

I would like to lodge an objection.

I object to the proposed development at Nelson Park, Armadale for the following reasons:

Unsuitable site for development – at the previous hearing Committee member Councillor Harry Cartmill stated in his summation that “it was clear from the points raised by the residents that Nelson Park should never have been designated for development, but since it was earmarked for development already I vote for the proposal”. The site is a significant flood risk area and requires supplementary drainage on an ongoing basis. During the last hearing for planning permission, the council conceded there are known drainage issues and the drainage system implemented by Taylor Wimpey was not fit for purpose and deficient to support the existing houses; definitely not a further 26. The proposed solution to the flood risk is to raise the land up by 3m leading to a 45 degree incline into a stagnant trench within 1m of a proposed large family dwelling and existing dwellings. This proposal creates an environmental / health and safety risk. Also to prepare the land would require excessive resources i.e. over 1500 lorries of type 1 to fill the land begging questions around traffic management and road safety for residents. This will also give rise to significant additional costs to the tax payer for materials, transport and site clean up. I would ask – has a cost / benefit analysis of other suitable sites been undertaken? Is this the most cost effective site to build on?

Loss of amenities - Several questions raised by residents still have not been addressed e.g. lack of street-scape diagrams available during the consultation, which would show the considerable elevation of the proposed 2 storey buildings in relation to existing bungalow dwellings? Has this substantial elevation been taken into consideration in essential sunlight restriction calculations and have these even been carried out? In order to build the houses several trees will be felled and a site of significant nature conservation removed. There are no plans to address safety and noise during construction.

Loss of greenspace - the site has already been cordoned off and can no longer be used, despite planning consent not being granted yet. The only remaining green space in [REDACTED] is a field with no fences or barriers, situated directly adjacent to the main road and A801, making it dangerous for children to use. In addition, the maintenance of this area is undertaken by the factors and paid for by the residents of [REDACTED] not the council. There are no houses under 3 bedrooms in [REDACTED], the base tariff for builders to the council for a 3 bedroom is £1500 increasing depending on size of house. There are 240 houses in [REDACTED] for which the builders contributed a minimum of £1500, resulting in upwards of £360k paid to the council with no amenities provided in return. It begs the question - what have the council done with the money from Wimpey and Persimmon? The proposal states even the contribution from additional houses will go towards amenities at St Anthony's Park. According to the council the compensating site for loss of this free green space are the 3G pitches at Armadale academy, over 2 miles from the current site which have to be pre booked and paid for and don't promote free play. The 3G pitches were built to fulfil an educational requirement and not to meet WLC outdoor facilities strategy. Therefore the development is in contravention of Holyrood's Scottish Planning Policy which says "Planning Authorities should support, protect and enhance open space and opportunities for sport and

recreation". This policy goes on to say "poor maintenance and neglect should not be used to justify development of open space which may otherwise be potentially functional and valued". Nelson Park has been neglected to the point that it no longer enjoys even a simple grass cutting service. Since the construction of North Fells, nothing effective has been done to fix the resulting extensive drainage problems on the site.

Infrastructure constraints – the schools in Armadale are already full to capacity with c 200 less school places than school age children in Armadale. Armadale Primary has the highest roll of any school in West Lothian and has sacrificed its library and other essential resources to be used as classrooms. It is full to such an extent that residents are forced (not choose) to school their children elsewhere to ensure adequate resources and smaller class sizes giving enhanced opportunity for learning. Also, Armadale Group Practice GP surgery is bursting at the seams and have confirmed they will not be expanding the practice, there are no proposals to build a new GP surgery. Additional housing means additional residents and will compound the issue, we simply do not have the infrastructure to support more residents.

Lack of transparency of planning process – I raised this point at the last hearing and agree that the council has met the minimum legal obligations in advertising the proposal. However, the council have not been transparent or acted with integrity. All documentation refers to the site as Nelson Park and unless you are indigenous to Armadale and over 50 years old, it is unlikely you would know which site was referred to. All advertising has been of minimal type size and not consistent with other advertisements for roadworks etc. Also, despite conceding the objections raised by residents are valid the Council has gone ahead with planning consent. I would ask – does this sound like the Council are acting with integrity? If this lack of transparency happened in the corporate world the government and all associated bodies would be after blood, but it appears the same rules do not apply to the council. These are the people we have elected to look after our interests! The objective appears to be meeting commitments to build 1000 new socials houses regardless of costs either social or economic. We have learned nothing from Edinburgh council's disastrous management of the trams process. The council has approved this proposal without adhering to all council policies (not everyone who placed an official objection were invited to speak at the planning committee meeting where the plan was approved), is packed with genuine material concerns raised by surrounding residents, but not answered by either the council or developers.

Sheila Smith

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ARMADALE

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