



I am also acutely aware of how much the destruction of our park will impact our local wildlife and their habitat, and will reduce the biodiversity of the area at the same time as we are being exhorted by so many agencies, including our government, to improve biodiversity, tree cover, etc., for the health of ourselves and the future of the planet. As a regular user of the park I can testify to the variety of birds and insects that are resident or traverse the area.

While I understand that there are tentative plans for a new park over the site of the existing Lenzie Academy, a new park cannot readily replace a mature 'non-manicured' park and would in any event be at some distance from Whitegates, in an area that is already provided with green space thanks to its proximity to the Moss.

To posit in more formal language, I believe that Whitegates Park is a **designated public open space**, and that the planning application does not provide sufficient planning justification to override policies protecting such land under NPF4 and LDP2. It forms part of an established Green Network and is protected under Policy 17 of the LDP2, the Open Space Strategy. In addition this plan runs contrary to the principles of the NPF4. The proposal would result in the irreversible loss of high-quality green space and biodiversity without adequate environmental assessment or mitigation. Building on such land is contrary to both Scottish Planning Policy and East Dunbartonshire's Local Development Plan, which emphasise prioritising brownfield and previously developed land.

If this application seeks to reclassify Whitegates Park from protected open space, I understand that it is procedurally flawed. The LDP2 designation remains in force, and any change of use should be made through a formal amendment process, subject to proper consultation and further examination. Attempting to bypass this process via a planning application is in conflict with the plan-led system required under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and NPF4.

### **Environmental Risks/Flooding and Contamination**

My further grounds of objection are the known risks of disturbing historic toxic waste lying beneath the surface of Whitegates Park, a park that every user knows is liable to water-logging. I also, as a Council Tax payer, baulk at the potentially exorbitant and increasing costs inherent in mitigating such risks.

When it was proposed several years ago that Woodlands View ASN School be built at Whitegates Park, the application was denied largely because of the risk and cost of containing toxic waste highlighted in the Council-contracted site feasibility study so I see absolutely no reason to reverse this decision. Are all councillors aware of the earlier decision, the reasons the site was previously rejected and the escalating costs involved in trying to adequately contain contamination?

After wet weather, I can attest that Whitegates Park becomes marshy, with many areas of standing water. Even the tarred paths often fail to provide properly walkable access, as you have to skirt around giant puddles, a situation not helped by poor maintenance. If the grassed surface area currently acts as a gigantic sponge, a flood plain, where is this water to go if the park is built upon and what happens if this water becomes contaminated with hazardous waste?

### **Site Selection Process/Unjustified Projected Need/Inadequate Consultation**

I understand that the young people of Lenzie need a new or upgraded school. I'd really like to understand why this cannot happen as a tandem-build on the existing site, as has happened elsewhere in East Dunbartonshire and throughout Scotland.

Anyone fearing for the safety or concentration of their own child and who believes that this cannot be done or that it is too disruptive to the education of their child needs to look at the evidence from elsewhere... a short hop up Lindsaybeg Road to Chryston High School/Hub will demonstrate that a significant extension construction is currently taking place while pupils are at the school. I myself attended two different high schools elsewhere; both had construction taking place while I was a pupil, in one case an entirely new Catholic school and a new primary school was constructed alongside my grammar school to form a complete campus. It was simply accepted and is barely remembered.

I'd like to ask where there is the clear evidence that **alternative sites or a tandem-build** on the same site have been properly and fairly assessed or compared so that the community and our representatives can make a fair evaluation of the facts?

I'd also question the suggestion promoted online that space at the existing Lenzie Academy is inadequate for a tandem-build. Where is the need for a larger footprint and justification for a building designed for a roll of 1400 pupils? How many of these projected pupils will come from outwith Lenzie? From outwith East Dunbartonshire? Why are we accepting so many out-of-catchment pupils, thereby adding to pressure on our transport infrastructure and local resources? Just today we learn that the population is again projected to fall. How does it make sense to inflate pupil numbers by assuming that we need to continue to accept so many out-of-catchment potential pupils?

I also submit that the **Council's consultation was fundamentally flawed**. I learned of the application to build on Whitegates Park because I randomly saw a poster in the park (which was removed very shortly after I saw it) highlighting the proposal. I then spoke to my own neighbours. It quickly became apparent that, although we live within easy walking distance of the park, the proposal was not widely known.

A development of this magnitude should have been flagged up to local residents via a specific pamphlet drop to every letterbox. The nature of social media is hit-and-miss - it will depend on which algorithms your particular newsfeed prompts. Many households no longer take daily papers or a local newspaper, and even those that do may miss a week or a story. Many residents are commuters who may not (yet) have need of local community and community assets because of the stage of life they are at. Yet, even if this proposal does not affect your household intimately at the moment, the inflated council tax bills we'll be charged to finance this project will be paid by us all.

Consultation should have been much more wider and for longer. The limited consultation that there was, as far as I can tell, involved parents of pupils already at Lenzie Academy, immediate neighbours and whosoever randomly happened to know of the proposal. Even with this limited ambit, residents have been given no opportunity to qualify their response. Many local people, like us, will want children to learn in a safe new building but see no good reason why this cannot happen within the current footprint of the school at Myrtle Avenue and most decidedly do not want our local park destroyed in the process.

In summation, I am a local resident and I want planners and councillors to **REFUSE** this planning application. Please do not to destroy our mature, beloved park and degrade our environment further.

