

Councillors approve new high school at Easter Bush

Councillors in Midlothian have unanimously approved plans for a new £120 million secondary school despite concerns about a road running through the site and claims it would have unisex toilets.

The planned new Beeslack High School will be built off Seafield Moor Road, Bilston, and will have capacity for 1600 pupils and include a swimming pool, a separate additional supports needs building and a vet clinic on the land which will be used by the Dick Vet.

The buildings are planned for land to the west of Seafield Moor Road at the site with planned sports pitches attached to the school to be built on land on the east of the road.

Roslin and Bilston Community Council had objected to the application saying that while they did not object to the principal of a new school, they believed the location for the current plans was wrong.

They said: "The location of the proposed school is unsatisfactory in a number of ways, not least having a campus that is split by a main road, a road that is due to become even busier in a few years' time.

"With so much public money at stake, the need for a thorough site search is irrefutable. Until there has been an open, professional site search with opportunity for

public participation, including participation in drawing up the terms of reference and in the assessment process, planning permission for the present proposal must not be granted.”

However a meeting of the council’s planning committee approved the plans for the school with council leader Kelly Parry saying she was ‘delighted’ to see the school coming forward.

And she addressed one objection which related to toilets in the new facility saying they were not ‘unisex’.

She said: “I want to clear up one issue that is the email campaign claiming there is only unisex toilets in the new Beeslack school.

“I want to assure people that the new building will include open plan, full height, closed individual cubicles, separate toilets and accessible toilets and are therefore not unisex only. Additionally if people prefer a more private toilet facility these will be available and positioned around the school.”

Councillor Parry moved the approval of the plans which was seconded by Councillor Colin Cassidy.

Recommending the plans for approval officers said: “The site is located on two sites allocated for development in the Midlothian Local Development Plan and will provide a facility that will enable the council to meet statutory education requirements.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter