

## **Loanhead – Fields in Trust Land Agreement**

### **Report by Garry Sheret, Head of Property Facilities Management**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on negotiations with Fields in Trust regarding the use of the existing George V Park surrounding the Loanhead leisure centre as part of the new Loanhead combined education and community facility.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1** On 12 August 2014 Council agreed to “*submit a bid to Scottish Futures Trust requesting funding for a new combined education and community facility in Loanhead*”.

Following a successful bid, extensive consultation with the local community and stakeholders was undertaken resulting in a preference for the new combined facility to be situated adjacent to the existing leisure centre.

As stated in section 3.2 of the 12 August report, the high level risks highlighted the need for “*consultation with Fields in Trust in relation to the use/excambion of the land for the proposed facilities/relocation of the play area to a new Queen Elizabeth park*”.

#### **3 Report Implications**

- 3.1** Through negotiations with Fields in Trust, it is proposed that, to allow development of the existing site within the George V Park, protected status be transferred to Memorial Park. A plan of the proposed Memorial Park area to be protected by Fields in Trust under this agreement is shown in Appendix A.

The Council has recently made a significant investment in the regeneration of Memorial Park. The dedication of the park provides a further demonstration of the Council’s commitment to protecting this key space for future generations.

Fields in Trust would add to the protective status of this site making it more difficult to use the land for a purpose other than its permitted use as a public park, sports or recreation ground.

- 3.2** In addition to the allocation of Memorial Park as a Fields in Trust protected site, Fields in Trust have stipulated that any agreement would be conditional upon the existing children's play park being relocated to a nearby site.

During the recent consultation process this was also raised by the local community as one of their main concerns.

To address both of the above, it is proposed that the children's play park be relocated to the area adjacent to the existing school MUGA. This would be incorporated as part of the master plan for the redevelopment of the existing Paradykes School site prior to any disposal of the land.

### **3.3 Resource**

To procure the Minute of Agreement between Midlothian Council and Fields in Trust fees for solicitors and project management, totalling £15,000 would be expended.

Both of these fees are provided for within the budget set out in Section 3 of the 12 August report.

### **3.4 Risk**

Agreement to progress with the recommendations of this report will remove a substantial risk from the Paradykes project. This will allow the project to progress without further risk to any Title challenge.

The risks to the Council of this agreement are:-

- Fields in Trust protection will mean any future development works associated with Memorial Park will require prior approval by Fields in Trust.
- Midlothian Council will have an obligation as part of the master plan of the existing Paradykes Primary school site to incorporate a new play park prior to disposal. This was already planned and therefore this risk should be seen as minimal.

### **3.5 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

### **3.5.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan**

This project supports the provision of suitable infrastructure for the efficient and effective delivery of services to meet the full range of community needs. The co-location of facilities would ensure closer working relationships and assist in the delivery of strategic initiatives such as the Ageing Well, GIRFEC, Midlothian Active Choices and Get Going programmes.

### **3.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

This work is a part of the Single Midlothian Plan's key priority of Early Years, providing fit for purpose community schools to present every child with the opportunity to attend the school which serves their community and supports improvement in pupil attainment and achievement.

### **3.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Providing fit for purpose community schools to provide every child the opportunity to attend the school which serves their community supports the preventative approach by improving achievement and attainment of pupils and increasing their prospects of progressing onto positive destinations.

### **3.9 Ensuring Equalities**

An EQIA has been commenced which will be taken forward in parallel with the overall project design.

### **3.10 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The proposals take into account the need to deliver fit for purpose, sustainable (for both now and the future) services including through the design and use of appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure.

### **3.11 Policy**

#### **Strategy**

This project links to the following national and local outcomes and objectives.

National Outcome 04: Our Young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

National Outcome 05: Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

National Outcome 10: We live in well-designed places where we are able to assess the amenities and services we need.

National Outcome 15: Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Divisional Priority 1: Provide increased access to Education and Communities facilities and resources through the Divisional Estate Asset Management Plan.

Divisional Priority 6: We aim to give children the best start in life and improve life chances of children, young people and families.

Divisional Priority 7: provide opportunities for people to develop skills for learning, life and work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing.

Divisional priority 11: Raise the profile of our services, people and communities through celebrating our achievements and successes.

### **3.12 IT Issues**

There are no IT issues associated with this report.

## **4 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council:-

- Instruct the Director, Resources to enter into an agreement with Fields in Trust to designate Memorial Park in Loanhead as a Queen Elizabeth park in exchange for Fields in Trust's agreement to the existing George V Park being developed for the new Paradykes Combined Community facility.
- Instruct the Director, Resources to enter into agreement with Fields in Trust to incorporate a replacement for the existing children's play park within the redevelopment master plan for the existing Paradykes Primary School site.

**13 March 2015**

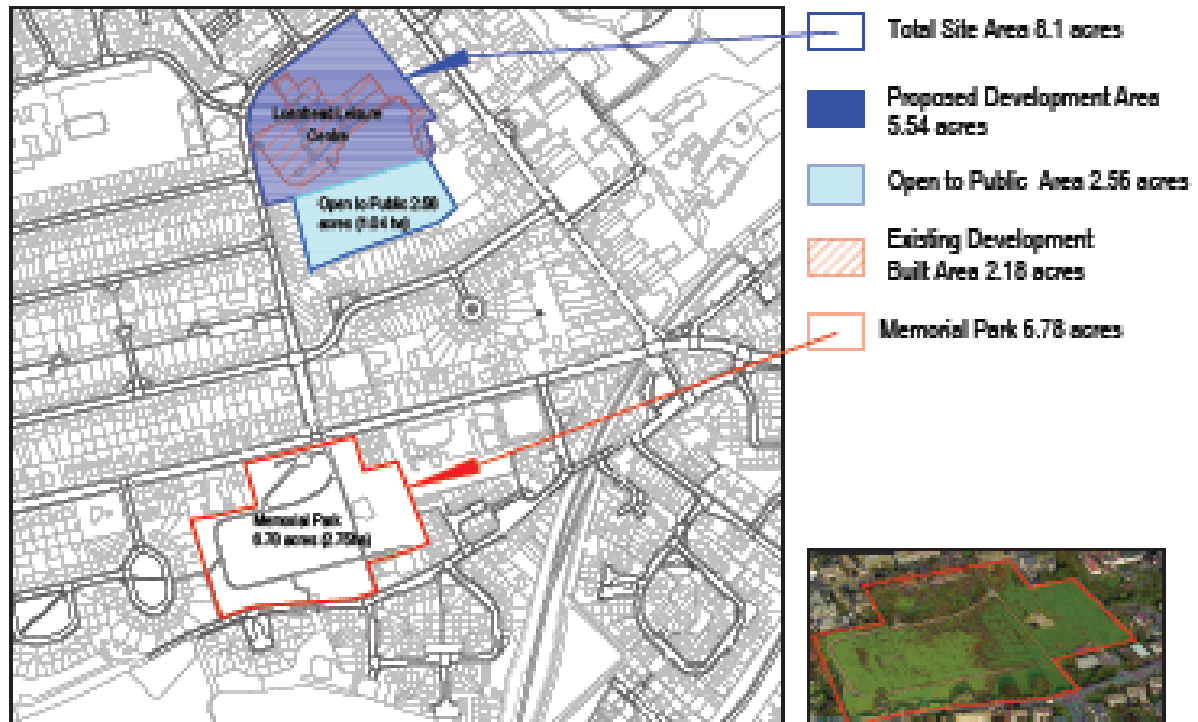
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**Background Papers:**

Loonhead



### **Loanhead KGV Playing Field (1058)**

Loanhead KGV playing field is an 8.1 acre site in central area of the town on Loanhead in Midlothian which is south east of Edinburgh near the Edinburgh by-pass. The site is owned by Midlothian Council.

Within the site there is a full size football pitch, two MUGAs and a children's play area. In terms of built structures the site also contains a Leisure Centre and car parking.

The NPFA Scotland Committee approved the development of a Leisure Centre in 1992 and a car park extension in 1993. The Leisure Centre and car park covers 2.18 acres of the site.

The Council is requesting FIT's approval to extending the current building to include a primary school, health centre, nursery and library. The new development would require an additional on site loss of green space of 3.36 acres.

The remainder of the site including the football pitch would be retained for public use. The MUGAs would be available for public use beyond school requirements and the play area would be relocated on a site nearby.

The Council are proposing to compensate for the net loss of 3.36 acres by agreeing FIT protection of a 6.78 acre park which is also central to the town and is a 2 minute walk from Loanhead KGV playing field. The park is accessible to all users of the current FIT protected site and is of equal quality with upgrading ongoing.

D M Hall Surveyors have valued both sites and have reported that they are of equal value 'in the order of £15,000 per hectare.'

In terms of green space quality and accessibility for local residents both sites are similar. In terms of area and value there is a net benefit to FIT.

## **FIT policy**

The proposed development and the proposed compensatory FIT protected park meets the terms of FIT's policy on 'Disposals of recreational land.'

Enclosures include:

- Loanhead KGV deeds
- Field change application from Midlothian Council
- Head of Terms signed by Midlothian Council
- Plans showing, existing developed area, proposed development area, area to be retained as publicly accessible FIT protected green space and the proposed site for FIT protection

## **Recommendation**

I recommend that FIT approves the 'Field Change' application conditional upon.

- 1 A Minute of Agreement being signed on the compensatory site
- 2 The existing children's play park being relocated to a nearby site.

Colin Rennie  
21 January 2015

