

Planning

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 March 2026 18:54
To: Planning
Cc: J B
Subject: TP/ED/26/0104 - Objection

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I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of a new Lenzie Academy on the site of Whitegates Park. This proposal, in my view, conflicts with multiple key planning policies and fails to demonstrate the sustainable, transparent, and evidence-based approach expected of a public project of this significant magnitude and significant cost.

yours faithfully,

1. Non-Compliance with Environmental and Land Use Policy

Whitegates Park is designated public open space, and the application does not provide sufficient planning justification to override policies protecting such land under NPF4 and LDP2. Whitegates Park is designated open space forming part of the established Green Network and protected under Policy 17 of the LDP2, the Open Space Strategy. 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 the Scottish Planning Policy and the East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan, which emphasise prioritising brownfield and previously developed land.

A Tree Preservation Order for Whitegates Park was approved by Committee on 3 February 2026, with consultation agreed. The emerging TPO is a material consideration and should be afforded appropriate weight in determining this application.

Public access to paths is implied rather than confirmed, with no clear commitment that new or re-provided routes will be public, permanent and available at all times.

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

The mitigation plan of converting the Myrtle Avenue site to parkland does not suffice for local residents. It is too distance. Nor does it suffice for the wildlife that currently lives in or uses in the existing park: deer, fox, bats, birds of prey, heron, frogs, toads, song birds. Placing bird and/or bat boxes does not mitigate because the primary food source for that wildlife will be lost.

2. Inadequate Site Selection Process

There is no transparent evidence that alternative sites have been properly assessed or compared. The exclusion of brownfield options directly contradicts the “town centre first” and sustainable spatial principles underpinning NPF4. Furthermore, the projected pupil numbers appear inflated due to very significant out-of-catchment enrolments: approximately 40% of pupils are placing requests. Half of the placing requests are from outwith East Dunbartonshire. Council will be building a new 1400 capacity school to accommodate placing requests.

A number of Primary and Secondary school in-situ rebuilds have taken place in East Dunbartonshire in recent years. There is no absolute reason why this could not take place for Lenzie Academy, indeed the redevelopment of Kirkintilloch High School was implemented on a very challenging, non-level, site. The existing Lenzie Academy site presents no such challenges.

3. Industrial Contamination and Public Health Risks

The Council’s own reports (Curtins Consulting, 2025) confirm severe 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.

It will be the case that local residents will be exposed to some level of contamination during construction and there can be no absolute guarantee that pupils and staff will not be exposed during the lifetime of the school.

4. Flood Risk

Large sections of the site are subject to surface water flooding. The proposed mitigation for this involves the excavation of very large volumes of contaminated soil - exposing workers and residents to pollution. It also relies on powered pumping to protect the new build and may, in some circumstances, lead to dirty water being pumped into the local river system, which hosts trout, salmon and other species.

The development puts local residential property at risk.

I have personally observed significant flooding and standing water on the site and public footpaths between Garngaber Avenue and Whitegates and Parkview Court during wet weather.

5. Additional Comments

The estimated cost of the development is now £138,000,000. This is an unacceptably high budget given the current financial constraints on council, government and local residents. Given the near doubling in cost from the original estimates, the selection process should be restarted. A significant component of the now £138M cost, with risk of further increase, is due to the fundamental unsuitability of the site due to contamination, existing flooding and the need to address this. This is not the case for other options.

I regularly use Whitegates Park for walking and cycling and its loss would directly affect my access to local greenspace. I value the wildlife and natural character of this area which would be significantly reduced by this development.

Additionally, please note that my property will not be affected directly by this proposal.