

## **Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre Update Report**

Report by Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report provides Council with an update on progress in the consideration of proposals for the potential future use of the former Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre building.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Previous reports to Council on 13 August 2013 (Item 11) and 5 November 2013 (Item 12) provide a comprehensive statement of the background to this matter. In summary the Council, in February 2010, agreed that the facilities at the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre and other buildings be incorporated into the new Lasswade High School Centre, and therefore authorised its closure and disposal following the opening of the new Lasswade High School Centre. That new Centre opened in Summer 2013, following which the old Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre closed, and currently remains vacant.
- 2.2 The report to Council on 13 August 2013 noted community concern over the intended demolition of the building, and that proposals had been received from local groups seeking to make use of and retain the building. These groups were requesting time to develop their business plans to support their proposals. Following consideration, the Council agreed to extend the timescale for a final decision on the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre until December 2013 : and to give potential bidders until 29 November 2013 *“to submit final robust, consulted and sustainable business plans for consideration against policy and land title and community consultation priorities criteria”*.
- 2.3 The report to Council on 5 November 2013 proposed extension of the timescale for final decisions on the future of the former Leisure Centre building : a further report to Council to be submitted in February 2014. This extension was to allow for the matter to be informed by the ongoing neighbourhood planning process at Bonnyrigg and Poltonhall; as well as the Members’ consideration of the Council’s prospective community asset transfer policy (Seminar held on 26 November 2013). The Council agreed the time extension to February 2014.
- 2.4 A further matter to be taken into account as part of the assessment process are the provisions, albeit draft, of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, published for consultation in November 2013, and which is reported in more detail elsewhere on this agenda.

### **3 Current Position**

- 3.1 By the deadline of 6 January 2014 for the submission of bids to take over the former Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre premises, two offers had been received, these being from :-
- 3.1.1 Bonnyrigg Centre Trust Ltd.  
3.1.2 Midlothian Fitness Academy.
- 3.2 An Assessment Panel has been appointed comprising the Council's Head of Finance, Head of Property and Facilities Management, Head of Communities and Economy, and an Associate Director (NHS Lothian) in her capacity as a Community Planning Partner. That panel has been asked to undertake a thorough assessment of the submitted bids including, as may be necessary, seeking further information and / or clarification from each bidder : and to report with recommendations within a time period that enables Council to reach a final decision at its meeting on 25 March 2014.

### **4 Report Implications**

#### **4.1 Resource**

Costs of maintaining the building including rates were set out in the report to Council in August 2013. Using these costings a delay from February to the end of March 2014 will incur additional costs of about £7,000 for which this report seeks approval of a supplementary estimate for that amount.

#### **4.2 Risk**

Failure to undertake a thorough assessment of the submitted bids would increase the risks of an ill informed decision being made, and a successful challenge of the Council's actions by a third party.

#### **4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

#### **4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

None specific to this report which is solely concerned with procedures in this matter.

#### **4.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

A thorough examination and assessment of bids will ensure that any opportunities to adopt a preventative approach are not missed.

**4.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Both bidders state that community consultation has informed their respective proposals.

**4.7 Ensuring Equalities**

One of the assessment criteria for examination of the submitted bids will directly consider matters of equality and diversity.

**4.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

No specific matters relating directly to this report.

**4.9 IT Issues**

None.

**5 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council:

- (i) notes that in response to its formal offer, two bids have been received from parties seeking to take over and run activities from the premises of the former Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre;
- (ii) instructs that a full report on the assessment of these bids be submitted to the Council on 25 March 2014; and
- (iii) approves a supplementary estimate of £7,000 in respect of additional maintenance and security costs.

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**Background Papers:**

None

### **Declaration Box**

**Instructions:** *This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.*

**Title of Report:** *Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre Update Report*

**Meeting Presented to:** *Midlothian Council 4 February 2014*

**Author of Report:** *Ian Johnson*

*I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-*

- ☐ *All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.*
- ☐ *All risk implications have been addressed.*
- ☐ *All other report implications have been addressed.*
- ☐ *My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

*For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.*

*Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.*