

St Ninian's High School

Parent Council Meeting

10th February 2022

Present: J. Stewart (Joint Chair) ("JS")
S. Reid (Joint Chair)
A. Wilmott (Vice-Chair)
D. Wilson ("DW")
J. McLaughlin
S. MacConnell
C. Umeh
J. Mackie
M. Pagliocca
K. Adams
G. McLaughlin (Church Representative)

Apologies: C. Wallis
K. McDiarmid
J. Miller
T. Gordon
P. Hessett
K. Kelly

School: G. O'Neil (Head Teacher) ("Mr O'Neil" or "HT")
J. Cumming
M. Gallagher

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer

The Office-Bearers ("OB") extended a warm welcome to all the Parent Council ("PC") members, and members of the Parent Forum, in attendance. JS led the meeting in an opening prayer

On behalf of the PC, JS also extended congratulations to Archbishop-Elect William Nolan on his recent nomination as successor to the late Archbishop Philip Tartaglia.

2. Apologies

Note was taken of the PC members in attendance and of intimated apologies.

3. Adjustment/Approval of Previous Minutes

Draft Minutes of the PC meeting on 13th January 2022 (adjusted as at 29th January 2022), were tabled for adjustment/approval. No adjustments were intimated. The Minutes were approved.

The OB undertook to publish the approved Minutes on the PC website.

4. Update on Progress with Agreed Action Points

The OB updated the meeting on progress achieved with "Agreed Action Points" from the previous meeting:

4.1 Improving Parental Engagement

Social media accounts (Facebook & Twitter) have now been set up for the PC, and are fully operational. MP has kindly agreed to monitor their use for the time being.

The PC's new Gmail account is fully operational to receive communications from parents and third parties. The email address is: pcstniniansgiffnock@gmail.com

The PC's webpage (on the School website) is still in the process of being overhauled (by MP on behalf of the OB), to populate the site with static documents, recent Minutes of PC meetings and other material likely to be of interest to the Parent Forum. This work should be completed shortly.

The PC's first Newsletter (dated January 2022) was published last month.

Positive feedback has been received to all methods of communication, including questions from parents for discussion at PC meetings.

The HT kindly offered to assist with parental engagement by circulating details of the PC's FB, Twitter and Gmail accounts in the School's next parent-wide Newsletter communication.

The use of Zoom (for PC meetings), having previously been trialled with mixed success, will remain under review.

AGREED ACTION:

The HT shall publicise details of the PC's new FB, Twitter and Gmail accounts in the School's next parent-wide Newsletter communication.

MP to complete the re-design, update and re-population of the PC webpage (on the School website), with IT support from Mrs Boyle; and to devise an efficient mechanism regularly to update and refresh the content.

4.2 Eastwood Park Development

Last month, DW kindly circulated to PC members the East Renfrewshire Council ("ERC") Planning Committee Report that was issued on 19 January 2022. Outline Planning Consent has been granted for ERC's proposed development of Eastwood Park, subject to conditions.

The HT advised that meeting that he continues to undertake an assessment (i) of vocational opportunities arising from the construction phase of the proposed development and (ii) of the School's wider estate/resource needs and deficiencies.

As regards the former, the HT reported his understanding that the availability of such vocational opportunities is to form an express condition of the tender process with contractors.

Further discussion was held over to later in the meeting (see para. 5, below).

4.3 The Scottish Government Health & Wellbeing Census

The OB has continued to maintain the PC's opposition to the Census, both in writing and orally to interested parties.

The OB also attended the meeting of the ERC PC Chairs Forum on 2 February 2022.

Further discussion was held over to later in the meeting (see para. 7, below).

4.4 Advanced Higher School Concert

The HT reported that he continues to actively review the possibility of re-arranging the Advanced Higher Music Concert to a later date, possibly towards the very end of May 2022, given the pressure on the School diary presented by (among other things) the School Prom (currently scheduled for Wednesday 1 June 2022, which is earlier than in previous years), the Jubilee Holiday and the scheduled Graduation Event.

AGREED ACTION:

HT shall continue to actively review the possibility of re-arranging the Advanced Higher Music Concert to a later date, possibly in or around May 2022.

5. **The Proposed Development in Eastwood Park**

By way of background, it will be recalled that last year, without prior notification to the School or the PC, ERC lodged an application seeking planning permission for a substantial development within Eastwood Park (namely, the construction of a new leisure centre to be operated by a separate Trust entity).

The planning application causes concern to the PC for three main reasons:

- (i) the proposed demolition and construction works raise safety concerns for School pupils, staff and parents;
- (ii) the proposed development seem likely to cause substantial traffic disruption and related risks, both during construction and after completion, due to the limited access points to and from the Park; and
- (iii) the proposed development abuts and encroaches upon ground and amenity currently enjoyed by St Ninian's High School pupils, and

substantially curtails the scope for future expansion of the School's outdoor sports facilities and academic accommodation.

The PC lodged "Representations" intimating objections/concerns to aspects of ERC's planning application specifically, concerning safe access and construction management, and also seeking to extract and secure certain minimum benefits for St Ninian's pupils from the proposed development by way of recompense for the prejudice to the School caused by the proposed development.

At this evening's Meeting, DW reported to the PC members that, on 19 January 2022, ERC's Planning Committee granted Outline Planning Consent for the proposed development.

The OB tabled extracts from the Report of the ERC Planning Committee dated 19 January 2022 (see Annex 1). The extracts show the extent of the proposed development.

DW reported that aspects of the PC's "Representations" were referred to in the Planning Committee's Report.

DW reported that the next step in the process was for a "Construction Management Plan" to be prepared by ERC.

The PC members expressed concern that, given the previous failure to notify and consult, the School and the PC may again find themselves side-lined by ERC, this time in the drafting of the Construction Management Plan and in the future development process. The PC members agreed that the PC had a legitimate interest in being satisfied that the health and safety of pupils and staff at the School was being adequately protected – and that, accordingly, the PC was entitled to be satisfied that the drafting of the Construction Management Plan was adequate to protect pupils and staff. PC members expressed the view that a "cordon sanitaire" required to be in place to separate the construction works from the pupils and staff, such as by restricting construction traffic on site to specified times outwith school hours. Various ideas, mooted by ERC's consultants at meetings with the PC's sub-group, were thought to be worth re-visiting, in order that they might be expressly articulated within the Construction Management Plan.

DW recommended that the PC should make contact with the ERC Planning Officer in order to seek to influence the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, with a view to ensuring the health and well-being of the School's staff and pupils.

The HT confirmed that the health and safety of staff and pupils was also his primary concern – and that, to that end, he too would contact ERC to reiterate the School's interest in the drafting of a suitable Construction Management Plan to ensure that it adequately protected the health and well-being of the School's staff and pupils.

It was suggested that enquiries be made of ERC to clarify ERC's "Master Plan" for Eastwood Park, specifically ERC's plans (if any) for the School, including issues such as car parking, the façade, expansion, etc.)

AGREED ACTION

The OB shall contact ERC (i) to reiterate our interest in the development, (ii) to request an update (including estimated timescale) on the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, (iii) to request the opportunity to be consulted on the drafting of that Plan, and (iv) to seek clarification of ERC's "master plan" (if any) for Eastwood Park (specifically ERC's plans, if any, as to the future development of the School).

The HT shall contact ERC to request (i) an update (including estimated timescale) on the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, and (ii) clarification and assurances regarding the steps to be taken to safeguard the health and safety of staff and pupils during the construction phase.

The HT shall continue with his assessment of the needs and deficiencies of the School (in terms of physical estate and intangible resources) – and the extent to which any of those needs and deficiencies might be capable of being addressed (in whole or in part) by means of negotiated access to the completed leisure complex development.

6. The Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on Pupil Education and Well-being

The OB tabled an extract of the latest Scottish Government "Guidance" on applicable COVID restrictions in Schools.

The OB observed that the "Guidance" seems to be changing (and easing) weekly.

Parents should refer to the following link for the most up-to-date "Guidance":

<http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-school/pages/mitigations-in-detail/>

The OB noted that, shortly prior to the meeting, the Scottish Government had issued yet another announcement, to the effect that the "guidance" for children to remain masked in classrooms will be removed with effect from 28 February 2022, but shall remain applicable in social areas.

The OB and PC members positively welcomed the ongoing relaxation of COVID restrictions – specifically, the accelerating move towards the wholesale removal of masking within the School.

The HT also welcomed the ongoing relaxation in restrictions. He observed that he hoped to re-convene whole-year assemblies in early course. (Half-year assemblies are currently capable of being convened with suitable distancing.)

7. The Scottish Government's Census (on "Health & Wellbeing")

As previously instructed, the OB had maintained the PC's opposition to the Census, both in writing and orally.

The OB attended the ERC PC Chairs Forum (by video-conference call) on 2 February 2022.

In advance of that meeting, the OB had written to ERC setting out the PC's detailed objections to the Census and listing twelve specific questions, to which a response was invited.

No written response has yet been received from ERC to that communication.

The OB reported to the PC members on the information that had been notified to them (and the other PC Chairs) at the Forum video-conference call.

In summary, ERC notified the PC Chairs of the following:

- (i) ERC is "committed to the Census".
- (ii) ERC "will implement" the Census "between March and June 2022" (later confirmed as June 2022).
- (iii) The purpose of the Census is said to be to help ERC "understand local wellbeing and need"; to "help direct resources"; to "provide evidence to identify issues young people are concerned about" and to "tailor" learning, advice and support services.
- (iv) For pupils at the S4-S6 stages, ERC intends to "split" the Census into two parts.
- (v) The first part will be involve disclosure of the Scottish Candidate Number ("SCN") of those pupils; the second part will not.
- (vi) It is the second part that is intended to include questions on the sexual experiences and illicit substance use of children.
- (vii) These sexual questions are to be adapted (from the original Scottish Government wording) to remove some of the more graphic and explicit references (such as references to "anal sex" and "vaginal sex") and to substitute the term "sexual intercourse".
- (viii) Consent (to participate in the Census) will be sought only from parents/carers whose children are below 16.
- (ix) Consent will not be sought from parents/carers whose children are 16 years of age or over (supposedly on the basis that, according to ERC, those older children have the "right" to decide whether or not to participate in the Census without parental involvement).
- (x) Parents and children are at liberty to "opt out" of the Census.
- (xi) However, ERC intends to adopt a system of "assumed consent" - whereby, if a parent/child does not expressly "opt out", that parent/child shall be assumed to have consented to "opt in" to participation in the Census.
- (xii) ERC considers that statutory "GDPR" (data protection) obligations and safeguards do not apply to data collected in the second part of the Census (due, supposedly, to the alleged "anonymisation" of that second part).

- (xiii) ERC stated that there will be “very limited access” to the data provided by children in answer to the Census; that no one “other than a very small team” will see the data; and that the data will be shared with the Scottish Government through a secure “hub”.
- (xiv) ERC intends to “share” the Census questions with parents/carers in advance of seeking their consent. (When and how that is to be done was not disclosed at the Forum.)
- (xv) The Census will take the form of an on-line questionnaire completed during class time.
- (xvi) Children who are participating in the Census will not be obliged to answer every question in the Census – and will have the option to respond to questions with the answer: “Prefer not to say”.
- (xvii) Children who are not participating in the Census will “continue with another activity”.
- (xviii) Children and/or teachers (it was not clear which) can liaise with an “educational psychologist” if required.

The OB reported to the PC members that they remained dissatisfied with ERC’s responses at the PC Chairs Forum.

The OB reported that, in an open session after the ERC presentation, a chorus of disapproval and concern was expressed by multiple other PC Chairs, from both denominational and non-denominational schools across East Renfrewshire.

The OB reported that not one of the PC Chairs in attendance at the Forum spoke up in favour of the Census.

At this evening’s meeting, a further heated discussion ensued regarding the Census. Contributions were made by the PC members, and also from several members of the Parent Forum who had chosen to attend this evening’s PC meeting. All expressed opposition to the Census.

The OB were asked for an update on responses received from the local Councillors to the PC’s previous correspondence to them.

The OB reported that only two local Councillors have so far responded to express any support for the Census. They are:

Councillor Paul O’Kane (Ward 1)
Councillor Jim Fletcher (Provost) (Ward 3)

Others have responded to express outright opposition to the Census. Some have sought further information.

The remaining elected local Councillors have failed to express a view, one way or the other.

The OB noted the determined mood of the PC members (and of the Parent Forum members present at the meeting) in vigorous opposition to ERC's plans regarding the Census.

No one spoke in favour of the Census.

Various options were discussed by the PC members, including litigation against ERC by petition for judicial review.

It was agreed that, on behalf of the PC, the OB should continue to maintain the PC's vigorous opposition to the distribution of the Census (including in its revised format) within St Ninian's High School, including by the pursuit of satisfactory responses from ERC and all other interested parties.

Mr O'Neil kindly renewed his undertaking to the PC that he will not allow the Census to be circulated to pupils within St Ninian's High School prior to the next PC Meeting, to allow the PC the opportunity to pursue matters.

AGREED ACTION

On behalf of the PC, the Office-Bearers shall maintain the PC's vigorous opposition to the distribution of the Census (including in its revised format) within St Ninian's High School, including by the pursuit of satisfactory responses from ERC and all other interested parties.

Meantime, Mr O'Neil shall procure that the Census will not be circulated to pupils within St Ninian's High School prior to the next PC Meeting, to allow the PC the opportunity to pursue matters.

8. SQA Plans for Examinations

The OB tabled papers for PC members explaining "three Scenarios" for examinations in 2022. The OB reported that, according to information provided by Donna Gray of SQA at a presentation to the PC Chairs Forum (on 2 February 2022), SQA was presently planning for "Scenario 2".

That means that the central planning assumption is that the examinations for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will proceed for the session 2021-2022 but with certain modifications and additional measures (to be introduced at the end of March 2022).

For fuller and more up-to-date information, parents should refer to the SQA website, specifically the following links:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/99158.html>

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/98682.html>

9. Diocesan Parent Forum

The OB reminded PC members of the inaugural meeting of the Diocesan Parent Forum on 16 November 2021, a new initiative devised by Bishop J. Keenan and the Diocesan Department of Education.

At that meeting, the Bishop has sought to emphasise the importance of Gospel values in Catholic education and Schools, and of the primacy of parents as “first educators” of our children.

The Diocesan Parent Forum seeks to support parents in Catholic schools to embrace that role.

The next Diocesan Parent Forum meeting is on 9 May 2022.

PC members were invited to consider and submit questions or items for discussion in advance of that May meeting.

The OB will attend on behalf of the PC.

AGREED ACTION

All PC members to consider and submit questions or items for discussion in advance of that May meeting.

The OB will attend the next Diocesan Forum Meeting on behalf of the PC.

10. Head Teacher’s Report

Mr O’Neil reported that Mark Gallagher had been appointed as the new Depute Head Teacher for S1. Mr Gallagher was introduced to, and warmly welcomed by, the PC members.

The Preliminary Exams had been completed; they were in the course of being marked; reports would be issued next week; and parent evenings were due to take place thereafter (on-line).

With the easing of COVID restrictions, the HT was keen to get School trips up and running, wherever possible. A School trip by the Computing Department was at an advanced stage of preparation, involving around 80 children. The S2 Ski Trip was also being planned for the end of January 2023, with letters to be issued to parents soon. Many challenging issues still required to be addressed though, including the risk of lost deposits and very real difficulties obtaining viable insurance (robust against, for example, COVID-related cancellation). The School staff were working hard to try to address these issues. It was observed by the HT that such trips are greatly valued and supported by staff, but that they come at a cost, in terms of the staff time and effort.

The OB acknowledged, with gratitude, the significant effort invested by staff in School trips, and their value to the children.

The S6 Masquerade Ball had to be cancelled, but the School was looking to try to re-arrange it, perhaps to sometime in March.

Mr O'Neil reported that the School is not yet quite at the stage of allowing parents back into the School - but he hoped to do so just as soon as possible.

The Careers Convention will be run again on 24 February 2022. Again, this will be run on-line this year.

11. AOCB

Two issues were raised by members of the Parent Forum (in written communications to the PC Gmail account), namely:

- (i) The cancellation and time-keeping bus services; and
- (ii) The feasibility of releasing test papers to parents, along with test results.

As regards issue (i), concern was expressed by a number of parents that certain private bus services were repeatedly running late, and one of the services (the 38 service) had been reduced in frequency during school hours, causing significant disruption to children and parents.

The School staff indicated that they had not been aware of this specific difficulty. It was explained that late-coming records are capable of being corrected retrospectively in certain circumstances, if timeous information is provided.

Neither the School nor ERC had control over private bus services. The HT suggested that communication be commenced with the bus companies direct – but confirmed that he was happy to relay concerns and specific data to ERC, if parents were able to give it to him.

As regards issue (ii), the HT confirmed that test papers are not released to parents because those papers contain valuable information that is often re-used or recycled in subsequent years. Parents who wish to obtain any additional information on their children's test performances should feel free to contact the Pupil Support Teachers and/or, if they wish, complete and submit a Feedback Form requesting information on areas of underperformance in any tests. The School staff will be delighted to assist.

The business of the Parent Council Meeting was then concluded.

The next Parent Council Meeting is on **MONDAY 14 MARCH 2022 at 7pm** in St Ninian's High School.

**[SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS
ATTACHED]**

**SUMMARY
OF
AGREED ACTION POINTS**

<i>Improving Parental Communication</i>	<i>Who is to action this?</i>	<i>Timescale?</i>
1. The HT shall publicise details of the PC's new FB, Twitter and Gmail accounts in the School's next parent-wide Newsletter communication.	HT	14 Mar 22
2. MP to complete the re-design, update and re-population of the PC webpage (on the School website), with IT support from Mrs Boyle; and to devise an efficient mechanism regularly to update and refresh the content.	MP	14 Mar 22

<i>The Eastwood Park Development</i>		
1. The OB shall contact ERC (i) to reiterate the PC's interest in the development, (ii) to request an update (including estimated timescale) on the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, (iii) to request the opportunity to be consulted on the drafting of that Plan, and (iv) to seek clarification of ERC's "master plan" (if any) for Eastwood Park (specifically ERC's plans, if any, as to the future development of the School).	OB	14 Mar 22
2. The HT shall contact ERC to request (i) an update (including estimated timescale) on the drafting of the Construction Management Plan, and (ii) clarification and assurances regarding the steps to be taken to safeguard the health and safety of staff and pupils during the construction phase.	HT	14 Mar 22
3. HT shall undertake an assessment of current and foreseeable needs/deficiencies of the School in the availability of facilities and/or physical accommodation, and the extent, if any, to which those current or foreseeable needs/deficiencies might usefully be satisfied by creative opportunities arising from the proposed development.	HT	Easter

<i>The Scottish Government's Health & Well-being Census</i>		
1. The Office-Bearers shall maintain the PC's vigorous opposition to the distribution of the Census (including in its revised format) within St Ninian's High School, including by the pursuit of satisfactory responses from ERC and all other interested parties.	OB	Ongoing
2. Meantime, HT shall procure that the Census will not be circulated to pupils within SNHS prior to the next PC Meeting.	HT	Ongoing (to 14 Mar 22)

<i>The Advanced Higher School Concert</i>		
1. HT shall continue to actively review the possibility of re-arranging the Advanced Higher Music Concert to a later date, possibly in or around May 2022.	HT	Ongoing

<i>Diocesan Parent Forum</i>		
1. The PC members shall consider and submit questions or items for discussion at the Diocesan Parent Forum in advance of that May meeting.	All	14 Mar 22
2. The OB will attend the next Diocesan Forum Meeting on behalf of the PC.	OB	9 May 22

ANNEX 1

EASTWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE

ENCLOSED PAPER FOR PARENT FORUM

1. Extracts of ERC Planning Application Committee Report (19 January 2022)

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Draft index of applications under the above acts to be considered by Planning Applications Committee on
19th January 2022.

Reference No: 2021/0694/TP

Ward: 3

Applicant:

East Renfrewshire Council
Eastwood Park HQ
1 Rouken Glen Road
Giffnock
UK
G46 6UG

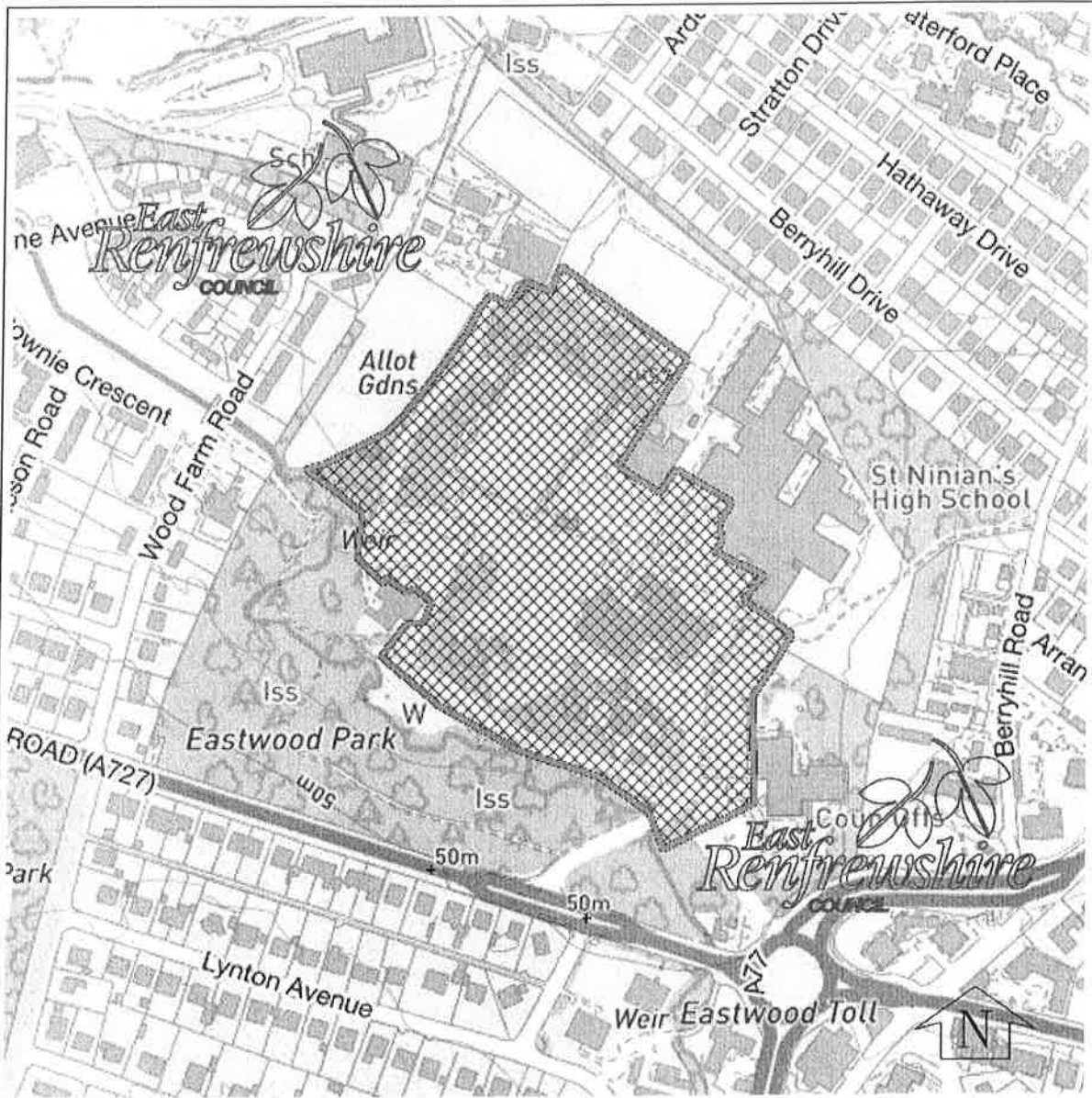
Agent:

Graeme Laing
Tay House, 2nd Floor
300 Bath Street
Glasgow
UK
G2 4JR

Site: Eastwood Recreation Centre 6 Eastwood Park Rouken Glen Road Giffnock East Renfrewshire

Description: Proposed leisure centre, theatre, library, cultural facilities and ancillary spaces with associated parking and landscaping works including demolition of existing leisure centre and theatre building

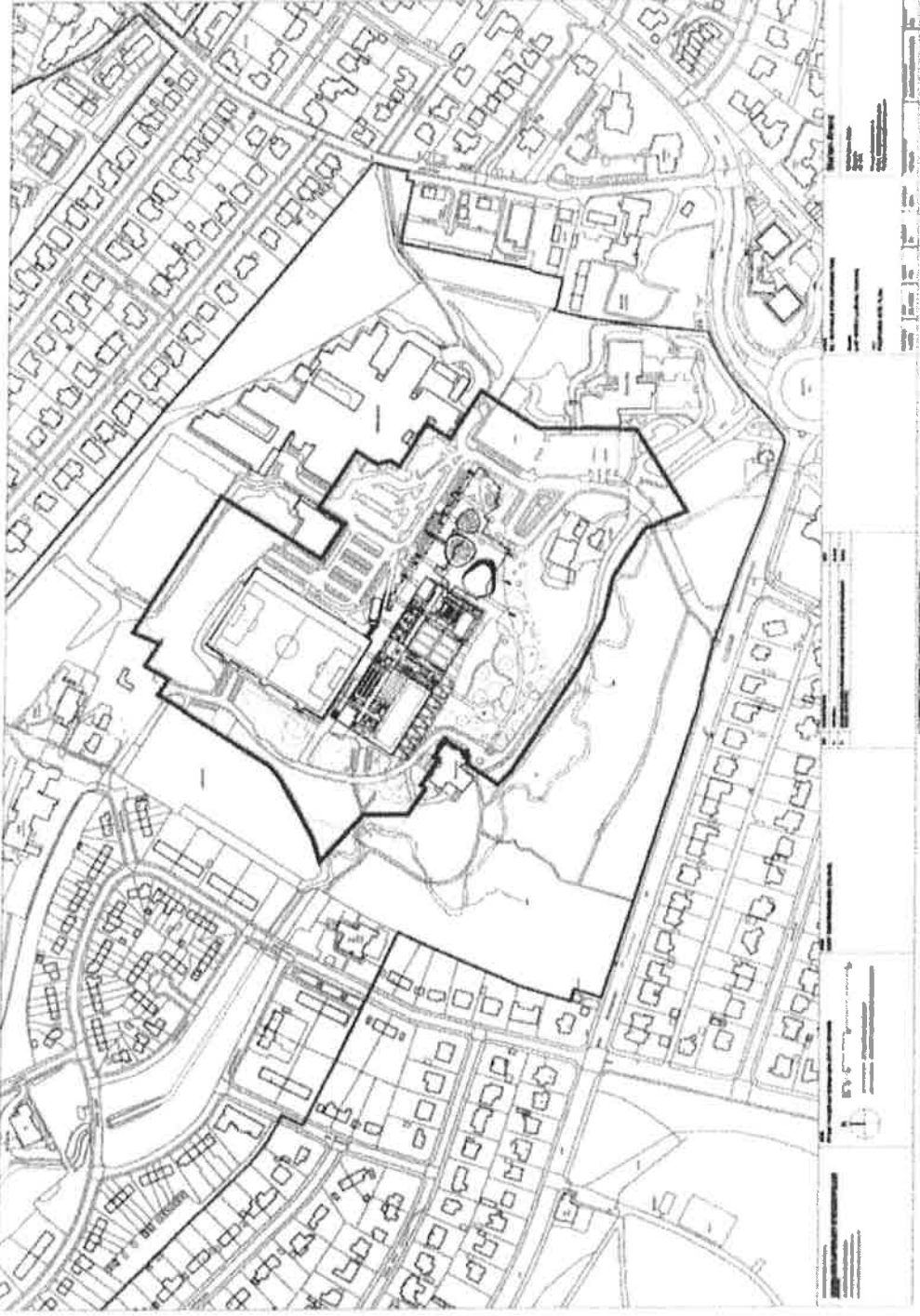
Please click [here](#) for further information on this application



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Proposed site plan



Proposed aerial view from south east

