

Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre**Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Joint Director, Health and Social Care****1 Purpose of Report**

The aim of this report is to seek approval for an extension of timescales for Council consideration of proposals for the future of Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre under the proposed Council Community Asset Transfer Policy.

2 Background

- 2.1** The purpose of the Neighbourhood Planning Process is to deliver a mutually agreed action plan based on the local evidence of need, demand and gaps in services. It also takes into account views of the community gathered in a broad consultation process and views of public service agency managers and of Council elected members about feasibility of delivery in the face of severe financial constraints.
- 2.2** Previous Council decisions considered support from the Bonnyrigg and Poltonhall Neighbourhood Planning Processes to undertake specific research into public views on possible future uses of the Centre. During the initial stages of the Neighbourhood Planning Process however, it has become clear that the conflicting activities of campaigning groups are affecting the ability of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group to deliver a questionnaire seen as fair and balanced.
- 2.3** Having regard to these particular circumstances, and following discussions with ward members and with the chair of the Community Planning Working Group, it has been agreed that the neighbourhood planning process should not be used to seek community views on the potential future use of the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre. Instead the community needs assessment arising from neighbourhood planning, which will be available by January, will inform the setting of criteria around priority community needs as part of the decision making with regard to any potential community asset transfer in the area. This is in line with the decision taken to delay approval of the policy and procedure report presented to council in August 2013 until such a seminar has been held.
- 2.4** In order to facilitate these changes it is proposed that the report to Council on proposals for the future of the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre should be considered at the February meeting rather than the December meeting as had previously been agreed. This extension for the receipt of proposals by 6 January 2014, will enable decisions on the future of the centre to be informed by the product of the members seminar, scheduled for the 26th of November 2013, on the proposed Community Asset Transfer policy and further consideration of the policy in accordance with Council decision in August. It also allows all parties

interested in taking forward proposals for the future use of the building more time to prepare their submissions for consideration.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The continuation of the decision making with regard to the future Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre will incur additional costs of £14,000 to maintain the safety and security of the building.

3.2 Risk

Failure to reach agreement on separation of the decision making process for potential asset transfer from the wider neighbourhood planning process would be detrimental to the neighbourhood planning process. and could lead to the loss of credibility with the public as well as failure to provide a basis for dialogue between the residents of Bonnyrigg Lasswade and Poltonhall and the providers of public services in these areas.

3.3 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

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The Council is required by law (Local Government Act 2003) to facilitate community planning; an element of this duty is to undertake locality or neighbourhood planning.

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The aim of neighbourhood planning is to support the shared goals of the Single Midlothian Plan by engaging with residents to ensure their views are influential in decisions about the level, type and location of local service delivery, and to develop a co- productive approach to services in which the community shares responsibility alongside the public and voluntary sector.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report confirms the complex nature of managing community engagement in an open and transparent manner where there are conflicts between local interest groups. The proposed way forward is intended to enable a separation between wider community consultation and engagement and the specific response by the council to this conflictual situation. Taking the proposed course will reassure partners in the CPP that they are not being drawn into a specific asset transfer issue, and will support wider community representatives to focus on the wider issues within the community.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

There are no specific equality issues arising from this report.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Consideration of future ownership and use of the former leisure centre will include as a central issue the sustainability of any proposals. This will be addressed in the future report on community asset transfer.

3.9 IT Issues

There are no specific IT issues arising from this report

4 Summary

Agreement has been reached with Bonnyrigg Ward members on the proposed way forward set out in this report. This approach has also been endorsed by the community planning working group chair on behalf of the CPP. As a consequence an extension of the timescale for taking proposals forward to Council on the future of Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre is required.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that Council agree to receive a further report on the future of Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre at the February meeting.

Date

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Background Papers:

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:

Meeting Presented to:

Author of Report:

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.