

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 29 August 2019

Promoting Play on Housing Revenue Account Land - Update

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	39

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that committee:
- 1.1.1 note the update in relation to 'No Ball Games' signs on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land; and
 - 1.1.2 to discharge the action agreed at committee on 30 August 2018 that an update on the outcome of consultations undertaken relating to 'No Ball Games' signage should be provided to committee within 12 months.

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Promoting Play on Housing Revenue Account Land - Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On [30 August 2018](#), Committee considered a report on the use of 'No Ball Games' signage on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land and the approach Locality Housing Teams would take to consult with residents on the potential use of suitable areas for active play. It was agreed that an update on work undertaken would be provided to Committee within 12 months.
- 2.2 'No Ball Games' signs are not common on HRA land and the overall approach is to seek to identify solutions to nuisance and disruption whilst encouraging play wherever possible. Opportunities for outdoor play are considered as part of the design and layout for new Council housing developments.
- 2.3 In the last year, housing officers have been progressing this work in the Localities and engaging with residents on the potential removal of signs where they may no longer be required. This report updates on this ongoing work.

3. Background

- 3.1 On [3 May 2018](#), Council requested that officers report to the Housing and Economy Committee on how best to consult with tenants and other residents on the approach to 'No Ball Games' signage on HRA land.
- 3.2 On [30 August 2018](#), Committee considered a report on the use of 'No Ball Games' signage on HRA land and the approach Locality Housing Teams would take to consult with residents on the potential use of suitable areas for active play. An initial update was included in the Business Bulletin provided to Committee on [21 March 2019](#).
- 3.3 Since then, housing officers have been reviewing the use of signs in their individual patches and engaging with residents on the potential removal of signs located on buildings or land on the HRA that may no longer be required. They have also been identifying areas that could benefit from wider discussions on alternative uses and opportunities to consider Neighbourhood Environment Projects (NEPs). This work remains ongoing.

- 3.4 To help with raising awareness amongst residents, an information page was created on the Council website and residents were encouraged to report the location of 'No Ball Games' signs for potential review. A leaflet was also made available in the localities and an article included in an edition of the City of Edinburgh Council tenants' newsletter, the Tenants' Courier. The Evening News also promoted the [initiative](#). These led to a few enquiries and some feedback from residents, the press and staff, which were followed up locally.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Across the city, 'No Ball Games' signs are being identified by tenants, residents and housing officers. The Locality Housing Teams are at different stages with progressing this work. All have, however, begun to identify signage for removal where signs are held on the HRA and there is potential for land to be used for play, and consultations are underway with residents. There are also a number of signs that are located on private developments where any decision on the use of the areas of land and use of signs is the responsibility of the owners or as set out in the title deeds.
- 4.2 Each Locality Housing Team has been responsible for its own consultation to ensure that tenants and other residents have an opportunity to give their views on the future approaches to use of HRA land. The approach to consultation will vary dependent on the areas where the signs are located and the number of residents to be consulted but it will include visits to residents by the patch officers, stair/local resident surveys and local meetings as appropriate.
- 4.2.1 The North West Locality is in the process of completing ongoing consultations in 10 streets where 'No Ball Games' signs are in place. Of these, four streets have either confirmed or are expected to confirm removal of the signs; the remaining six streets have either confirmed or are expected to confirm retention. Further 'No Ball Games' signs have been identified and the Team will continue to progress with consulting with residents to confirm the future approach.
- 4.2.2 Discussions are being progressed with tenants and other residents in the South East Locality. There are several sites, particularly in city centre locations where the signs are on blocks onto pathways or hard landscaping where an alternative use is not likely to be suitable. Initially 17 sites have been identified for potential removal of signs and work is ongoing to complete consultations in other locations that have been identified. Overall it is estimated that around 30% of signs in the locality are likely to be suitable for removal where areas of ground have been identified as suitable for play.
- 4.2.3 The South West Locality has identified around 12 'No Ball Games' signs that they are beginning to consult residents on to confirm the future approach. Officers are assessing which areas are not suitable for play, for example, the

gable ends of buildings onto pathways, versus where there are clear amenity/potential play areas which may be an option for alternative uses to be taken forward through a NEP.

4.2.4 The North East Locality has prioritised consultation in the area that prompted the initial discussion on 'No Ball Games' signs at Committee. This consultation is now complete, and residents have agreed that the signs in this area can be removed. Two further consultations have been completed with residents in one location agreeing to signs being removed and another near a tower block, where there is already a play and ball park in the immediate area, will be retained. The Team are progressing consultations with residents in a further 19 areas where there are 'No Ball Games' signs to ensure resident views are taken in to account as this work moves forward.

4.3 Identifying NEPs to support any potential use of areas for active play will be actioned in the next phase of activity and dependent on funds available.

5. Next Steps

5.1 This report discharges the action agreed on 30 August 2018 that an update on the outcome of consultations undertaken should be provided to committee within 12 months.

6. Financial impact

6.1 The cost of this consultation activity is being contained within existing HRA budgets.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1 There are no adverse stakeholder/community impact implications arising from this report.

7.2 Use of HRA land by children, young people and communities for active play and interaction can have a positive impact on health and mental wellbeing.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 None.

9. Appendices

9.1 None.