policy 17 (Natural Environment). The proposal would permanently remove a vital community asset used daily for walking, cycling, dogwalking, informal football, and recreation.

Policy requires open space to be protected unless robust evidence demonstrates that alternatives have been fully assessed. No transparent siteselection evidence has been provided. This represents a fundamental breach of planning policy.

The proposal would remove a large area of public parkland in a town that already has a deficit of public park provision, directly conflicting with NPF4 Policy 20, which requires development not to exacerbate deficiencies in green infrastructure.

3. Community Wellbeing and Accessibility

Whitegates Park is one of the only freely accessible greenspaces in this part of Kirkintilloch. Its removal would disproportionately impact families, older residents, and those with mobility issues. A fenced school campus is not a genuine replacement for open, public space. Relocating greenspace proposed for mitigation to central Lenzie is inequitable. It removes a vital asset from the eastern boundary - already identified in the Council's Open Space Strategy as underserved - and transfers it to an area that is already wellprovided. This exacerbates inequalities in access to greenspace.

4. Flood Risk, Climate Resilience and Contaminant Mobilisation

SEPA flood maps classify parts of the site as having a 10% annual chance of flooding. The drainage plan does not show assessment of how floodwater would mobilise contaminants across the site and into local systems.

Replacing permeable greenspace with hard surfaces worsens surfacewater run-off, reduces climate resilience, and undermines national climate adaptation policy. Building a school on a contaminated, floodprone site is reckless.

5. Unjustified site selection

The Council's statutory consultation does not demonstrate public support for building a school at Whitegates Park. The consultation question asked only whether people supported the idea of a new school in principle, not whether they agreed with the location.

The Consultation Report itself confirms that many "Yes" responses were conditional ("yes, but not at this location") and that "many of the comments against the proposal are in relation to the proposed site (Whitegates Park)".

6. Trac, Parking and Transport Sustainability

The Transport Assessment underestimates the likely trac impacts and congestion around Initiative Road and surrounding residential streets, raising concerns about road safety and suitability of the location for a school of this scale.

The development will generate substantial traffic, with inadequate provision for parking, drop-offs, and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. Several junctions are already at capacity.

Public transport connections do not effectively serve the likely catchment, forcing reliance on private cars. This undermines sustainability objectives and worsens congestion and safety risks.

7. Inadequate and Flawed Consultation Process

The consultation has been insufficient and opaque. Many residents were not properly engaged, and no transparent evidence has been provided to justify why this protected site was chosen over alternative, policy-compliant locations. This undermines public trust in the planning process.

Council officers' own emails (June-July 2024) released following FOI, admit the existing school site was feasible, but instead of presenting councillors with an acceptable design, they worked to prove it "doesn't fit" in order to defend Whitegates Park. Internal overlays comparing the sites were circulated but withheld from public release. This shows the site selection process was biased, predetermined, and procedurally unfair. Councillors were misled and the planning application rests on a flawed foundation.

- Officers acknowledged feasibility but dismissed it as "not acceptable to Education."
- Councillors were denied a fair choice.
- Overlay documents exist but were withheld.

The process was about defending the use of Whitegates Park, not objectively testing options.