

Livingston town centre will see new homes in place of vandalised business park

A badly vandalised business park in the centre of Livingston is set to be developed into new flats and homes after officials said there was “no realistic opportunity to develop the site for business.”

Business pavilions on the site, which lies on west side of Alderstone road between the Almondvale roundabout and the Campus roundabout, had been extensively vandalised until their final demolition earlier this year.

Now councillors have backed plans by Dundas Estates to redevelop the site with 62 flats and 26 houses.

A planning officer acknowledged: “Livingston’s got countless ‘To Let’ signs”, and added there was no realistic opportunity to develop the site for business.

Bathgate’s SNP Councillor Willie Boyle, speaking at the Development Management Committee that backed the plans, warned that space should be retained to allow further commercial development of the town centre.

And Livingston Village Community Council objected to the proposal citing fears for extra traffic the impact on schools and local GP facilities.

The site lies within the employment boundary of Kirkton Campus as identified in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan, 2018. The site formerly contained 9 brick built, 2-storey business units which were constructed in the 1990s under Livingston Development Corporation.

In a report to committee planners said: "The character of this area of Livingston has changed, and whilst not all former employment land within the Kirkton Campus area would be suitable for redevelopment as housing, this site has the benefit of its location immediately adjacent to the identified Livingston town centre.

"The sustainable, edge of centre location, good public transport and pedestrian connections, together with the brownfield nature of the site and spatial relationship to other recently approved housing sites are sufficient, in this case, to justify approval of the site."

Councillor Boyle called for the application to be rejected and said: "We have to take seriously the issue of restraint on local GP surgeries.

"It does have an effect on the amenity of everyone in Livingston, where it's harder and harder to get an appointment with a GP. Given its location so close to the town centre, it's a loss for potential further development from a commercial point of view."

The councillor failed to find a seconder.

Chairing the meeting Labour's councillor Tony Boyle moved the application be granted subject to conditions including a section 75 payment. This was seconded by Councillor Tom Conn.

The meeting heard that there was adequate capacity at local schools.

A 97 sqm two-storey commercial building which can be used as a

flexible workspace, community space or other appropriate uses also proposed within the development was backed.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter