

Loanhead recycling firm challenges claim business is next to school path

Operators of a waste recycling plant have insisted it is not near a school route – despite a pedestrian crossing and footpath to two primary schools on the same street.

Enviroworx faced opposition from local residents and the community council after they applied for planning permission for a new facility and relocation of other operations on the site earlier this year.

Council leader Councillor Kelly Parry, who is a local ward member, said the impact of the industrial site next to housing on Engine Road, Loanhead, had sparked concerns with vehicles from the industrial site blocking residents from parking and making it difficult to use pavements with buggies.

She told a meeting of the council's planning committee: "Local residents cannot park and vehicles on pavements prevent them getting to their homes with buggies or disabled residents unable to use the pathways.

"This is supposedly a safe route to school."

The committee voted to reject the planning application despite part of the operations already being in place for the last three years and their own officers recommending they approve

it.

In an appeal now lodged with Scottish Ministers asking them to overturn the decision, agents for Enviroworx challenge the move to block their plans because of 'local objections'.

They say Engine Road "does not have any functional pedestrian connectivity to the routes to school."

They say: "(It) only serves the homes and businesses on the road or within the wider industrial site.

"The location of the development access is such that it would have minimal impact on wider pedestrian activity to the nearby school or town centre and is limited to those using the footway on the northeast side of Clerk Street, who already require to cross Engine Road and, based on the review of accident data, are able to do so safely."

At their meeting in March councillors were told by planning officers that the site had been used as an industrial area for 150 years and if the waste facility was refused permission, its space could revert to the scrap yard which previously operated on it.

However Councillor Parry expressed frustration at the lack of mitigation measures offered by planning conditions or the applicant to tackle the impact on residents living next to the industrial estate.

Residential homes on Engine Road and the industrial site are separated by a pedestrian crossing, which connects with a footpath leading to both Loanhead Primary School and St Mary's RC Primary School in the town.

The council received 26 individual objections which raised concerns over the impact of traffic in and out of the site,

the centre being in close proximity to schools and a call for it to be moved to a more industrial location away from housing.

Enviroworx who are operating the waste processing site had pointed out it is not a new facility but a relocation of their operations on the site to a more efficient area.

They are urging Scottish Ministers to support their appeal on the grounds the council's own planning officers found no reason to refuse it.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter