

Planning

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 March 2026 20:20
To: Planning
Subject: Objection to New Lenzie Academy build at Whitegates Park, Lenzie

To: The Planning Authority, East Dunbartonshire Council
Date: 10th March 2026

Planning reference: TP/ED/26/0104
Proposal: New Lenzie Academy build - Whitegates Park, Lenzie

Name: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]

I wish to object to the proposed development of the new Lenzie Academy at Whitegates Park, Lenzie.

My objection is based primarily on material planning considerations including:

1. Inadequate and flawed consultation process
2. Policy conflict and loss of protected space
3. Severe, unmitigated contamination and public health risks
4. Profound environmental, climate, and biodiversity concerns
5. Social equity concerns
6. Unjustified expansion and projected need
7. Traffic congestion and road safety issues
8. Environmental risk - flooding and contamination
9. Scale, mass, and accessibility
10. Conflict with emerging legislation & ethical standards

1. Inadequate and Flawed Consultation Process:

The consultation has been inadequate and has omitted key stakeholders including numerous residents who live adjacent to / near Whitegates Park. These and other stakeholders were not consulted in good time and were not invited to fully engage.

Engagement was largely restricted to the existing school community, excluding the wider population most affected by the loss of the park. The format of consultation - particularly online tools limiting detailed responses - appears inconsistent with Statutory Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) requirements for meaningful public input.

In addition, there has been a complete lack of transparency in the site selection process. No compelling, publicly available evidence has been provided to justify why this protected site was chosen over alternative, brownfield, or non-designated locations, as required by NPPF4. This failure undermines the entire application.

The Council’s Education consultation did not show support for building on Whitegates Park. People were only asked if they wanted a new school in principle, not if they agreed with the location. Significantly, **the Report itself admits many “Yes” answers were conditional (eg “not at Whitegates Park”)** and that many objections focused on the site, **but these were excluded from the analysis.**

Council officers’ own emails (June–July 2024) released following FOI requests, admit the existing school site was feasible - but instead of presenting councillors with an acceptable design, they worked to prove it “doesn’t fit” in order to defend Whitegates Park. Internal overlays comparing the sites were circulated but withheld from public release. This shows the site selection process was biased, predetermined, and procedurally unfair. Councillors were misled and the planning application rests on a flawed foundation.

In short:

- Officers acknowledged feasibility but dismissed it as “not acceptable to Education.”
- Councillors were denied a fair choice.
- Overlay documents exist but were withheld.
- The process was about defending the use of Whitegates Park, not objectively testing options.

The outcome therefore cannot be used to claim community backing or to override protections for designated open space. The proposal must go through full planning scrutiny, where the suitability of Whitegates Park will be properly assessed.

2. Policy Conflict & Loss of Protected Open Space:

Whitegates Park is designated public open space within the Local Development Plan, and the application does NOT provide sufficient planning justification to override policies protecting such land under NPF4 and LDP2.

The proposal would remove this valued community greenspace entirely. Policy requires clear evidence demonstrating that alternatives have been fully and robustly assessed - a process which has not been transparently demonstrated.

Furthermore, Whitegates Park forms part of the established Green Network and is protected under Policy 17 of the LDP2, the Open Space Strategy. 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 recent Technical Note confirms a change in approach to Myrtle Avenue as a separate major planning application. This represents a material change that affects how mitigation and policy compliance can properly be assessed at this stage.

3. Severe, Unmitigated 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.

Despite these extreme levels, inadequate physical remediation is proposed. Contaminated soil will be reused on-site, with risk downgraded to "Low" via computer modelling that ignores real-world scenarios such as flooding, future repairs and damage due to standard child play. This is an unacceptable risk management strategy that prioritises cost savings over child safety.

4. Profound environmental, climate, and biodiversity concerns:

The development would result in the permanent loss of almost all mature habitat, tree cover and wildlife connectivity - including bats and birds of conservation concern - on the site. Given the restricted footprint of the school with its buildings, car parks and fences, it is unlikely that a genuine nature-positive outcome could be delivered.

The proposed floodlighting – to enable the evening use of sports facilities during evenings and winter months – will be detrimental to whatever fragment of wildlife (especially bats) remains on the periphery of the school.

The proposed biodiversity mitigation does not offer an acceptable "like for like" compensation: creating a new park at the vacated school site will not provide adequate wildlife habitat for many years. What's more, I am aware that the new park is being suggested only because it is a requirement for the approval of the new school on Whitegates – at the presentation we attended, we were told that a subsequent council may choose to build properties there instead.

The Council has resolved to make a Tree Preservation Order for Whitegates Park. Determination of this application should not pre-empt or undermine the statutory TPO process now underway.

5. Social equity concerns:

The proposed school would also remove a large area of public parkland in a town that already has a deficit of public park provision, directly conflicting with NPF4 Policy 20, which requires development

not to exacerbate deficiencies in green infrastructure. This loss would disproportionately impact families, older residents, and those with mobility issues: the existing park's flat terrain and central location make it uniquely valuable for recreation, wellbeing, and community/social activities. Also lost would be a valued playing field, which will not be replaced like-for-like as national guidance requires.

Should the new park ever go ahead, it would be nearly a mile away from the green space we would be losing and therefore not a practical destination for the many people who currently use Whitegates recreationally. The proposal removes a vital asset from the eastern boundary - already identified in the Council's Open Space Strategy as under-served – and transfers it to an area that is already well-provided. This exacerbates inequalities in access to greenspace.

6. Unjustified Expansion & Projected Need:

A 1,400-pupil school assumes sustained high demand despite fluctuating roll projections, discretionary intake and recent catchment changes. Building to this scale on a constrained site risks over-provision and the permanent loss of protected green space without clear evidence of enduring local need.

Critically, the official catchment area projections themselves forecast a fall in pupil numbers to 1,140 by 2028/29. Building a school for 1,400 pupils in the face of this projected decline is illogical and represents a poor use of public resources.

This over-provision risks creating a future surplus of school places, a situation that would be both inefficient and financially irresponsible.

7. Traffic congestion and road safety issues:

The Transport Assessment underestimates the likely traffic impacts and congestion around Initiative Road and surrounding residential streets, raising concerns about road safety and suitability of the location for a school of this scale.

Transport and road safety are major concerns. The surrounding roads already experience significant congestion at rush hour, with long queues at key junctions. Pavements are narrow, crossings are limited and there is already pressure on parking. Introducing a large secondary school would make these issues worse and create additional safety risks for pedestrians even if additional crossing points were to be added. A secondary school of this scale would intensify these issues.

The formal drop off area is likely to worsen the situation, creating a bottleneck at that roundabout. There is a real risk of overspill drop off and parking into nearby residential streets, which would affect road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. There are numerous areas where traffic is likely to build up to an unworkable level. Public transport connections in the immediate area do not effectively serve the likely school catchment as it is. This undermines the sustainability of the proposal.

8. Environmental Risks - flooding and contamination:

There are also known problems with drainage and ground conditions at Whitegates Park. Standing water is frequently present, and potential ground-quality issues have been raised. Full geotechnical

and contamination evidence, including how these interact, should be available before any determination is made.

The site discharges into the Luggie Water and onward to the River Kelvin, which already depends on flood defences. With climate change set to intensify flooding, Aviva projects that by 2080 more than double the number of properties in Scotland will be at risk from surface water than there currently are. The developer's flood screening assertion that the site is not vulnerable flatly contradicts SEPA flood maps and historical records, and is therefore misleading.

Replacing permeable greenspace with hard surfaces worsens surface-water runoff, reduces climate resilience, and undermines national climate adaptation policy. Building a school on a contaminated, flood-prone site is reckless.

9. Scale, mass, and accessibility:

The scale and massing of the proposed buildings would significantly alter the character and appearance of this open green space. The plans do not clearly guarantee that existing public paths through Whitegates Park will remain open, unrestricted and accessible outside school hours. The loss of the existing grass football pitch also reduces local sports and recreation provision for the community.

The Noise Impact Assessment identifies houses on Larkfield Road as among the closest residential receptors, with gardens approximately 35 metres from the proposed sports pitches. It acknowledges that sports pitch activity may raise noise levels by up to 10 dB above evening background noise levels approaching 9pm. According to the Sport Scotland guidance referenced within the report, increases of this magnitude constitute a substantial adverse impact, raising concern about the effect on nearby residential amenities. floodlit sports pitches with assumed use until 9pm.

The main drop-off and parking areas are also located on this side of the site, concentrating activity closest to existing homes.

10. Conflict with emerging legislation and ethical standards:

The scale and nature of the development appear to be in direct conflict with the spirit of the proposed Scottish "Ecocide Bill," which received overwhelming public support (95% in favour).

The potential for long-term, widespread environmental damage should be a material consideration for Scottish Ministers.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, including unacceptable flood risk, loss of protected open space, contamination concerns, procedural failures, and disregard for public opinion, this application is unsound. The proposal represents a significant and irreversible loss for the community and the environment.

I request that East Dunbartonshire Council refuse this application.

Regards,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.