

## Arboretum Road, pavilion and playing field

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### Education, Children and Families Committee

9 October 2012

#### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report is a response to the motion on the Arboretum playing fields submitted to the Council by Councillor Hinds in March 2012 and referred to the Education, Children and Families Committee. This motion referred to the poor condition of the current temporary changing facilities (with Portakabins costing £10,000 a year) and the derelict former changing rooms. The Committee agreed that new changing facilities are required and called for a report to address this. This report seeks approval to explore the scope for granting a long lease of the Council owned playing field at Arboretum Road to the Merchant Company Education Board linked to a Partnership Agreement with Stewart's Melville College which would see substantial investment in a new pavilion and allow for continued use of pitches by Children and Families schools and the resident sports clubs who are currently based at Arboretum.

#### 2 Summary

- 2.1 The sports pitches at Arboretum Road are principally used by St Thomas of Aquins RC High School, Trinity High School and two sports clubs – Inverleith Rugby Club and Holy Cross Cricket Club. Other schools and clubs make use of the pitches on a letting/occasional basis. Changing and shower facilities are currently provided in portakabins following substantial fire damage to the original pavilion. Initial discussions have taken place with Stewart's Melville College whose sports pitches and changing facilities are located immediately to the west of the Council's playing field (see Appendix 1 for map of grounds). The College are looking to expand their sports facilities to cope with current demand and are interested in exploring shared use of the pitches at Arboretum Road and construction of a new changing pavilion.

#### 3 Main report

- 3.1 The playing field at Arboretum Road, Inverleith, is held on the Children and Families account and currently accommodates one rugby pitch, a football pitch and a cricket pitch (in the summer months). Currently, Edinburgh Leisure

manage and let the pitches and changing facilities on behalf of Children and Families. Changing and shower facilities were originally located in a pavilion which is now derelict following substantial fire damage in 2003. Following the fire, replacement changing and shower facilities were provided in portakabins which also suffered from subsequent vandalism. Two new replacement portakabins were located on site in 2008 and continue to provide changing and shower facilities for Children and Families schools and the sports clubs.

- 3.2 St Thomas of Aquins RC High School use the playing field as a match pitch mainly on a Saturday morning. There is also some occasional use by Trinity Academy as overspill provision. The Arboretum pitches were originally an additional sports site for the denominational schools in Edinburgh. The lease of the clubhouse (this is a separate building to the derelict pavilion and is covered in points 3.3 and 3.7) is actually in the name of 'Old Augustinians'. The need for this additional sports site has vastly reduced over the period of this lease as can be evidenced by the sports facilities enjoyed by St Augustine's RC High School who now share a joint campus with Forrester High School. Their school sports facilities are among the best in Scotland so they have no reason to use Arboretum.
- 3.3 Inverleith RFC and Holy Cross CC's club house is located at Arboretum Road on a site which they lease from the Council on a 40 year ground lease which runs until November 2016. The club house building does not have adequate shower facilities and as such the club use the portakabins along with other sport pitch users.
- 3.4 Stewart's Melville College's sports pitches and changing facilities are located immediately to the west of the Council's playing field. The College wants to expand their facilities to cope with current demand. They have the biggest mini-rugby section in the city (open to City of Edinburgh Council school pupils) and a thriving junior cricket section. The Club run coaching programmes in Broughton High School and the feeder Primaries. Initial discussions have taken place with the College who are keen to explore shared use of the pitches at Arboretum Road and construction of a new changing pavilion.
- 3.5 Discussions with the College have been on the basis that the Council would grant the Merchant Company Education Board (who hold the College's property assets) a long lease of the playing field at Arboretum Road. Under the terms of the lease, the College would be responsible for all aspects of the maintenance and management of the sports pitches. This arrangement would be dependent on the College building a new pavilion at Arboretum Road.
- 3.6 The lease would be linked to a Partnership Agreement to ensure continued use of the sport pitches and access to the new pavilion changing facilities by City of Edinburgh Council schools and the resident clubs who currently use the pitches. Stewart's Melville College already have considerable experience of managing community facilities at their school campus at Ravelston. There is extensive use of these facilities by a wide range of community organisations and sports clubs. The College in recent years have fully engaged in a range of events and programmes organised by the Children and Families Sports and Outdoor Education Unit. Their Junior school regularly participate in our annual calendar of EPSSA (Edinburgh Primary School Sports Association) sporting

events and festivals, they have made their swimming facilities available for our primary schools and we are currently involved in extensive planning with their Junior School about a major sponsored event in the Pentlands to raise money to allow disadvantaged children in Edinburgh to go to our Outdoor Centre at Lagganlia.

- 3.7 Initial consultation has taken place with the resident sports clubs regarding the costs associated with building a new pavilion and the planning restrictions that are in place for this site (see also 3.9). In particular, they favour a replacement pavilion on the existing site. They also wish to retain their existing club house and this is excluded from the lease to the Merchant Company Education Board based on the Club having continued access to changing facilities (details to be defined in the Partnership Agreement).
- 3.8 If Committee approves the principle of the proposed partnership with the College, more detailed discussions will take place with the College and the Merchant Company Education Board to agree provisional terms and conditions for the lease which will then be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval. There are several examples of sports clubs operating out of Council owned land that is also a school site. The most recent example of this partnership approach is at Balerno High School with Currie RFC with whom we have entered into a new long term lease and partnership agreement. This was approved by the Finance and Resources Committee in March 2012. Sports pavilion/club houses are also in situ on the school campuses at Forrester HS, Trinity HS, Leith Academy and The Royal High School.
- 3.9 Other options within the grounds have been explored but initial indications are that the planning restrictions on this site are strict. The ground is close to residential housing and from the Ferry Road end there is an iconic skyline view of Edinburgh Castle. The only alternative site would be on Stewart's Melville ground but this option is not the first choice of the clubs and may in fact be problematic for the school in terms of potential loss of playing field area and a parking area. This option would also have to include demolishing the existing pavilion at significant additional cost. The possibility of marketing for disposal the old pavilion has also been explored with a view to raising a capital receipt but that also throws up additional problems with partial loss of part of the playing fields.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The hire cost for the two portakabins is currently £10,000 per annum, which is met by Children and Families revenue budget.
- 4.2 At the time the pavilion was damaged by a fire it was not possible to identify a budget to carry out repairs. Insurance cover for operational property such as sports pavilions is based on an excess of £250,000, so the Council would have had to provide substantial funding as part of any insurance claim.

#### **5 Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 There is no equalities impact arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## 6 Environmental Impact

- 6.1 There are no significant adverse environmental impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## 7 Conclusions

- 7.1 A partnership approach with Stewart's Melville College provides an opportunity to secure substantial investment in sports facilities that will benefit Children and Families, the College and the wider sports community. By linking the proposed lease to a Partnership Agreement this will safeguard the Council's interests and provide continuity for the sports clubs currently based at Arboretum Road.

## 8 Recommendations

- 8.1 To approve in principle exploring with Stewart's Melville College a partnership which would deliver improved sports facilities at Arboretum Road for the Council and the College.
- 8.2 To note that provisional terms and conditions for the proposed lease will be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval.

**Gillian Tee**  
Director of Children and Families

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Appendices      1. Location plan

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Wards affected      Ward 5 Inverleith

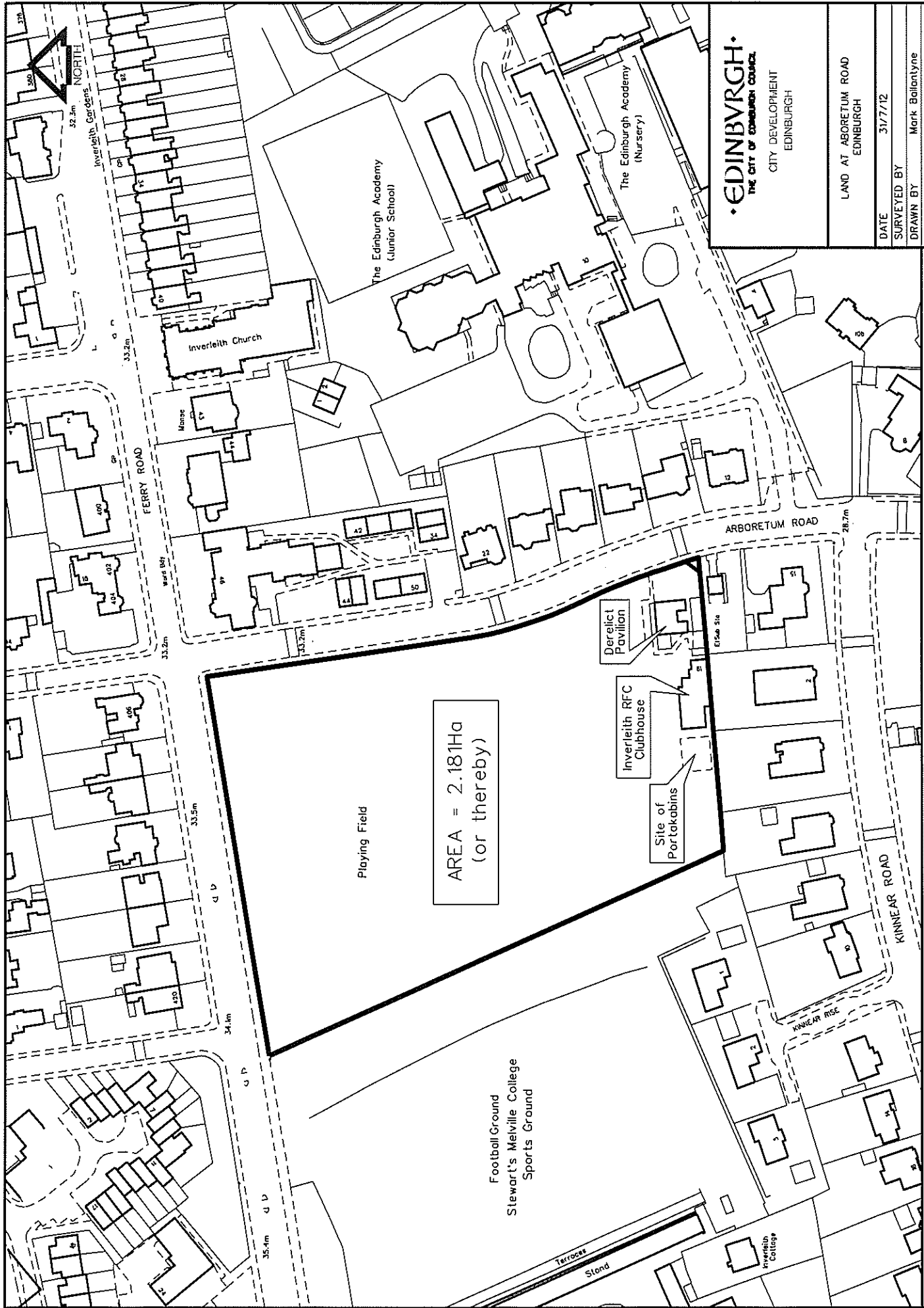
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Single Outcome  
Agreement

Supports the following outcomes:

2. Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health
3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
4. Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric

Background  
Papers



<p><b>EDINBURGH</b> THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL</p> <p>CITY DEVELOPMENT EDINBURGH</p>	
DATE	31/7/12
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FILE NO.	A3/1306
NEG. NO.	

LAND AT ARBORETUM ROAD EDINBURGH
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PHOTOGRAPHICALLY REDUCED NOT TO SCALE

SITE PLAN

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