

Former Killearn Hospital site – comments received by Killearn Community Council following the public consultation held on 16 May 2016

Killearn Hospital opened as a War Hospital in 1940 and continued in use until 1972, when it closed. The site has deteriorated rapidly in recent years and several buildings are now in a state of collapse. The site extends to 52.5 acres overall and is the largest brownfield site in Stirling Council area. The existing buildings occupy 22.5 acres and the new plans cover all the existing hospital ward areas and follow the contours of the site, part of which slopes down to the River Blane. The site is on the A81 approximately 2 miles from the village of Killearn.

Comments were received from a small number of people following the public consultation held on 16 May 2016 by Selborne Developments, owners of the site, and further comments were made during discussion at the meeting of Killearn Community Council held on 18 May. The site is zoned for mixed residential and business use in Stirling Council Local Development Plan. The plan published by Selborne Developments proposes a large number of houses in this rural setting: 58 house plots, 38 affordable homes and 7 live/work units for those working from home. The site may be developed in several phases over perhaps a ten-year period. Specific comments:

- Some neighbours preferred the site in its wild condition. However, most people took the view that the site needed to be cleaned up and a housing development would be preferable to leaving the site in a derelict state.
- 58 house plots 1/4 - 1/3 acre. These are no longer intended to be self-build as Stirling Council planners have stated that a properly planned development would be better than the variety of house styles and sizes which might occur with self-build. House plots are a reasonable size, in line with similar properties within Killearn village.
- 38 affordable houses in the form of 2-bedroomed cottage flats. The site has been described in the Local Development Plan as being too far from Killearn Village to be considered for affordable houses, defined as social housing to rent. However, the site could be acceptable for affordable houses to buy, for which no other provision is being made in Killearn.
- A courtyard development at the front of the site for workshop units, shops, office space, bunkhouse for walkers. These suggestions are indicative of some form of commercial development; they are not fixed as definite plans. A bunkhouse at Killearn could appeal to hill walkers and walkers on the West Highland Way and John Muir Way. Commercial development on the site should be encouraged, as contributing to the local economy and providing employment locally. Retail units and community services may be required if a large residential development is approved on this site.
- With such a variety of properties to be incorporated into the site there is a danger that there will be no overall unification of the development.

- The site owner has obtained costs for cleaning up the site, which would have to be carried out and paid for prior to any development taking place. This cost should be clarified and assurance given that the site survey and estimated cost of cleaning up the site were truly independent. Clearly this cost has a bearing on the number of housing units required to pay for the site clean-up. Remaining space should be returned to green land.
- An existing sewage treatment plant on site would be upgraded, to serve the new development. It is not planned to link to the Killlearn treatment plant at Lettreburn. Expert advice would be needed to confirm that this is the correct solution and that the existing plant would be capable of serving the number of properties planned for this site.
- A full survey of the impact of the proposed development on health and education services in the area should be carried out to assess this. Assurance would be needed that Killlearn Primary School, Balfron High School and Killlearn Health Centre could cope with the additional residents.
- The former Hospital site is not served by public transport at present. The school bus service may be expected to pick up pupils for Balfron High School, but there is no arrangement for transport to Killlearn Primary School from this site. That would be parents' own responsibility. A self-contained primary school on the site would not be viable.

The former Killlearn Hospital is a derelict site located in a beautiful area of West Stirlingshire, near several long-distance footpaths (the West Highland Way and the John Muir Way) and on a major tourist route to the Trossachs. The local Glengoyne Distillery attracts many international visitors as well as large numbers from other areas of the United Kingdom and the existence of this derelict site has a deleterious effect on tourism.

This large site has been subject to planning blight for decades, and complaints about the state of the site featured largely in the comments made to the Community Futures Company for the updated Killlearn Community Plan. Killlearn Community Council, Killlearn Community Futures Company and the local community in Killlearn and neighbouring villages wish to see this derelict site cleaned up and restored to new use as soon as possible. We would encourage the site owner to develop his plans in order to achieve this end. His stated intention after the public consultation will be to apply for Planning Permission in Principle. However, more detail and clarification is required before any consent is given.

27 May 2016