

Written Questions to the Leader of the Council**Report by John, Blair, Director, Resources****1 Written Questions to the Leader of the Council**

In terms of Standing Order 4.2(vii), the following written questions to the Leader of the Council have been received from Councillor Baxter:-

"The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, is designed to strengthen community participation and encourage enterprising community development

Derek Mackay, Local Government Minister, is quoted as saying: "This bill is about enabling people and communities throughout Scotland to make their own decisions and to build their own future".

Visiting The Kabin, Loanhead, in June 2014, Mr Mackay said,

"The Kabin is an excellent example of what can be achieved with the right support. It supports around 20 organisations all working together to support over 1,500 individuals of all abilities in the local community".

Very soon after Mr Mackay's visit, a proposal was rejected by this council for a community organisation in Bonnyrigg to take ownership of the former Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre. That proposal, coincidentally, also had the support of over 20 organisations and over 1,500 individuals in Bonnyrigg. The proposal was considered "worthy of further consideration" by officers and was supported by a number of people with experience in advising community buy-outs.

To ask the Leader of the Council

a) in what respect the proposal lodged by the Bonnyrigg Centre Trust did not merit the "right support" from Midlothian Council

b) why the formal procedure which Midlothian Council insisted all those submitting proposals follow was subsequently overridden without notice

c) why no report was presented to the June Council meeting regarding the review of the need for soft play facilities in Bonnyrigg, when the delay in demolition agreed at the March meeting was to allow consideration of the outcome of such a review,

d) when the report reviewing the need for soft play in Bonnyrigg will be released

e) in what respects the proposal agreed by the council will be of greater benefit to the growing Bonnyrigg community compared to the alternative proposal presented to Council which advocated shared use of the building by Bonnyrigg Centre Trust, Bright Sparks and Bonnyrigg and Sherwood Development Trust

f) to clarify whether soft play is to be provided in the Leisure Centre, and if so how this is consistent with statements which indicate the building cannot be shared with Bright Sparks; and if not, how this is consistent with the stated intention of the council as agreed at its March meeting that demolition was delayed to explore the provision of soft play in Bonnyrigg.”

2 Recommendation

The Leader of the Council is invited to respond to the written questions.

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