

# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 29 September 2015

## Update on proposal for a new Meadowbank: improved funding package

<b>Item number</b>	8.1
<b>Report number</b>	
<b>Executive</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	All, and particularly Craightinny/Duddingston

### Executive summary

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In February 2015, Council agreed to continue to support the redevelopment of Meadowbank at an estimated project cost of £43m, noting that the funding package left a funding shortfall of between £11.3m and £19.8m. Council also noted that further work was required to secure a funding package making best use of public and private options. Since February, private funding options have been explored and rejected, as they would cost more than prudential borrowing. Some public funding options remain under consideration.

Development guidance for the surplus land has been produced in consultation with the Planning Service and an intrusive ground survey has found no significant issues on the site, thus de-risking the project. A modified and re-costed design lowers the estimated total project cost to £42m. With increasing land values, the funding gap is now estimated to be £6.8m, with scope to decrease this further.

In the meantime Meadowbank continues to deteriorate. A recent risk assessment suggests significant remedial expenditure is required to keep the building compliant with Health and Safety regulations and in operation.

### Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P42, P43, P45
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO20
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO2

## Update on proposal for a new Meadowbank: improved funding package

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Council:
  - 1.1.1 notes that since February 2015, the project's costs have reduced by more than £1.5m (following a favourable ground survey and subsequent redesign, re-costing and adjustment of fees) while construction inflation on the project cost has risen by £923,000;
  - 1.1.2 notes that the net effect of the above is a reduction in the total project cost from £43m to £42m;
  - 1.1.3 notes that the potential for private sector borrowing has been analysed in detail and would not provide best value;
  - 1.1.4 notes that significant progress has been made by Corporate Property on a disposal strategy for Meadowbank's surplus land, which has increased its potential value;
  - 1.1.5 agrees to refer the disposal of surplus land held on the Culture and Sport account at Westbank Street, Portobello to the Economy Committee and the subsequent ringfencing of the receipt from this disposal to the Finance and Resources Committee for the Meadowbank project;
  - 1.1.6 notes that the combination of the Meadowbank disposal strategy and sale of surplus land at Portobello is anticipated to lower the funding shortfall to £6.8m;
  - 1.1.7 notes that a report will be presented to Finance and Resources Committee as soon as possible, providing an update on the disposal process of the surplus land, detailing the outcome of ongoing discussions with potential partners and recommending how to address any remaining funding gap;
  - 1.1.8 agrees to begin procurement now of the full Project Team for the new Meadowbank, noting that this process and appointment could be stopped without financial loss if the project does not proceed;
  - 1.1.9 notes that if a Project Team is appointed by February 2016, and demolition begins in autumn 2016, the updated timeline anticipates that a new Meadowbank would open in spring 2018; and
  - 1.1.10 notes that the deteriorating Meadowbank cannot be refurbished to a satisfactory standard, and the negative impact on participation in

physical activity and sport in the city would be significant if a solution for a new Meadowbank is not found.

## Background

- 2.1 On 13 March 2008, the Council approved “a new build at Meadowbank as the best option” for the future of this Sports Centre and Stadium and agreed “to commission an appraisal for this new facility”. As an interim investment measure, and in recognition that the facility was more than 40 years old, was beyond its designed lifespan and required significant upgrades, £1.45m was invested in 2009 to improve the reception areas, showers and changing facilities. Edinburgh Leisure continues to carry out routine repairs and maintenance, and an annual condition survey to identify any immediate risks to the ongoing operation of the facility, including failure of mechanical and electrical services and plant. The latest risk assessment suggests significant remedial expenditure is required to keep the building compliant with Health and Safety regulations and in operation.
- 2.2 Various systems within the building are becoming more difficult to keep in service through repair work, and it is anticipated that a point will be reached in the short term when it is no longer practical or economic to keep the current facility open. Before that point is reached, unless other plans are developed for the future of this facility, a planned withdrawal of service within the next five years will be required.
- 2.3 Since February 2015, when Council agreed to continue to support the redevelopment of Meadowbank, the following work has been completed:

March 2015 to the present	Discussions with NHS Lothian, Edinburgh City and Edinburgh University regarding future use/development
March to May 2015	Explored potential public and private funding sources in more detail
April 2015	Appointed Grontmij to conduct an intrusive ground survey (ie a site investigation) on the Meadowbank site
May – June 2015	Site investigation completed
May 2015 to the present	Consultation with Planning service to define Planning guidelines for the site
June-September 2015	Appointed Walker Sime as cost consultant for four months to review all the construction costs.
August 2015	Appointed GVA to revalue the surplus land at Meadowbank.

- 2.4 Initial consultation on the sporting mix was positive, as previously reported. Community consultation on all aspects of the project will begin immediately if the

Committee approves the recommendations of this report. A Meadowbank Member Officer Group was established during 2013, and met four times in 2014 and once so far in 2015. The group includes all political groups, local ward members, **sportscotland**, Edinburgh Leisure and Council officers and is chaired by the Convener of Culture and Sport.

## Main report

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- 3.1 As reported to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in January 2015, the feasibility study carried out in 2014 is based on a core sporting facility mix for a new Meadowbank and design to RIBA Stage C (concept and outline proposals for buildings and structures).
- 3.2 A key element of the feasibility study is that residual land not needed for the new facility, approximately 12.5 acres across two separate sites, is marketed for disposal. Developing the disposal strategy now would provide the Council with certainty over the capital receipt and thus reduce the funding gap.
- 3.3 The design team has continued to engage with the Planning Service to determine an acceptable development strategy for the surplus land which may include residential units, student accommodation and some commercial space. Final guidance will be available as part of the disposal strategy.
- 3.4 Officers are in dialogue with Edinburgh University on a potential partnership that would include giving students at the University access to the new Meadowbank facilities. This would have a positive impact on the Centre's business case. It is envisaged that student accommodation, for use by the University, could also be developed on part of the surplus land.
- 3.5 Discussions are also ongoing with Edinburgh City Football Club which has expressed interest in developing clubroom, social and changing facilities at Meadowbank. NHS Lothian is exploring the feasibility of creating a new Brunton Place surgery within the development. Both opportunities could result in a positive cash contribution to the development costs.
- 3.6 Internal discussions are under way to assess the viability of housing development on the surplus land through the Council's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Homes Programme.
- 3.7 The above discussions are dependent on whether best value for the land can be achieved in each case. The outcome of the above discussions will be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.

### **Estimated cost of a new Meadowbank**

- 3.8 The entire project costs were estimated to be £43m in February 2015. This figure included a high risk allowance for underpinning the new building, based on worst case assumptions about the underlying ground conditions; an allowance for pre-construction and construction inflation totalling £1.75m, up to the third quarter of 2016; and allowances for removal of contamination and the inclusion of client direct fit out costs.

3.9 A detailed site investigation has now provided certainty about the underlying conditions, which are better than the worst case scenario. This has allowed the team to reduce the risk allowance required for underpinning the building, reduce the allowance for removal of contamination across the site, and remove some risk from this key construction element of the project. However, pre-construction and construction inflation are increasing as the economy recovers and now are estimated to total £2.9m (an increase of £923,000). Further delays to this project will result in the total project cost increasing from the current estimate of £42m.

**Review of funding options**

3.10 In February 2015, the then cost consultant, Deloitte Real Estate, concluded that the majority of community sport and leisure developments in the UK rely on a blend of funding to make them viable. The typical package used by local authorities includes prudential borrowing (based on the forecast improvement in the revenue position); capital receipts from the sale of assets; grant funding from external bodies, capital funding from local authorities and Planning gain (in Scotland, under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997).

3.11 The Council has now revisited the detailed feasibility study which was presented to Committee in February 2015. In accordance with the Council’s 12 February 2015 decision, public and private funding options have been explored in more depth.

3.12 Soft market testing has been completed with the private sector and developers and has informed the findings summarised in the table below.

Funding option reviewed	Conclusion
Private sector borrowing	Discounted (for the reasons discussed below).
Head lease commitment	Discounted (because of insufficient anticipated income from a new Meadowbank to service head lease payments and because this potentially removes control and flexibility over the site from the Council).
Competitive tendering of the management contract	Discounted, following engagement with stakeholders.

Funding option reviewed	Conclusion
Reduce the scope of the building and capital costs	Changes to the building would reduce revenue generation, the <b>sportscotland</b> grant and the physical activity and sporting needs of the city.
Other grant funding	May be possible but not identified so far.
Naming rights and sponsorship	Small sums may be possible after construction, towards ongoing revenue costs.
Philanthropic contributions	Limited evidence of this in this sector but crowdfunding via third parties may be possible.
Include additional revenue generating facilities in Meadowbank	Some progress has been made on this, but its impact is limited in reducing the funding gap.
Contribute additional surplus land to the project	Recommended. Include receipt from Powerleague 5 a side complex at Westbank Street Portobello. This site on the Culture & Sport account is subject to a ground lease which expires in 2088. This facility no longer fits the tenant's strategy for the future of its operational portfolio. The tenant has therefore asked the Council to market the site for development and has agreed an appropriate split of the capital receipt with the Council.
Additional prudential borrowing	Recommended.
Contribution from the Council's capital programme	Recommended.

3.13 The Council has talked to a cross-section of funders from the private sector to determine the relevant costs of seeking finance on this basis. These costs were then compared, by the Council's Treasury and Banking Service, to the cost of borrowing the same sums through prudential borrowing (via the Public Works Loans Board). The Treasury and Banking Service has advised that borrowing through pension funds is more expensive than making use of prudential

borrowing over the duration of the project: PWLB loans are at fixed rates whereas pension fund borrowing entails repayment increases linked to the Retail Price Index. In addition, it should be noted that the Council would lose control of the land on which the Sports Centre is situated, becoming a tenant of the funder for the term of the agreement (which would normally be for circa 45 years). The Council would have reduced flexibility to undertake future developments to the site.

### Recommended funding package

- 3.14 A fund of £20m set aside by the Scottish Government for [National and Regional Facilities Investment](#) is managed by **sportscotland**. It has been assumed that between £5m to £7m would be available from this fund for the project. An application will be submitted following the Council's consideration of this report.
- 3.15 It is possible to provide estimates for the total sum which could be achieved by combining the disposal of surplus land at Meadowbank and Portobello; prudential borrowing, revenue savings during demolition and construction, and a grant from **sportscotland**.

<b>Estimated cost and financial package for a new Meadowbank</b>	<b>February 2015 (worst case)</b>	<b>September 2015</b>
<b>Total project cost estimate</b>	<b>£43.00m</b>	<b>£42.00m</b>
<b>Principal Funding Sources</b>		
Anticipated capital receipts	£11.50m	£21.50m
Prudential borrowing	£5.97m	£5.97m
<b>sportscotland</b>	£5.00m	£7.00m
Revenue savings from closure of Meadowbank	£0.75m	£0.75m
<i>Total funding</i>	<i>£23.22m</i>	<i>£35.22m</i>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>£19.78m</b>	<b>£6.78m</b>

- 3.16 The Project Team and Member Officer Working Group have also discussed a procurement strategy. Alternative procurement routes explored so far include SCAPE (a provider of national construction frameworks), delivery company hubco (for the South East Territory), using the Council's arms length development company EDI, and the standard procurement route via calls for tender in the Official Journal of the European Union. The final procurement strategy would be confirmed once the full Project Team is in place and approval

for the preferred procurement route will then be sought from the Finance and Resources Committee.

- 3.17 The new Meadowbank could open by spring 2018 at the earliest, with work commencing on site in autumn 2016. To achieve this timeline, procurement of the design team would have to commence now, so that the team is in place ready to proceed with RIBA stage D (updated design, specification and cost plan), if the complete funding package is confirmed by Council in February 2016.

## Measures of success

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- 4.1 A successful disposal strategy to reduce the funding gap and approval to procure the full Project Team.

## Financial impact

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- 5.1 A total of £0.368m in revenue has been spent to date on developing the new Meadowbank proposal.
- 5.2 The total cost of the project is now estimated to be £42m. The total estimated funding, which could be achieved by combining the disposal strategy with sale of surplus land at Portobello and prudential borrowing, revenue savings during demolition and construction and a grant from **sportscotland**, is £35.22m.
- 5.3 The total cost of the project has been reduced as the ground conditions are better than worst case. A sum of £0.028m from the Corporate Governance revenue budget 2015/16 was used to carry out an intrusive ground conditions survey (ie a site investigation). The Director of Corporate Governance was satisfied with the ground conditions and the project team has therefore begun the next phase of the project, namely to develop Planning guidelines with Planning. These will remove further risk from the project at a cost of £0.009m. A sum of £0.008m has been spent on valuation of the surplus land.
- 5.4 To progress the prudential borrowing element of funding, full approval will need to be sought from the Finance and Resources Committee and Council, based on a business case that demonstrates the associated revenue income / saving streams that would be generated to pay for annual loan charges. The proposed level of prudential borrowing has been calculated by assuming that the improved operating position of the new facility would remove the requirement for a service payment. The forecast service payment level for the existing facility (around £0.330m per annum) will be made available by the Council to fund the prudential borrowing.
- 5.5 Pending realisation of the full funding package, the Council could incur additional borrowing costs. These costs will be known once the procurement solution is identified and the cost profile is known.

- 5.6 The report outlines proposed total capital expenditure plans of a maximum of £42m. If this expenditure were to be funded fully by borrowing, the overall loan charges associated with this expenditure over a 20 year period would be a principal amount of £42m and interest of £27.3m, resulting in a total cost of £69.3m based on a loans fund interest rate of 5.1%. The annual loan charges would be £3.467m.
- 5.7 It should be noted that the Council's Capital Investment Programme is funded through a combination of General Capital Grant from the Scottish Government, developers and third party contributions, capital receipts and borrowing. The borrowing required is carried out in line with the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy and is provided for on an overall programme basis rather than for individual capital projects. Following a request from Members, notional loan charge estimates have been provided above; these estimates are based on the assumption of borrowing in full for this capital project.
- 5.8 If the decision is taken not to proceed with the proposed new Meadowbank, a further report on the financial and other implications of this will be required. As noted in previous reports, the facility cannot be refurbished to a satisfactory standard and there is a limit to the length of time it can remain operational.

### **Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The total project cost and funding projections are estimates and are subject to fluctuating market conditions and inflation which may affect the scope and delivery of the project. As noted above, construction inflation has increased since February and is still rising. The capital receipt estimates are based on current day prices.
- 6.2 The revenue costs and income projections for the business case are subject to regular review and updating which could change the prudential borrowing level.
- 6.3 The Planning risk will be mitigated by preparing Planning guidelines for the site with Planning.
- 6.4 If the project does not proceed beyond RIBA Stages D or E, or is reduced in scope, design fees related to the abortive elements of the project will require to be written off to the revenue budget.
- 6.5 Since Meadowbank is Edinburgh's biggest driver of indoor and outdoor sport participation, the closure of this facility would have a negative impact on levels of physical activity and participation in sport by Edinburgh residents of all ages. In a separate report on this agenda, which details the findings of a citywide review of Council-owned sport facilities and services, it is noted that an independent consultancy advises that there would be a serious under-supply of facilities and services if Meadowbank is closed and not replaced.
- 6.6 This would have a negative impact on the delivery of key policies including the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy agreed by the Council and city partners; two of the Council's Pledges; and the Scottish Government's Active Scotland Outcomes Framework.

- 6.7 If this project does not proceed, and services are withdrawn from Meadowbank, the capital city would no longer have a flagship multi-sport facility and regional training needs and Edinburgh's general health and wellbeing would be adversely affected. The city's other facilities could absorb some but not all of the demand for a short period (of say 18 months) only. The city would have fewer regional-level sporting facilities than its peer city group and lose the ability to train Edinburgh's future sportsmen and sportswomen.

## Equalities impact

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- 7.1 The new Meadowbank proposal would help to meet the city's housing needs, including affordable housing, and would provide a modern, fully accessible, high quality facility open to all Edinburgh residents and visitors. The new facility would make a positive impact on the health, well-being and quality of life of those who use it. The facility is currently projected to attract over 600,000 visits per year by the second year of its operation. The current Meadowbank has just over 500,000 visits per year. If the project does not proceed, the impact on current users losing this facility would require to be assessed.

## Sustainability impact

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- 8.1 The impacts of this report have been considered in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties, and the outcomes are described below. The new building would be built to meet or exceed modern energy efficiency standards. On a like for like basis, the energy consumption would be significantly lower than the existing building. The new building's energy demands would be reduced by the proposed enhanced building fabric performance; high efficiency equipment for heating, ventilation, and lighting; and renewable energy technologies such as photovoltaics.
- 8.2 A visual inspection of the trees surrounding the Meadowbank site was undertaken in September 2014. The inspection report identified the 11 Wheatley Elms on Wishaw Terrace and 10 on London Road as having the most significant impact on the street scene. Unlike many cities in the UK, Edinburgh has managed its stock to retain approximately 15,000 elms in the city. From assessing historic photos of the area and the height of the trees it is reasonable to assume the elms pre-date the existing stadium. The new building proposal has been designed to maintain an adequate distance from the existing elm trees to allow their retention in principle. A detailed survey of their condition and any impacts on the trees of construction works or resurfacing around the trees will be undertaken during RIBA Stage D.
- 8.3 The decision to retain the new sports centre on the existing Meadowbank site will enable the new facility to benefit from the existing transportation network already serving Meadowbank. A strategic plan for maintaining and improving these transportation links will be developed if the project progresses. The landscaping proposal will help to create a civic presence along the London Road frontage, and

will provide a generous public arrival area at the entrance to building. Shelter will be provided along the length of the building from the roof canopy, and features within the landscape will provide seating and gathering areas. Consideration has been given to providing increased facilities for cyclists in line with National Planning Policy. The existing bus stops would be retained and incorporated into the landscaping proposals along London Road.

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 Detailed community consultation will be undertaken if the recommendations of this report are approved.
- 9.2 For reasons of efficiency, safety and cost, demolition will be completed before construction begins. Alternative provision will need to be made for Meadowbank's customers, using Edinburgh Leisure facilities, the school's sporting estate and facilities in neighbouring council areas. This is the approach that was taken by the successful £37.1m refurbishment of the Royal Commonwealth Pool.

## Background reading/external references

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Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on [20 January 2015](#)

Report to Culture and Sport Committee on [17 December 2013](#)

Nine previous reports on National and Regional Sports Facilities (incorporating Meadowbank) to Council, Culture and Leisure Committee, and the Culture and Sport Committee, from 2004 to present, including the [March 2008](#) report to Council cited above

Scottish Government [Active Scotland Outcomes Framework](#)

### Alastair D Maclean

Deputy Chief Executive

Contact: Stephanie-Anne Harris, Strategic Development Manager

E-mail: [stephanie-anne.harris@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie-anne.harris@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7911

Contact: Graeme McGartland, Acting Principal Project Manager

E-mail: [graeme.mcgartland@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.mcgartland@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 5956

## Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	<b>P42</b> – Continue to support and invest in our sporting infrastructure. <b>P43</b> – Invest in healthy living and fitness advice for the most in
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<b>Council outcomes</b>	need. <b>P45</b> – Spend 5% of the transport budget on provision for cyclists <b>C020</b> – Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens.
<b>Single Outcome Agreement Appendices</b>	<b>S02</b> – Edinburgh’s citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health.