



PRE - APPLICATION REPORT REGARDING THE ERECTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AT THE FORMER SITE OF THE NEWBATTLE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, EASTHOUSES ROAD, EASTHOUSES (19/00445/PAC)

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Economy

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a pre- application consultation submitted regarding the erection of a primary school at the site of the former Newbattle Community High School, Easthouses Road, Easthouses.
- 1.2 The pre-application consultation is reported to Committee to enable Councillors to express a provisional view on the proposed major development. The report outlines the proposal, identifies the key development plan policies and material considerations and states a provisional without prejudice planning view regarding the principle of development.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Guidance on the role of Councillors in the pre-application process, published by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, was reported to the Committee at its meeting of 6 June 2017. The guidance clarifies the position with regard to Councillors stating a provisional view on proposals at pre-application stage.
- 2.2 A pre-application consultation for the erection of a primary school at the site of the former Newbattle Community High School, Easthouses was submitted on 15 May 2019.
- 2.3 As part of the pre-application consultation, a public event took place at Newbattle High School on 4 June 2019. On the conclusion of the requisite 12 week consultation process the applicant could submit a planning application for the proposal. It is reasonable for an Elected Member to attend such a public event without a Council planning officer present, but the Member should (in accordance with the Commissioner's guidance reported to the Committee at its meeting in June 2017) not offer views, as the forum for doing so will be at meetings of the Planning Committee.

- 2.4 A copy of the pre application notice has been sent by the prospective applicant to the local elected members and to the Mayfield and Easthouses Community Council.

3 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 In assessing any subsequent planning application the main planning issue to be considered in determining the application is whether the currently proposed development complies with development plan policies unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The development plan is comprised of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (June 2013) and the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP).
- 3.3 The site is approximately 2 hectares of land located at the western edge of Easthouses and currently retains the buildings of the former high school. The land gently slopes from Easthouses Road at the eastern boundary of the site down towards the agricultural land/Campbell Park to the west. There are open views from the site westwards towards the Pentland Hills.
- 3.4 The land is not allocated for a specific use in the MLDP (being a high school at the time of the adoption of the MLDP) but is located within the built-up area. Any proposal would therefore need to be compatible with the character and appearance of the area (MLDP policy DEV2).
- 3.5 Although the site is located within a predominantly residential area much of the land to the east and south consists of open space. The only residential properties in the immediate vicinity adjoin the site at the northern boundary (Roanshead Crescent) the amenity of which will need to be considered.
- 3.6 The land to the west has a number of protective designations including; the Newbattle Strategic Greenspace Safeguard (MLDP policy ENV3), Newbattle Conservation Area (MLDP policy ENV19) and a Nationally Important Garden & Designed Landscape (MLDP policy ENV20). The proposal will need to be sensitive to these designations and avoid any adverse effect on them.

4 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The Scottish Government's Guidance on the Role of Councillors in Pre-Application Procedures provides for Councillors to express a 'without prejudice' view and to identify material considerations with regard to a major application.
- 4.2 The Committee is invited to express a 'without prejudice' view and to raise any material considerations which they wish the applicant and/or officers to consider. Views and comments expressed by the Committee will be entered into the minutes of the meeting and relayed to the applicant for consideration.

4.3 The Scottish Government's Guidance on the Role of Councillors in Pre-Application Procedures advises that Councillors are expected to approach their decision-making with an open mind in that they must have regard to all material considerations and be prepared to change their views which they are minded towards if persuaded that they should.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes:
- a) the provisional planning position set out in this report;
 - b) that any comments made by Members will form part of the minute of the Committee meeting; and
 - c) that the expression of a provisional view does not fetter the Committee in its consideration of any subsequent formal planning application.

Mary Smith
Director of Education, Communities and Economy

Date: 16 August 2019
Application No: 19/00445/PAC (Available online)
Applicant: Midlothian Council
Validation Date: 15 May 2019
Contact Person: Fraser James
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**Education, Economy
& Communities**
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Proposal of application notice for erection of primary school at
Former Site of Newbattle Community High School, Easthouses
Road, Easthouses, Dalkeith

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