

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE SITING AS A PLANNING COMMITTEE: 17 APRIL 2007

**07/0073/LA: CHANGE OF USE OF VACANT FORMER COMMUNITY CENTRE
TO FORM YOUTH STRATEGY BASE
AT: FORMER ALTONHILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, ALTONHILL AVENUE,
KILMARNOCK
BY: EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET

1. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

1.1 The proposals constitute a change of use of the vacant former community centre to form a youth strategy base for the Council's Educational and Social Services Department. The Council's Educational and Social Services Department advises that Youth Strategy offers educational and social support to young people from primary one to secondary fourth year (5-15 years olds) who cannot sustain a full time mainstream education. There are currently three bases – Kilmarnock and Cumnock for secondary first and second year and Shortlees for primary and secondary third and fourth year children and young people. The Shortlees base is being phased out and a replacement sought for educational provision for third and fourth year pupils. It is proposed the previous Altonhill Community Centre becomes the secondary third and fourth year base. In total it would offer a service to approximately 12 young people.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that a Notice of Intention to Develop be submitted to the Scottish Ministers in accordance with the Development by Planning Authorities Regulations 1981-1984. This proposal is considered to be acceptable subject to further details being agreed with the Head of Planning and Economic Development as indicated on the attached sheet.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 As indicated at Section 5 of the report, the application is considered to accord with the policies of the Approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and the Adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan. Therefore given the terms of Sections 25

and 37 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the application should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 As indicated at Section 6 of the report there are material considerations relevant and they are supportive of the development. None of the consultation responses indicate the proposed development should be refused whilst the comments of the objector are not material relative to their concerns that the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the continuing and future residential developments in Altonhill, whilst the concerns of the objector relative to potential criminal activities of young people, whilst noted, have not been echoed by Strathclyde Police, who have verbally advised they have no objections to the proposed development. The proposals will bring into active use the former Altonhill Community Centre building which has been vacant for a number of years. As such the proposals will provide a sustainable use for this vacant property and could also provide a community facility for the local area out with the opening hours of the Youth Strategy base.

Alan Neish
Head of Planning and Economic Development

Note: This document combines key sections of the associated report for quick reference and should not in itself be considered as having been the basis for recommendation preparation or decision making by the Planning Authority.

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Report by Head of Planning and Economic Development

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present for determination a Local Authority application which is to be considered by the Development Services Committee under the scheme of delegation as it is subject to an objection and will require to be notified to the Scottish Ministers.

2. APPLICATION DETAILS

2.1 **Site Description:** The application site is 0.39 acres in area and comprises the single storey former Altonhill Community Centre. The former Community Centre forms part of a terraced unit which includes a newsagents and a hot food takeaway. The application site is bound by a play area with housing beyond to the north; to the south by retail units and housing beyond; to the east by dwellings and to the west by dwellings and recreational ground.

2.2 **Proposed Development:** The proposals constitute a change of use of the vacant former community centre to form a youth strategy base for the Council's Educational and Social Services Department. The Council's Educational and Social Services Department advises that Youth Strategy offers educational and social support to young people from primary one to secondary fourth year (5-15 years olds) who cannot sustain a full time mainstream education. There are currently three bases – Kilmarnock and Cumnock for secondary first and second year and Shortlees for primary and secondary third and fourth year children and young people. The Shortlees base is being phased out and a replacement sought for educational provision for third and fourth year pupils. It is proposed the previous Altonhill Community Centre becomes the secondary third and fourth year base. In total it would offer a service to approximately 12 young people.

3. CONSULTATIONS AND ISSUES RAISED

3.1 East Ayrshire Council's Roads and Transportation Division and Environmental Health and Waste Management Division have no objections to the proposed development.

Noted.

3.2 The North West Kilmarnock Community Council have not responded to their consultation at the time of writing this report.

Noted.

3.3 Strathclyde Police have verbally advised that they would have no objection to the proposed development and would generally be supportive towards community facilities being brought back into use and support facilities which prepare young people for re-entering mainstream education and provide life skills to prepare them for employment.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 There is one objection to the proposed development following the statutory neighbour notification and public advertisement process. The main points of objection are summarised as follows:

4.2 The objector believes that the Council will bring undesirables into the area who are excluded from mainstream education mainly through criminal activities. The proposal would be a recipe for disaster as these young people have already shown their disregard for authority by their previous actions and will surely vent their frustration on the local surrounding area.

As stated in the applicant's supporting statement the proposal is for a youth strategy base to provide life-skills and work skills to enable the young people using the centre to re-enter mainstream education or prepare for employment. The proposals seek to re-use an existing former community centre and as such the applicant has advised that out with the operating hours the centre will be available for use by the local community, thereby providing a sustainable use for a vacant former community centre. It should also be noted that Strathclyde Police have also verbally advised they have no objections to the proposed development.

4.3 Altonhill is in the middle of regeneration and re-inventing itself as a highly desirable place to stay after years of neglect and non-investment by the Council. This proposal will have an adverse impact on the private housing currently built and any future developments

Each planning application requires to be determined on its own merits and as such the objectors concerns relative to the proposed development's impact on residential property values or the viability of future residential developments is not a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

5. ASSESSMENT AGAINST DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of this application the development plan comprises the Approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan (EALP).

Approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan (AJSP)

5.2 Under Policy ADS 2 East Ayrshire Council shall promote Kilmarnock as the primary location for all major residential, economic, commercial, cultural, educational and community development.

As the proposal is for educational/ community development on an existing site in Kilmarnock it would accord with Policy ADS 2 above.

Finalised Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2006

5.3 Policy COMM 1 (A) Regeneration states that the three Ayrshire Councils shall give priority to proposals that regenerate existing communities.

It is considered that this proposed community/ educational facility accords with Policy COMM 1 (A).

Adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan (EALP)

5.4 Policy CSI is supportive of the proposed development as it states that it will respond positively to the changing needs and demands for community and educational facilities wherever possible, existing facilities will be retained and improved and support and encouragement will be given to all other community facility and public service organisations to maintain and improve the services they provide.

As the proposal would involve the conversion of existing premises to other community and educational uses it would be acceptable in terms of Policy CS 1.

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The principal material considerations relevant to the determination of the application are the consultations received which are detailed in Section 3 of the report and the supporting statement submitted by the applicant.

Consultation Replies and Representations Received

6.2 The consultation responses do not raise any issues that indicate that the application should be refused. The concerns of the objector, whilst noted, are not material relative to their concerns that the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the continuing and future residential developments in Altonhill, whilst the concerns of the objector relative to potential criminal activities of young people, have not been echoed by Strathclyde Police, who have verbally advised they have no objections to the proposed development.

Applicant's Supporting Statement

Educational and Social Services advise that Youth Strategy has existed in East Ayrshire since 1997.

The service is staffed by a Manager, teaching staff, a Parent Support Worker, Support Assistants and administration staff.

The aims are to ensure children and young people become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors
- Responsible citizens

Youth Strategy offers educational and social support to young people from primary one to secondary fourth year (5-15 years olds) who cannot sustain a full time mainstream education. There are currently three bases – Kilmarnock and Cumnock for secondary first and second year and Shortlees for primary and secondary third and fourth year children and young people. The Shortlees base is being phased out and a replacement sought for educational provision for third and fourth year pupils.

Each support programme is individually tailored to individual child/young persons needs. Additional support is also offered through a Parent Support Worker (PSW) and Support Assistants (SA). They provide the social work element of Youth Strategy and offer individual and group support to parents and young people to assist them to manage home and community relationships in a more positive way.

With primary and secondary first and second year children and young people the primary aim is to re-integrate them back into mainstream education on a full time basis. Secondary third and fourth year young people are more likely to end their education within a Youth Strategy base. Youth Strategy support this group of young people to:

- Gain academic or vocational accreditation
- Access further education
- Secure employment
- Undertake further training

Youth Strategy is a community resource which is known to offer better outcomes to young people than a more expensive external placement.

It is proposed the previous Altonhill Community Centre becomes the secondary third and fourth year base. In total it would offer a service to approximately 12 young people.

The staff to young person ratio depends on the needs of the young person which can involve individual support but will never exceed 1 member of staff to 6 young people. Initially young people are transported to and from the base but would eventually be encouraged to use public transport. The base would be used by Youth Strategy between 8.30am and 6pm. There after with appropriate lets the community could utilise the rooms within the base.

As curricular programmes are individually tailored it would be rare for any young person to spend their entire day in the base. They access taster courses at college and outdoor learning (team building, problem solving, and leadership).

Within the base there will be two class areas, a meeting room, kitchen, toilets and office areas. This will allow up to 5 staff to be based at Altonhill. The kitchen area will allow young people to learn independent living skills and the new facilities will allow a broader range of curricular activity – art and media studies.

Other services such as school nurses, psychological services and others who would visit a mainstream school, will also visit Youth Strategy.

7. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are financial and legal implications for the Council in the determination of this application as the Council are both the applicant and owner of the application site.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 As indicated at Section 5 of the report, the application is considered to accord with the policies of the Approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and the Adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan. Therefore given the terms of Sections 25 and 37 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the application should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8.2 As indicated at Section 6 of the report there are material considerations relevant and they are supportive of the development. None of the consultation responses indicate the proposed development should be refused whilst the comments of the objector are not material relative to their concerns that the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the continuing and future residential developments in Altonhill, whilst the concerns of the objector relative to potential criminal activities of young people, whilst noted, have not been echoed by Strathclyde Police, who have verbally advised they have no objections to the proposed development. The proposals will bring into active use the former Altonhill Community Centre building which has been vacant for a number of years. As such the proposals will provide a sustainable use for this vacant property and could also provide a community facility for the local area out with the opening hours of the Youth Strategy base.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is recommended that a Notice of Intention to Develop be submitted to the Scottish Ministers in accordance with the Development by Planning Authorities Regulations 1981-1984. This proposal is considered to be acceptable subject to further details being agreed with the Head of Planning and Economic Development as indicated on the attached sheet.

**Alan Neish
Head of Planning and Economic Development**

30 March 2007
(BD/SA)
FV-AN

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application Forms and Plans.
2. Statutory Notices/Certificates.

3. Consultation Responses.
4. Approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan.
5. Adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above papers please contact Barry Douglas on 01563 576770

Implementation Officer: Dave Morris

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

07/0073/LA

Site of Proposal:	Altonhill Community Centre Altonhill Avenue KILMARNOCK KA3 1PW
Nature of Proposal:	Proposed change of use of vacant Former Community Centre to form Youth Strategy Base
Name & Address of Applicant:	Director of Educational and Social Services Council HQ London Road KILMARNOCK KA3 7BU
Name & Address of Agent:	Iain Barker Council Offices Lugar CUMNOCK KA18 3JQ

DPOs Reference: BD/SA

The above LOCAL AUTHORITY application should be granted.

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PLANNING OFFICE IN KILMARNOCK. FOR INFORMATION ON
VIEWING PLEASE CONTACT (01563) 576790.**