

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 January 2021 19:14
To: localplan
Subject: GSGALA 010 - Development Comments

CAUTION: External Email

Dear SBC

I would like to submit the following comments regarding GSGALA010 - the proposed redevelopment of Galashiels Academy on the Key Greenspace that is the Scott Park.

Galashiels Academy is certainly in need of redevelopment to provide a modern, fit-for-purpose multi-year education campus that reflects the needs of Galashiels and provides the education facilities that are much required. However, I do not believe that the land-grab of Scott Park's grass expanse is the correct approach and think that the existing site appraisals have not made sufficient consideration of other options within the existing High School plot. I am 100% in favour of a school redevelopment but not in the current form.

Scott Park is one of the only greenspaces in Galashiels; a town that has limited access for residents to areas of grass that provide families with an area for children to run around / develop safely (cycling etc), have picnics and enjoy fringe-urban nature. The Park's importance at times such as these is critical and the remodelling of Scott Park would be detrimental to many residents' health.

Planning Policy EP11: Protection of Key Greenspace is open for interpretation but is quite clear in its aim to protect Key Greenspace areas / sporting areas. From reading LDP documents, SBC policy, reviewing the Scott Hobbs 'interpretation of policy' document and considering the Site Appraisals I do not believe this development proposal should be agreed given the terms of EP11, even with the social / community justification of a more modern High School.

1) The proposed school development will not be 'ancillary to the principal use of the site' as play area (please note the use of Scott Park for sporting meets and training grounds such as the Harriers)

2) the proposed development does not affect / claim a minor part of the park / grass - this would therefore significantly affect the use of the greenspace. In addition to this, the grass area that would be lost would be replaced in Hectares by an enlarged (5ha to 7.2ha) 'park' but this would be woodland margin and not grass open field. There is sufficient uncertainty as to the 'quality' of this replacement as it would not give the people of Galashiels the same access to open-space. In addition to this woodland paths are more dangerous for older-aged walkers in winter / wet weather which would be discriminatory.

3) there is not an excess of grass areas / playing areas in the town of Galashiels (Victoria Park / Public Park) and the removal of this key grass area will be detrimental to the town's residents.

Perhaps the development appraisal should include a consultation with the local landowner (Hollybush) regarding the use of woodlands that are of the Lower Gala Hill wood (that to the South of the existing buildings, before the Hollybush road). The area, once cleared of trees,

could provide sufficient space for modern 2g / 3g playing fields and this would allow for the building of a new education complex on the current playing fields. Was this considered and if not, has a full site appraisal been properly conducted...??

I am not against the Council's commitment to build a new campus; however i believe that further consideration should be paid to additional options for the existing site.

Thank you

Jamie Frere-Scott