

Culture and Communities Committee

10am, Tuesday, 29 January 2019

Community Sports Facilities: Developing an Enabling Approach

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| Item number | 8.1 |
| Report number | |
| Executive/routine | |
| Wards All | |
| Council Commitments | 39 |

Executive Summary

Edinburgh has a distinguished record in supporting sports clubs and community organisations through long term leases of Council owned sports facilities.

The opportunity to enhance our approach is now available through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act of 2015 that allows for greater influence over community planning, local service provision and the use of land and buildings. This report covers some of the enabling approaches that have been developed over recent years, summarises the new asset transfer process that has been put in place and explores some of the emerging considerations and issues.

The City of Edinburgh Council like many other local authorities faces financial pressures and maintaining the desired level of subsidy and investment in all our sports centres, pavilions and pitches is challenging. The Council Change Strategy specifically refers to the need to change the way we work with our partners and in relation to sports facilities to ensure their future sustainability.

We need to further develop an enabling approach to meet this challenge.

Community Sports Facilities: Developing an Enabling Approach

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Culture and Communities Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the report as part of the pending new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and the intention to commence work on a new Sports Facility Strategy within that.
 - 1.1.2 Request a future report which details progress being made across the city

2. Background

- 2.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act of 2015 allows for greater influence over community planning, local service provision and the use of land and buildings.
- 2.2 For the purpose of this report the use of the term 'community sports facilities' refers to small sports centres, pavilions and pitches in Edinburgh.
- 2.3 'Changing How We Work with Our Partners' is one of the five priorities of the Council Change Strategy. This report explores some of the ways this is being done in Council owned sports facilities and how we extend this approach. In addition to this 'Making the Most of Our Cultural and Leisure Assets' is another of the specific objectives.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Edinburgh has a distinguished record in supporting sports clubs and community organisations through long term leases of Council owned sports facilities. Currently, over 40 organisations benefit from these arrangements (See list in Appendix A). These arrangements can importantly provide a route to external funding and fresh investment (see section 3.9).
- 3.2 Two of our smaller Sport Centres previously run by Edinburgh Leisure namely the Craggs Sports Centre and the Queensferry Sports Centre transferred to local community organisations. The transfer of both facilities has proven to be successful and they have developed thriving community based programmes. It surely follows that this model has the capacity to be replicated elsewhere in Edinburgh. An enabling approach would be to list facilities that might be open to possible asset

transfer to be more widely known. The asset rationalisation exercise underway within the Council may accelerate this action.

- 3.3 The Community Empowerment Act allows for greater influence over community planning, local service provision and the use of land and buildings. We are entering an era of co-production with communities for better services and the introduction of this Act allows for sports clubs and community organisations to potentially take full ownership of some of our sporting facilities.
- 3.4 In January of 2016 the City of Edinburgh Council put in place an approved process to deal with these requests. Following initial expression of interest there are meeting(s) with the club and/or community organisation to explain the process, the key expectations and any potential land ownership or condition issues. The Stage 1 process invites the club to outline their ambitions and Stage 2 focusses on the consultation process and the robustness of the Business Plan. Only upon the submission of a valid Stage 2 Business Case does the application become a formal Community Asset Transfer request. Should a Club be successful with their panel hearing at Stage 2 this then proceeds to the Finance and Resources Committee for political approval.
- 3.5 Since the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act 12 sports clubs and community organisations have expressed their interest in community sports facilities. The facilities that an expression of interest has been shown are listed in Appendix B.
- 3.6 However, to date no successful transfers have been concluded. It could be that two years is too short a period to reach a full conclusion on this but any Council that considers itself to be an enabling organisation (and puts co-production of services at the heart of the 'Change Strategy') needs to reflect on how best we can support the ambitions of clubs and community organisations. In the next few years it is hoped that there will be several successful transfers of sports facilities in Edinburgh.
- 3.7 Several clubs and organisations have been unprepared for the level of consultation and level of detail required by the process. On some occasions there is a level of local opposition to the proposed change that is daunting for a club to deal with. The immediate reaction of some residents is that they are losing a facility in their community through a transfer of ownership either through direct negotiation of a long term lease or full completion of the asset transfer process. This is not necessarily the case and there is a need for better public awareness of the potential benefits of either a partnership approach or asset transfer.
- 3.8 In the 'Planning for Change and Delivering Services' section of the Council Change Strategy the ambition is to 'ensure sustainability for future generations'. Some of our pitches and pavilions undoubtedly require fresh investment.
- 3.9 There are two recent examples where facilities were in a dilapidated condition and the situation has been completely reversed by long term leases of Arboretum pavilion and playing fields to ESMS schools and a section of Warriston playing fields to Warriston Community Tennis Club. 'Before and After' photographs are

shown in Appendix C. This enabling approach has protected existing users and undoubtedly enhanced the playing experience of participants and future generations. In addition to this the recent extension of long term lease for Thistle Tennis Club (Craiglockhart) resulted in a £160,000 investment in the courts.

- 3.10 At present the development of Council owned sports facilities in the city is largely dependent on two major factors. The first is through the development of the 'flagship' projects such as the new Meadowbank complex or the Royal Commonwealth Pool or secondly, the building of new schools. The 'Wave 4' programme (see background reading section) will see new and enhanced sports facilities at a range of locations throughout the city with several communities set to benefit from these in the next decade. However, this programme is potentially subject to change and depends on government funding and local housing and planning decisions. While both developments are extremely welcome neither of these provide a coherent strategy for dealing with either properly maintaining existing community sports facilities in our neighbourhoods or responding to any gaps in local provision.
- 3.11 As part of the pending new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy we intend to commence work on a new Sports Facility Strategy. This strategy needs to underpin any future investment through the Capital Expenditure budget. And given the financial pressures on the Council we need to find new ways of working that lever in fresh investment and a key part of this is likely to include the transfer of Council owned facilities to sports clubs and other community based organisations.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Further assets are leased or transferred to new partners therefore relieving pressures on existing budgets and ensuring these facilities are sustained for future generations.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The finance is to be secured within existing resources.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 This report and the potential impact of successful partnership approaches can positively affect the ambitions in the Council's Business Plan around health and wellbeing and tackling inequalities.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 Equalities and tackling inequality is expected to be a top priority in the proposed Physical Activity and Sport strategy for the period 2019-23.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse impacts from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The approach to creating a new physical activity and sport strategy for the city focusses on direct engagement and consultation with key partners, sports clubs and other community organisations. An on-line consultation is also underway.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Council Change Strategy: Planning for Change and Delivering Services 2019-23 (Finance and Resources Committee 27 September, 2018)
- 10.2 Wave 4 Schools Infrastructure Investment Programme (Finance and Resources Committee 11 October, 2018)

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11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix A – List of long term leases to sports clubs in Edinburgh
- 11.2 Appendix B – Sports Facilities subject to expressions of asset transfer interest
- 11.3 Appendix C – Facility Transfer Comparisons: Photographs of Arboretum and Warriston Playing Fields

APPENDIX A

PAVILIONS

| Pavilion | Club Name | Ward |
|-----------------------------------|---|------|
| Bingham Park Pavilion | Edina Football Club | 17 |
| Clermiston Park Pavilion | Hutchison Vale Football Club | 3 |
| Kingsknowe Park Pavilion | Currie Star Football Club | 2 |
| Cairntows Park Pavilion | Castlevalle Youth Development Club | 17 |
| Pavilion at Davidson's Mains Park | Cramond Football Club | 1 |
| Pavilion (Fernieside) | Edinburgh South Community Football Club | 16 |
| Pavilion at Redhall Park | Redhall Star Youth | 7 |
| Sports Pavilion | Leith Athletic Football Club | 13 |
| Leith Links Pavilion | Leith Athletic Football Club | 13 |
| Newcraighall Park Pavilion | Newcraighall Leith Victoria Amateur Football Club | 17 |
| East Pilton Park Pavilion | Lauriston Thistle Football Club | 4 |
| St Mark's Park Pavilion | Craigroyston Football Club | 12 |

CLUB PREMISES

| Club Premises | Club Name | Ward |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|
| Clubroom | Tynecastle Club | 7 |
| Golf Clubroom | Edinburgh Thistle Golf Club | 10 |
| Clubhouse | Boroughmuir RFC | 9 |
| Clubhouse (Craigentenny Avenue) | Lochend Golf Club | 14 |
| Clubhouse | Liberton Rugby Club | 16 |
| Clubhouse | The Royal High Athletic Club | 1 |
| Clubroom | Edinburgh Northern Rugby Club | 5 |
| Clubhouse | Carrick Knowe Golf Club | 6 |
| Clubhouse (Braids Hill) | Harrison Golf Club | |

| Club Premises | Club Name | Ward |
|---|---|-------------|
| Clubhouse (next to Wardie Playing Fields) | Broughton RFC | 4 |
| Leith Links Clubrooms | Leith Franklin Cricket Club | 13 |
| Clubhouse | Currie Rugby Football Club | 2 |
| Clubhouse (Moredun Park Loan) | Fenmore Sports and Social Club | 16 |
| Clubroom (Muirhouse Parkway) | Craigroyston Boys Club | 4 |
| Union Park Clubroom | Corstorphine Rugby Football Club | 6 |
| Golf Course Clubhouse | Silverknowes Golf Club | 1 |
| Clubroom | Trustees of Lochend Amateur Boxing & Fitness Club | 14 |
| Clubhouse | Forrester Rugby Football Club | 3 |

In addition to the above list 10 Bowling Clubs and 4 Tennis Clubs also hold leases on Council owned facilities.

Appendix B

| COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER ENQUIRIES January 2016 – December 2018 | | |
|--|--|--|
| Applicant(s) and Facility | Comments | Progress |
| Currie Star FC and Edinburgh Cricket Club – Campbell Park (Colinton) | Stage 1 panel held and application approved March 2018. Applicant commenced work on Stage 2 submission. Community consultation meeting was not as positive as expected. Applicant taking stock. | On hold. Considering other options. |
| Edinburgh United FC – Paties Road (Craiglockhart) | Stage 1 panel held and application approved March 2018. No contact from applicant since April 2018. Consultation meetings to be held November and December 2018. Proposals have not been shared by applicant. | |
| Edinburgh South FC and Change Centre (a group company of Street Soccer). Hibernian Community Foundation expressed initial interest but then withdrew application – Morgan Playing Fields (adjacent to Peffermill) | Stage 2 application submitted and panel hearing held September 18. Application deemed to be invalid due to partner company not being a Community Controlled Body. To pursue option of direct negotiation. Draft Heads of Terms agreed and report to go to F&R 4 th December | Considering alternative approach to transfer |
| Baseball Scotland – Warriston Playing Fields | Advising applicant on CAT process. To consider short term lease option while applicants considers capital funding options. | On hold |
| Hutchison Vale and Tynecastle FC – Saughton Sports Complex | Not considered at this stage due to added pressure on Athletics because of closure of Meadowbank | On hold |
| Edinburgh Spartans FC – Wardie Playing Fields | Playing fields are used by School and are not available for CAT | On hold |
| Napier University – Sighthill Park | On hold due to potential ‘common good’ issue. Awaiting results of options paper and community consultation. | |
| Projekt 42 – Leith Links Pavilion | Pavilion fire damaged. On hold whilst options for future of structure are agreed. | |
| Meadowbank Gymnastics Club – General Enquiry | No suitable property found | |
| Katie’s Stable (Equine Charity) – General Enquiry | No suitable property found | |
| Liberton FP RFC – Kirk Park | CAT request dealt with as routine lease extension | |
| Corstorphine Dynamo – Roseburn Park | Not progressed | |

Appendix C



Before



The new Arboretum pavilion opened in 2015.



Before



The new Tennis facility at Warriston.