

Eastwood Park Masterplan - Losing the plot: Council plans could see allotments become car park

Posted by RM64 - 30 Jan 2020 11:50

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A consultants' study for East Renfrewshire has suggested 'moving' a park's allotment site, Catriona Stewart

Losing the plot: Council plans could see allotments become car park

CAMPAIGNERS have condemned an "absurd" proposal that would see a council spend £1.7 million to destroy a thriving allotment site and replace it with a car park.

The idea is part of a "master plan" put together by consultants on behalf of East Renfrewshire Council that would extensively redevelop Eastwood Park.

The park currently houses a leisure centre and theatre, the council's own HQ and St Ninian's High School.

More than 100 people who use Eastwood Nursery Allotment Association's (ENAA) site are calling on councillors to rethink the proposals.

Colin Stange, chairman of ENAA, said: "Local residents have invested more than eight years of time and money in transforming this patch of waste ground into a thriving and environmentally friendly community space.

"It is used not only by individuals but also by the high school and additional needs pupils from Isobel Mair school. We have a sensory garden, and a recently planted orchard with varieties of Scottish fruit trees.

“It is beyond belief that anyone would recommend covering that in concrete and parking cars on it, in this day and age.

“It seems a very strange thing for East Renfrewshire to be contemplating in the year when Glasgow is playing host to the COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference.

“We hope the council will see sense and reject this absurd proposal.”

The report merely says the allotments do not “add value” to the park.

The planners suggest they could be moved to a nearby sports pitch currently used by the school.

Were the site moved, the association’s 60 ploholders would lose the results of years of effort and investment.

They also point out this would also mean the waste of more than £100,000 of public funding which has gone into the site since it was set up in 2012, including grants of £75,000 and £21,000 from Whitelee Windfarm Fund, £10,000 from the Big Lottery fund and £5,000 from the council.

Consultants were commissioned after the council’s director of environment Andrew Cahill said a vision was being developed to create a new park with a mix of different land uses.

In a further report to the council last month, Mr Cahill said the consultants’ ideas were merely options. “They are not firm recommendations... they are merely suggestions/possibilities.”

ENAA members are hoping this is the case and councillors will recognise the importance of their site to the area.

No-one from the allotments has been consulted about any of the proposals and the committee says it has had no response to a request for the council to meet with plot-holders to discuss them.

Mr Stanage added: “Surely a community facility involving dozens of people in active, environmentally friendly, inclusive and welcoming activities, with a strong community spirit deserves better than that?”

“The alternative site is much too small and schools would likely have no space either even though our lease specifies the inclusion of schools.

“But you can’t just ‘move’ an allotment site either. It’s like saying you can move Rouken Glen park a bit to the left.”

Friends of the Earth Scotland’s Air Pollution Campaigner Gavin Thomson said: “Concreting over allotments to provide new car parking spaces is a very concerning proposal.

“Councils and government have known for years about the devastating impact of air pollution on our health yet they are unwilling to make the necessary changes that will lessen the stranglehold of cars on our lives.”

A council spokesman said: “The consultant’s report presented to councillors in December 2019 is simply a list of options for the council to consider.

“The report identifies a wide range of options, but these are not firm recommendations.

“All options within the report will be discussed in due course. A crossparty member and officer working group is being established to consider the consultant’s report and will report back to the council in due course with proposals on the way forward.”

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Re: Eastwood Park Masterplan - Losing the plot: Council plans could see allotments become car park

Posted by RM64 - 30 Jan 2020 12:00

Published Barrhead News On Line 30/1/2020-

By Tristan Stewart-Robertson @srtristan Chief Reporter

East Renfrewshire Council's consultants recommend turning Eastwood Park allotments into car park

COUNCIL bosses have been looking at plans that would rip up a thriving allotment site... and replace it with a car park.

East Renfrewshire Council asked a consultancy firm to report on how it could improve Eastwood Park, which includes allotments used by more than 100 people.

The plans show four different ideas to redevelop the greenspace - and two of the four recommend using £1.7 million to destroy the popular plots.

It comes as Glasgow City Council has revealed plans to cut car use in Pollok Country Park and make the park more environmentally friendly.

Colin Stanage, chairman of Eastwood Nursery Allotments Association (ENAA), said: "Local residents have invested more than eight years of time and money in transforming this patch of waste ground into a thriving and environmentally friendly community space.

"It is used not only by individuals but also by the high school and additional needs pupils from Isobel Mair school.

"We have a sensory garden, and a recently planted orchard with varieties of Scottish fruit trees.

"It is beyond belief that anyone would recommend covering that in concrete and parking cars on it, in this day and age.

"The report the council has commissioned even talks about the need to reduce car use and change people's transport habits.

“It seems a very strange thing for East Renfrewshire to be contemplating in the year when Glasgow is playing host to the COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference.

“We hope the council will see sense and reject this absurd proposal.”

The idea is part of a ‘masterplan’ put together by consultants on behalf of East Renfrewshire Council that would extensively redevelop Eastwood Park.

The park currently houses a leisure centre and theatre, the council’s own HQ and St Ninian’s High School.

Two of the four main options proposed by the council’s consultants involve the demolition and relocation of the council offices, as part of a plan to upgrade the sports centre and theatre, and make cosmetic improvements to the approach to the school, which a report says is ‘dominated’ by existing car parking.

Consultants suggest the total project will involve construction costs of between £31 and £42 million.

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Re: Eastwood Park Masterplan - Losing the plot: Council plans could see allotments become car park

Posted by RM64 - 04 Feb 2020 11:02

Published Glasgow Evening Times On Line

30th January

By Catriona Stewart @LadyCatHT Columnist/reporter

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with a car park.

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Consultants suggest the total project will involve construction costs of between £31 and £42 million.

But all but one of the options to be presented to councillors involve demolishing the allotment site - which was set up with council backing just seven years ago - to make way for a £1.7m car park for teachers at the school.

The report says the allotments do not "add value" to the park, despite none of the allotment holders being consulted.

The planners suggest allotments could be moved to a nearby sports pitch currently used by the school.

But members of volunteer-run ENAA say this is unrealistic, with the new location both unsuitable, and smaller than the current site, meaning many would lose their plots.

Were the site moved, the association's 60 ploholders would lose the results of years of effort and investment.

But they also point out this would also mean the waste of more than £100,000 of public funding which has gone into the site since it was set up in 2012.

This includes grants of £75,000 and £21,000 from Whitelee Windfarm Fund, £10,000 from the Big Lottery fund and £5,000 from the council itself.

East Renfrewshire Council had previously supported ENAA to take on a disused former garden nursery which had become an overgrown wilderness and turn it into a community growing area.

Consultants were commissioned after the council's director of Environment Andrew Cahill said a vision was being developed to create a new park with a mix of different land uses.

However in a further report to council in December, Mr Cahill said: "The report is much wider than simply a proposal for a leisure centre and theatre in Eastwood Park.

"It is aspirational and considers a vision and identity for Eastwood Park in the future including potential options for all the buildings and land within Eastwood Park to optimise the future of the park."

However he said the consultants's ideas were merely options. "They are not firm recommendations... they are merely suggestions/possibilities."

ENAA members are hoping this is the case and councillors will recognise the importance of their site to the area.

In relation to the allotments the report gives little consideration to alternatives although it mentions an 'additional option' which would see a car park established in a different area of the park 'in lieu of the allotments'.

But no-one from the allotments has been consulted about any of the proposals and the committee says it has had no response to a request for the council to meet with plot-holders to discuss them.

Mr Stanage added: "Surely a community facility involving dozens of people in active, environmentally friendly, inclusive and welcoming activities, with a strong community spirit deserves better than that?

"Especially when so many people have invested both time and considerable amounts of money.

"The alternative site is much too small, leaving the site with no space for greenhouses or communal areas and schools would likely have no space either even though our lease specifies the inclusion of

schools.

“But you can’t just ‘move’ an allotment site either.

“It’s like saying you can move Rouken Glen park a bit to the left.”

Friends of the Earth Scotland’s Air Pollution Campaigner Gavin Thomson said: “Concreting over allotments to provide new car parking spaces is a very concerning proposal.

“To reduce air pollution, to address the climate emergency, to live in a healthier, safer, happier place, we need to move away from car dependence.

“This proposal should be amended to prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport connections, restrict private car use, and ensure Eastwood Park is a model for sustainable green spaces.

“Councils and Government have known for years about the devastating impact of air pollution on our health yet they are unwilling to make the necessary changes that will lessen the stranglehold of cars on our lives.”

An East Renfrewshire Council spokesman said: “The consultant’s report presented to councillors in December 2019 is simply a list of options for the council to consider.

“The report identifies a wide range of options, but these are not firm recommendations.

“All options within the report will be discussed in due course.

“A cross-party member and officer working group is being established to consider the consultant’s report and will report back to the council in due course with proposals on the way forward.”

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