

Deputy Minister for Communities

PLANNING APPLICATIONS: STIRLING SCHOOLS PPP

1. I refer to my submissions of 9 September and 10 October about this group of eight planning applications notified to Scottish Ministers.
2. We have today received a letter from Stirling Council, containing further information about the proposals, covering the following issues:
 - Public consultation and involvement
 - Site selection
 - Green Belt and open space policies
 - Civic gain and housing
3. A copy of the Council's letter is attached for your attention. You may wish to take this further information into account in your consideration of the proposals.



ANDY KINNAIRD


DD Planning 1:4

Ext 47079

13 October 2005

12 October, 2005




13/10/05
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Dear Andy

Schools PPP – Notification of 8 Applications

I refer to the above applications from the Gateway Group which have now been with the Executive since May and July.

I understand that you are not fully aware of the background to these applications particularly in relation to consultations, affordable housing and selection of sites and I hope that this additional information assists in your deliberations.

a) **Public Consultation and Involvement**

There was considerable consultation on the overall proposals in two parallel but discreet statutory processes under both the education and planning legislations, from September 2004 to May 2005. The planning consultations were well in excess of the minimum requirements, and involved public/community council meetings, and hearing objectors cases at the relevant Community Councils and at the Committee when the applications were considered; Dunblane, Polmaise and Causewayhead Community Councils supported the new Dunblane, St Modan's and Wallace High Schools respectively, however Torbrex Community Council opposed the new Stirling High. The initial proposal for St Modan's in Bannockburn was withdrawn on education grounds following considerable public concern, which was echoed by the Community Council; the revised application on the new site attracted support.

The education consultations were much longer and wider than these under the planning legislation. There were 6 public meetings held in advance of the formal process:

Wallace High School	-	236 attended
St Modan's High School	-	148 attended
Dunblane High School	-	250 attended
Stirling High School	-	number not recorded

These meetings were initial information giving events and raised points for clarification etc.

The proposals were also discussed at the School Boards of the affected schools and their respective associated primary schools.

There was a survey of schools (parents, staff and community), total of 774 responses with support varying from 60-90% for new build as proposed.

Andy Kinnaid, Principal Planner, Development Department, Scottish Executive
12 October 2005

A further round of public meetings was held, with two at each school, which were attended by a total of 278. 41 written submissions were submitted, 13 supporting and 25 opposed, mostly to the original St Modan's site; a 700 signature petition opposing the original St Modan's site was balanced by a 94 signature petition and 785 "notes" of support from parents, and the Council identified a revised site as the initial proposal was unable to deliver a suitable education environment. A 126 signature petition in support of Stirling High new build was received.

At the education public meetings there was an overwhelming support from an educational perspective in all cases for new build solutions

b) Site Selection

Originally the Council submitted its (education) Business Case to the Executive based on school refurbishment and tenders were sought on this basis; however, 'variant' bids representing the basis of the current proposals were received from two separate consortium bidders. These involved variations on new build schools and housing on their redevelopment sites.

The site for the replacement Dunblane High School within the existing school grounds has always been favoured, as there are no readily identifiable alternatives due to topography and location, one alternative to the east of Dunblane proposed by a third party was rejected due to location.

The site for Stirling High replacement from both consortiums was basically similar and there is no readily identifiable alternative location. Refurbishment would have caused major disruption to education due to internal remodelling requirements. A site, in countryside to the west suggested by a third party, was unacceptable on locational grounds.

The site for the replacement Wallace High had three alternatives. A site within the existing School grounds was rejected due to disruption and health and safety issues, which are much more complex than at Dunblane. A site at Raploch was considered too restricted to provide pitches and, due to proximity to the proposed "primary campus", operationally complex. A site at Cornton was liable to flood and had been rejected by SEPA. The resultant proposals at Airthrey Road were amended in consultation with the local community etc. to retain the community football pitch, revised access and siting of the school building further from existing housing.

The original proposals for St Modan's at Bannockburn High were withdrawn following community consultation and concerns over the educational case. Due to the denominational nature of the school and locational flexibility, the revised site adjacent to the Sports Village was identified.

The final selection of sites involved consultation and public meetings prior to the formal submission of the planning applications as now referred.

c) Green Belt and Open Space Policies

The Dunblane High School on-site replacement involves the loss of playing field open space with replacement pitches off-site and the new Stirling High School involves the loss of the existing cricket club, which is to relocate to the Council's Sports Village at Forthbank. Both of these developments involve the loss of local open space, but they are in areas where there are alternative nearby amenities immediately adjacent. The housing redevelopment of the Wallace High site includes open space provision, however there is a loss. Whilst these aspects of the proposals are contrary to the development plan; sportScotland have accepted the overall balance of loss and reprovisioning of sports pitches, especially in the context of the developing Forthbank Sports Village, which is adjacent to the site of the new St Modan's.

Andy Kinnaird, Principal Planner, Development Department, Scottish Executive
12 October 2005

The new Wallace High site is in Green Belt, however, the Green Belt at this location narrows, and the loss is not fundamental to its effectiveness, and represents a degree of rounding off and infill. A considerable part of the landtake (54%) is pitch provision, which is an acceptable use of the Green Belt; the total loss of the green belt location between Bridge of Allan and Causewayhead is 5%.

d) Civic Gain and Housing

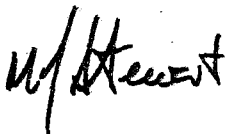
The Council, in anticipation of the cross-funding components of the Schools PPP and associated housing redevelopments, and the Council's proposals for the redevelopment of Forthside, where new housing is similarly being provided as a partially cross-funding component, agreed (at a full Council meeting) on 16 December 04, that if there were elements of "Civic Gain", then the development plan requirement for affordable housing could be flexibly applied; this policy was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The housing applications which have been referred were considerably amended to include a wide range of house types, e.g. semi-detached, terraced and flatted, compared with detached villas as initially proposed.

The civic gain of the combined package of applications was considered to be the new education provision and any other elements of gain would have decreased the quality of proposed education provision or critically increased the affordability gap.

Should you wish further information, there are reports to Council, minutes and file notes etc which support the above, which I would happily forward.

I trust that this information will help you come to an early conclusion, and if there is any further information which I can provide, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mick Stewart
Head of Planning & Regulation