Questions for EDC posed by Lenzie Residents re new Lenzie Academy for Information Evening 5th Nov

There were a number of questions/comments on the same topics. We have summarised these rather than repeat every question/comment verbatim.

Questions for EDC Proposed Siting of the New Lenzie Academy in Whitegates Park

Question 1

I would like to know whether the Council has entered into, or been involved in, any formal or informal discussions, negotiations, agreements, or arrangements with any house builders or developers, including but not limited to Cala Homes and Robertson Homes, regarding the current Lenzie Academy site.

If any such discussions have taken place, please provide details of the parties involved, the nature of the discussions, and when they occurred.

Response:

The Council has not entered into, or been involved in, any formal or informal discussions, negotiations, agreements, or arrangements with any house builders or developers, including but not limited to Cala Homes and Robertson Homes, regarding the current Lenzie Academy site.

Therefore, under Section 17 (1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I must inform you that the Council does not hold the information you have requested.

Question 2

What steps are being taken to prevent flooding if Whitegates Park is chosen for the relocation of Lenzie Academy?

Flooding occurred in 2005 in the Whitegates/Middlemuir area when 15 houses were evacuated due to flooding merely from excessive rainfall and there is a high probability with climate change etc that rainfall will increase (it already has!). As it is, Whitegates Park does flood and so major drainage will be required to enable the surface water to access the Bothlin Burn.

Response:

The proposed drainage strategy incorporates SUDs features and is designed to attenuate surface water to a restricted discharge rate, matching the greenfield predevelopment condition, which discharges to the north and south via existing drainage infrastructure. Attenuation is provided to appropriately balance flows and is detailed in full via the published Surface Water Drainage strategy for the project published with the project planning application.

The Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage strategy for the site is published in full on the planning portal and is currently subject to consideration via the planning process, including through consultee input from the Council's Flooding and Drainage team.

The planning application can be viewed in full here:

https://planning.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TGNQ0OGJLV700

Question 3

Why refurbishing the classical buildings and campus on Myrtle Avenue has basically been ignored, yet this option meets the Scottish Government's aspirations for net zero far more than any new build.

Response:

The refurbishment of the existing building was considered during the feasibility process. The report of the feasibility review was considered by Council in September 2022 remains available to view on-line:

https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/media/5szdlnzz/proposed-new-lenzie-academy-outcome-of-feasibility-study.pdf

Sections 3.64 onward of the report onward provide a summary of the assessment of the refurbishment option, which is also detailed within the appendix of the report:

3.64 A detailed condition survey was undertaken during the course of the feasibility exercise to gauge the current condition and forward works plan for the existing school building. Significant modernisation is required throughout the school to deliver a modern, fit for purpose and energy efficiency secondary school. The report identifies a number of constraints which would present either a design, construction or logistical challenge through refurbishment, particularly in the main school building, including:

- Low floor to ceiling heights which will impact the replacement of M&E services, in particular modern ventilation systems
- Classroom sizes too small to meet the current Building Standards for secondary education and would need to be reconfigured
- Numerous level changes throughout the main teaching block which would require to be made fully accessible
- Existing building orientation and classroom dimensions will limit the opportunity to achieve Enerphit accreditation for the project

3.65 As with Options 1 and 4, the tandem nature of the project and limited space within the site also mean this option has the potential for the greatest impact on the operation of the existing school during this period and the educational experience of teachers and pupils over an extended period of time.

3.66 The re-development of the existing site avoids the need for a 12 month statutory consultation period which would be necessary if the school is relocated to a new site, retains the Myrtle Avenue site in Council ownership, the continuation of its current planning use and offers well-established local transport links.

3.67 This option also has the opportunity to reduce the embodied carbon used during the construction process (i.e. the total carbon impact of construction activity, including building materials) as fundamental parts of the existing building can be re-used (such as the main structure and large parts of the external envelope). In-use energy performance is likely to be more difficult to estimate and control over the lifecycle of the refurbished building and is not projected to provide as energy efficient a building as a new build school.

Question 4

If refurbishment was chosen, there would be no need for long, protracted, and very expensive planning applications. More importantly, the classic campus and buildings layout are precisely what the best achieving private schools want, to encourage a greater investment from the pupils towards their own education. Why is this option too good for Lenzie pupils?

Response:

Please refer to the response to Question 3. The requirement for planning consent for a refurbishment of the building would have been dependent on the detailed design proposals for the refurbishment itself.

Question 5

In any school development with which I have been involved, the main requirements are that children and staff are protected and safe, and that all dangers are removed as far as possible. Thus, the campus must have a secure boundary. There should be no access to busy roads, rivers, or water features. Neither of these fundamental requirements can be achieved at Whitegates Park. Indeed, the proposals have the campus conterminous with a busy, fast moving town centre by-pass. Why have these factors not been taken into account? Why is this risk level acceptable?

Response:

The design of the new school has been developed in close collaboration with teaching staff and Education professionals, led by an experienced architect with a significant track record in the design of high quality, modern secondary schools.

The proposed school benefits from a secure boundary and consideration has been given to the safe access, egress and movement of pupils around the school building and wider site itself.

Question 6

The campus is to be constructed over a waterlogged peat bog. Peat beds are carbon sinks and when disturbed they release copious amounts of carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere. These same harmful gases will cause severe illnesses to people congregating in the area above. Why has this site been selected despite these risks?

Response:

Proposals for the Whitegates are informed by an extensive suite of detailed site surveys, all of which have been published as part of the planning application and will be independently verified through the planning process. This includes a Human Health Detailed Quantitive Risk Assessment as published here:

https://planning.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/online-applications/files/2C4FDBA37CEA0A3D877A5D187B78A100/pdf/TP_ED_26_0104-PL60_-_HUMAN_HEALTH_DETAILED_QUANTITATIVE_RISK_ASSESSMENT-1023265.pdf

Question 7

Why is the iconic Lenzie Academy being moved into South Kirkintilloch?

Response:

The requirement for the replacement school and appraisal of the site options considered for the location of the school specifically are contained within the feasibility review considered by Council in September 2022 which remains available to view on-line:

https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/media/5szdlnzz/proposed-new-lenzie-academy-outcome-of-feasibility-study.pdf

Question 8

Why does the proposed school roll for the new school allow a significant percentage of pupils from outside the catchment area to attend Lenzie Academy. What is the rationale?

Response:

In arriving at the decision for the role capacity for the replacement school, the Council takes into consideration current and predicated future demand for places based on a variety of factors including local demographic trends, current and anticipated future housebuilding and new families moving into the area in order to attend the school. There has historically been a high demand for Lenzie Academy as with other secondary schools in East Dunbartonshire and the Council anticipates this to continue and strengthen in the future.

Question 9

It seems like the proposed academy build on Whitegates Park is less and less likely to go ahead. As a parent of children in Lenzie, due to attend the Academy in the near future, this is a concern as there is a very strong chance that our children will be attending a school that is certainly nowhere near the standard of all other high schools in EDC for the foreseeable future. In my children's case, it is now likely that their full high school education will miss out on these new facilities. I would like to know, what is the plan B? How is the council planning to ensure these children have suitable facilities for their education while there is no new school being built?

Response:

Following determination of the planning applications at Whitegates Park and Myrtle Avenue and on conclusion of the construction tender process, a report will be submitted for consideration by Council which will detail the final design proposals, total development cost and contractual arrangements for the delivery of the project.

The Council continue to ensure that the condition of the existing school at Myrtle Avenue is fit for purpose and this will continue to remain the case.

Question 10

What other sites were considered for this project?

Response:

The appraisal of the site options considered for the location of the school specifically are contained within the feasibility review considered by Council in September 2022 which remains available to view on-line:

https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/media/5szdlnzz/proposed-new-lenzie-academy-outcome-of-feasibility-study.pdf

Question 11

What I and many, many others would like to know is why does it appear to be the case that the local council is hell bent in bulldozing through very expensive, ill considered and impractical plans for the area such as proposed new Lenzie academy in such an unsuitable area? Spending hundreds of £millions residents can't afford when wiser people would apportion much lesser sums on basic maintenance rather than the cycle of neglect causing increased damage and then significant expense in a panic patching-up which seems to be EDC's maintenance policy. Why is EDC so eager to mis-spend money?

Response:

The Council disagree with the assertion the investment in a new Academy, replacing the existing C-Rated asset and the only remaining legacy secondary school in East Dunbartonshire, are ill-conceived.

Reports to Council on the project to date have detailed the anticipated financial implications of the project, including the anticipated borrowing costs associated with the investment and are in-keeping with the Council's required

Question 12

We know where a lot of historical chemical waste is but do not necessarily understand the long-term effects of the waste on future generations. How can EDC propose putting children in a school, on top of chemical waste, when there are appropriate safe sites for the school?

Response:

Proposals for the Whitegates are informed by an extensive suite of detailed site surveys, all of which have been published as part of the planning application and will be independently verified through the planning process. This includes a Human Health Detailed Quantitive Risk Assessment as published here:

https://planning.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/online-applications/files/2C4FDBA37CEA0A3D877A5D187B78A100/pdf/TP_ED_26_0104-PL60_-_HUMAN_HEALTH_DETAILED_QUANTITATIVE_RISK_ASSESSMENT-1023265.pdf

Question 13

Why did East Dunbartonshire Council put Whitegates Park back on the table as a site option for the new Lenzie Academy only weeks after the March 2021 planning appraisal deemed it 'unviable' for the ASN school, with technical officers stating it

was 'unsuitable for building on' and warning that development would require 'costly land reclamation'? What new evidence, assessments or decision-making processes justified reversing that position?

Response:

The assessment of Whitegates Park and the other sites considered through the process if outlined within the project feasibility report considered by Council in September 2022 which remains available to view on-line:

https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/media/5szdlnzz/proposed-new-lenzie-academy-outcome-of-feasibility-study.pdf

The report sets out the factors taken into consideration arriving at Whitegates Park as being the preferred site for the location of the replacement secondary school.

The site was considered during the shortlisting process for a new Additional Support Needs school which was ultimately sited at Waterside, Kirkintilloch. This was considered as a preferred location primarily on the basis of it's links to local schools at Gartconner Primary and Kirkintilloch High School.

Current proposals for Whitegates Park are based on an extensive period of design development which have included extensive and detailed site surveys, all of which are available on-line and now form the basis of the current planning application.

Question 14

I would like to know the cost of ground work and drainage costs before any work on the new building can start.

Response:

The construction tender for the project remains on-going. An estimate of cost for the project has been provided at Feasibility Stage and Concept Design Stage, with reports published here:

https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/media/5szdlnzz/proposed-new-lenzie-academy-outcome-of-feasibility-study.pdf

https://eastdunbarton.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s15213/Lenzie%20Academy%20Project%20-%20Stage%201%20Approval.pdf

A further detailed report, which will include the outcome of the construction tender and final development cost for the project, will be submitted to Council for consideration at the end of the pre-construction phase ahead of any decision to commence with the construction phase of the project.

Question 15

What plans are in place to ensure that building a large school on Whitegates Park does not leech contaminants to the Bothlyn Burn, Luggie Water, or other fresh water streams?

Response:

The proposed drainage strategy incorporates SUDs features and is designed to attenuate surface water to a restricted discharge rate, matching the greenfield predevelopment condition, which discharges to the north and south via existing drainage infrastructure. Attenuation is provided to appropriately balance flows and is detailed in full via the published Surface Water Drainage strategy for the project published with the project planning application.

The Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage strategy for the site is published in full on the planning portal and is currently subject to consideration via the planning process, including through consultee input from the Council's Flooding and Drainage team.

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Question 16

Please provide the assumptions (e.g., number of children per new house) that are used in school roll projections.

Response:

Please refer to separate note attached.

Question 17

What the comparable costs are for refurbishing and improving the existing Lenzie Academy on the present site compared to building a new school on Whitegates Park site? This would possibly be more useful if it were produced independently. I am sure some arrangements could be made locally for sports facilities to be made available to LA on its existing site.

Response:

The refurbishment of the existing school was considered during the original feasibility stage of the project. An estimate of costs associated with this alongside an assessment of advantages and disadvantages of this option is included within the feasibility report, available to view here:

https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/media/5szdlnzz/proposed-new-lenzie-academy-outcome-of-feasibility-study.pdf

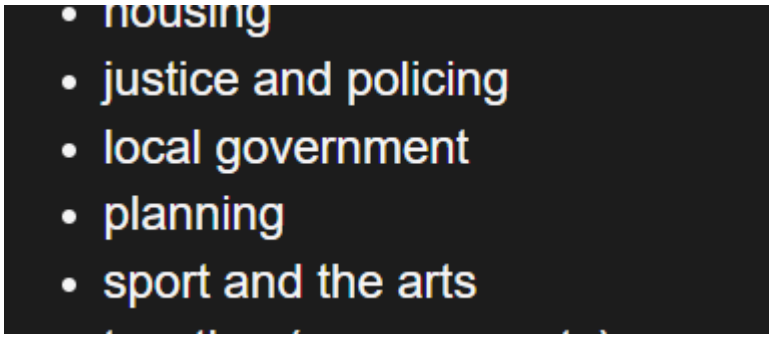
Question 18

EDC said in an October 2026 document from Ann Davie CEO: "Planning in Scotland is a devolved matter; any legal precedent in England has no jurisdiction in Scotland." Can EDC please provide their evidence for this?

Response:

A list of powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament is listed here:

https://www.parliament.scot/about/how-parliament-works/devolved-and-reserved-powers



Question 19

EDC said in an October 2026 document from Ann Davie CEO: "The site will not be developed for housing, as the proposed development at Myrtle Avenue is required in order to provide off-site mitigation measures." Can EDC explain how this is squared with the previous comment from Provost Renwick to the effect that "a future council could change its mind about whether to develop the site as housing"?

Response:

Officers cannot provide comment on behalf of the Provost or other Elected Members.

The planning strategy for the project has been widely publicised including during the several pre-planning application consultation events held by the Council for applications at Whitegates Park and Myrtle Avenue. Officers propose to mitigate the impact of the loss of open space and biodiversity at Whitegates Park through the creation of high quality open space and biodiversity area at Myrtle Avenue. Should the proposals receive planning consent, the Council as developer will have a legal obligation to deliver those proposals at Myrtle Avenue.

Question 20

EDC said in an October 2026 document from Ann Davie CEO: "…as noted above, the outfall pipe will not be underwater" - how can this be squared with figure 10 in the Kaya FRA which shows the level of the Bothlin Burn far above the level of the outflow?

Response:

The Floor Risk Assessment states that the ‘water levels are not predicted to exceed 50.8m AOD’ in the Bothlin Burn for the 1:200-year event (as indicated on Figure 10). The outfall pipe to the drain is at 50.80m so the pipe is above the 1:200-year fluvial flood event in the Bothlin Burn.

Question 21

EDC said in an October 2026 document from Ann Davie CEO: "The proposed design intends to raise the ground levels in the areas where below-ground attenuation tanks are proposed, which are themselves supported on a suspended piled slab structure.“ How can this be squared with what SEPA said in their second response ? "As the proposal is not considered an exception under Policy 22, no mitigation should be undertaken, such as, for example, raising the area above the fluvial floodplain or provision of compensatory storage. This is because it would be contrary to the more sustainable flood management approach of avoidance."

Response:

The attenuation tanks are for the proposed surface water runoff and are parts of the SuDS system. They are not for fluvial floodplain compensatory storage. The ‘more sustainable approach of avoidance’ that SEPA mention must refer to the unblocking of the downstream culvert, which is currently causing surface water flooding of the drain, and provision of SuDS for the proposed site. The design provides this.

Question 22

EDC said in an October 2026 document from Ann Davie CEO: "The use of attenuation crates as part of the wider SUDS design is entirely consistent with Council policy and the approach undertaken on other similar developments.“ How can this be squared with what the Council say in their 2015 Guidance for Developers document "East-Dunbartonshire-Flooding-and-Drainage-Development-Guidance-Rev-B-Final-1.pdf", which says "EDC will require that no SUDS features should be proposed within a functioning flood plain to avoid the risk of:

- SUDS features becoming redundant during possible inundation from adjacent watercourses.

- Risk of contaminants from the development washing to the adjacent watercourses during such events."

Response:

The SuDS are not within the floodplain. Therefore, the EDC guidance on placement of SuDS features has been complied with.

Question 23

EDC said in an October 2026 document from Ann Davie CEO:

“National planning guidance requires the drainage systems to be designed to contain the surface runoff for a 1:100 year plus climate change rainfall event.”

Can EDC please reply to the flowing three assertions regarding this statement:

1) It misattributes the jurisdiction: There is no Scottish national planning guidance setting a 1:100 year containment rule; that is an English DEFRA standard.

2) It understates the Scottish statutory baseline: Scottish national planning policy under NPF4 Policy 22 and SEPA guidelines mandate that flood risk, resilience, and surface water impact must be evaluated against the 1:200 year (0.5% AEP) plus climate change event, not 1:100 years.

3) It misrepresents EDC's own local rules: While EDC’s local developer guidance mentions a 1:100 year threshold for internal system overflow, it explicitly mandates that any overland flows during a 1:200 year event must be fully and safely contained on site without affecting existing infrastructure

Response:

The drainage design for the site has been developed in accordance with the Council’s own guidance / design standards:

4.4 Peak Flow Run-Off Rate

The peak flow run-off rate from the proposed development site for a 1 in 100 year (1%) storm event shall not exceed peak rate run-off from the undeveloped site for a 1 in 2 year (50%) storm event. For developments that are located within a previously developed site (brownfield), the peak flow run-off rate from the development to any drain, sewer or watercourse for a 1 in 2 year event and the 1 in 100 year event must not exceed the greenfield run off rate for the site during those same events (as agreed by EDC). The proposed development’s peak run-off rate at a minimum must either mimic or better the previous developments rate if the Greenfield run-off is greater.