WHY REFURBISHMENT IS BETTER: LENZIE ACADEMY

An Alternative to a “Whitegates Relocation” or a “Myrtle Avenue Tandem Build”

PART 1: Analysis of the December 2024 Consultation Report

An analysis of the *"final-lenzie-academy-education-statutory-consultation-report-december-2024.pdf"* reveals several critical vulnerabilities in the Council's preferred option (Whitegates) and strengthens the case for retaining the school at Myrtle Avenue.

1. The "leading question" flaw

The consultation asked: *"Do you agree that the young people would benefit from a new-build school?"*

As explicitly noted by several respondents (e.g., *"This questionnaire has not been presented fairly... A vote for the new school is not a vote for the proposed site"*), this question conflates the undeniable need for upgraded facilities with the highly controversial relocation to Whitegates. The 85% "Yes" rate validates the need for modernization, but it **cannot** be interpreted as a mandate for the Whitegates site.

2. Validation of the Myrtle Avenue location

Your positive notes on the Site Analysis for the current layout align perfectly with the community feedback. Respondents repeatedly highlighted:

- **Active travel & community:** The central location is vital. Moving to Whitegates forces longer walks, increases vehicular traffic, and disconnects the school from the community heart.
- **Greenbelt preservation:** Whitegates is a heavily utilised park and wildlife corridor. The community is fiercely protective of this space.
- **Contamination risks:** Multiple respondents and the Education Scotland (HMI) report raised severe concerns regarding industrial contamination and radon gas at the Whitegates site (noting it was previously deemed unfit for an ASN school).
- **Endless maintenance costs:** Independent experts have predicte huge ongoing costs due to shifting peat.
- **Drainage impossibilities**: it may not be possible to ever drain the site properly.

3. The refurbishment mandate

The consultation shows clear community appetite for upgrading the existing site (Option 6) or utilising the Rugby Club. The primary Council argument against refurbishing the current site is the "disruption to learning" caused by a tandem build.

PART 2: The modern refurbishment alternative (“Deep Retrofit”)

"Doc 1_Phase 1 to completion M&H Option 1.docx" outlines a “**Tandem Build**.” While achievable, tandem builds can be disruptive. Pupils live near a construction site for 3-4 years, and outdoor PE space is compromised as pitches are temporarily turned into construction compounds. (Mitigated by use of Lenzie Rugby Club or Boghead playing fields.)

The alternative: A “**Deep EnerPHit Retrofit”** utilising an **Off-Site "Dual-Node" decant strategy**. Instead of building *around* the pupils, we temporarily relocate the pupils using nearby assets, allowing the contractor unfettered access to strip the existing 1960s building back to its structural frame and rebuild it to modern standards.

The Project management & decant strategy ("dual-node")

Modern project management for school refurbishments avoids live-site disruption by leveraging temporary, high-quality "learning villages."

Node 1: The rugby pitch modular village

- **Action:** Lease modern, high-spec modular classrooms (Portacabins have evolved significantly; modern units feature climate control, acoustic baffling, and interactive tech).
- **Location:** Temporarily placed on the adjacent Rugby Club pitches.
- **Benefit:** Keeps the core teaching localised. Solves the tandem build problem where construction vehicles and pupils share the same footprint.

Node 2: Lenzie Public Hall restoration

- **Action:** Fast-track the refurbishment of the nearby, dilapidated Lenzie Public Hall as an "enabling works" phase.
- **Usage:** Repurpose the hall during the school's construction phase to serve as the primary assembly area, dining hall, exam hall, and indoor PE overflow.
- **Legacy Benefit:** Once the academy retrofit is complete, the community inherits a fully restored, high-performance Public Hall, turning a logistical necessity into a massive civic victory.

PART 3: Modern refurbishment techniques deployed

By removing the pupils from the immediate footprint, the contractor can utilise modern retrofit techniques to deliver a "like-new" school faster and cheaper than a new build.

1. The "fabric-first" EnerPHit approach

Instead of demolition (which releases massive carbon emissions), the existing structural concrete/steel frame is retained.

- **Technique:** The building is stripped to the frame and "wrapped" in a highly insulated, airtight thermal envelope (often using prefabricated, biogenic timber panels).
- **Result:** Transforms a drafty 1960s building into a Passivhaus-standard facility, reducing heating energy demand by up to 90%.

2. Building information modelling (BIM) and “Point-Cloud Scanning”

- **Technique:** Before work begins, the entire existing structure is 3D laser-scanned. This creates a "Digital Twin" of the school.
- **Project management benefit:** Engineers use BIM to route new, modern “Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery” (MVHR) systems and IT infrastructure through the existing ceiling voids without physical clashes, ensuring the 1960s ceiling heights (a challenge noted in feasibility studies) are perfectly managed.

3. Zonal phasing (If partial occupation is required)

If the modular village cannot hold the entire 1,400 pupil roll, the refurb uses “Agile Zonal Phasing.”

- **Technique:** The building is split into sealed, acoustically isolated zones.
- **Process:** Zone A is completely vacated, stripped, retrofitted, and handed back. Pupils then move into the pristine Zone A, while Zone B is tackled. Modern acoustic hoarding and negative-pressure dust extraction ensure the occupied zones remain completely undisturbed.

PART 4: Financial & "best value" analysis

A critical evaluation of EDC’s £138 million proposal for Whitegates Park (WGP) against recent Scottish school construction benchmarks reveals a severe violation of public "Best Value" mandates.

1. The per-pupil cost discrepancy

Looking at 2026 inflation-adjusted figures for recent "on-site tandem builds" across Scotland (including Peebles High, Perth High, Queensferry High, and EDC’s own Boclair Academy), the modern average cost to execute an on-site replacement is **£47,950 per pupil**. EDC's own Boclair Academy was delivered at approximately **£45,837 per pupil**.

By contrast, EDC is proposing a budget of £138 million to move Lenzie Academy to the WGP site for 1,400 pupils.

- **WGP Cost Per Pupil:** £138,000,000 ÷ 1,400 = **£98,571 per pupil.**

EDC is proposing to pay more than *double* the national average for a school of the exact same size, sinking millions into abnormal ground remediation, flood mitigation tanks, and peat-piling

at the contaminated WGP site. EDC are currently (Aug 26) asking for *more* money from SFT.

2. The "Right-Sized" on-site alternative

If EDC eliminated placing requests from outside East Dunbartonshire (approximately 20% of the roll), the required capacity drops to 1,120 local pupils.

Applying the Boclair Academy benchmark cost to this right-sized roll:

- **1,120 pupils × £45,837 = £51,337,440 (£51.3 million)**

This presents a direct, comparative saving of **£86.7 million** against the official £138 million WGP budget. If the true cost of WGP reaches £160 million (a realistic projection given inflation and site abnormalities), the overspend balloons to **£108.7 million**. Note that EDC have confirmed that no cost benefit analysis wa done on reducing the school roll even though with a new school the marginal cost analyses of extra pupils change completely.

3. The lifetime burden on the council taxpayer

Local authorities fund these projects via multi-decade loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The LEIP funding model provides revenue funding for outcomes, not a direct capital contribution. In overall terms, including interest, LEIP funding approximates a maximum of 25% of the total lifetime cost, leaving the Council Taxpayer to fund the remaining 75%.

Taking the realistic £108.7 million overspend figure:

- **Principal to be locally funded (75%):** ~£81 million
- **Interest over 25 years (at 4.5%):** ~£54 million
- **Total extra lifetime cost burden: £135 million** (approaching £162 million without maximum LEIP success).

Dividing this £162 million lifetime burden by the 47,283 Council Taxpayers in East Dunbartonshire reveals the stark local impact:

- **Cost per Taxpayer: £3,400 per household.**
  *(Even using the highly optimistic £138 million official budget, the lifetime debt burden remains a staggering £2,711 per household for the **overspend alone)**.*

Conclusion

Because East Dunbartonshire Council is choosing to force this development onto a highly contaminated, peat ridden floodplain, (as admitted in the latest PUF to SFT, "*Extensive capping and piling is required on site due to the results for the Site Investigation survey relating to contamination and stability. The amount of capping and piling that is required on site will have an impact on the development cost. Additional funding for excessive abnormals to be issued for review.*"), every single household in the authority will effectively be saddled with thousands of pounds in completely avoidable debt. Deeply retrofitting the school on its current, safe site at the national average cost would halve that debt burden, aligning the project with strict Audit

Scotland "Best Value" mandates.

Summary of Advantages over Council Proposals

1. **Financial Prudence:** Avoids up to £108 million in capital overspend and saves the average EDC household ~£3,400 in lifetime borrowing debt.
2. **Zero Live-Site Danger:** Using the Dual-Node decant, pupils are not navigating heavy machinery pathways.
3. **Faster Delivery:** Contractors work up to 30% faster on a vacant structural frame compared to tiptoeing around a live school environment.
4. **Community Win:** Saves Whitegates Park, retains the school on Myrtle Avenue, and actively restores the Lenzie Public Hall.
5. **Carbon targets:** Unlike the Whitegates alternative, a refurbishment does not blow through the council's embodied carbon targets.

