Opportunity for New Football Pitch at Beeslack Community High School.

Report by Don Ledingham, Director Education & Children’s Services

1 Purpose of Report
To obtain governance from Council to proceed with plans for an externally funded 3G community pitch at Beeslack Community High School, Penicuik.

2 Background

2.1 Penicuik is home to several football clubs and groups and practically all of them have recently come together to form an all-embracing organisation called the Penicuik Athletic Community Football Club (PACFC). The organisation is keen to increase the number of playing members especially in the youth section and it believes a dedicated playing hub and training centre is necessary for the realisation of their aspirations. Penicuik is also home to the 2nd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland based at Glencorse Barracks and over the years very strong relations have been forged between the barracks and the local community. The local schools, notably Beeslack High and Mauricewood Primary schools, have played a significant part in this. The Barracks currently has a number of facilities but some of these would benefit from augmentation.

2.2 Beeslack already provides an extensive community programme of Educational, Leisure and Sporting activities used each week by over 2000 users (from the Armed Forces and the local community). However the existing pitch is a poor quality shale surface that is not fit for purpose and consequently pupils have to go to other facilities outwith the school premises for some physical education activities. A new fit for purpose pitch would provide much needed sports / physical education facilities for pupils of both Beeslack High and Mauricewood Primary schools, additional and easily accessible facilities for the 2nd Battalion and a new playing and training hub for the Penicuik Athletic Community Football Club (PACFC).

2.3 The proposed project is structured to be cost-neutral to the Council as far as additional funds are concerned but it will require the Council to formally commit part of the land that forms Beeslack CHS to the project for 10 years i.e. the site of the existing shale pitch. This is a necessary step in order to obtain external funding to construct the new pitch. Approval to proceed with the bid is predicated on agreeing that Midlothian Council will commit the required land to the project for a minimum of ten years.

Further to the member seminar on high school provision in Penicuik (26 July 2011), officers were directed to explore options to revise catchment areas including taking a look at bringing Loanhead into the Penicuik group of schools and collating information on how best to align the primary schools with the two secondary schools. It is not envisaged that any alignment will have a material effect on this project.
3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

a) Physical

The planned development will be a modern, floodlit, all-weather 3G synthetic grass pitch replacing the existing shale pitch, located within Beeslack CHS boundaries. Midlothian Council is required to commit the area to the project for a minimum of ten years as part of the funding criteria.

b) Financial

Preliminary enquiries, though subject to a formal procurement exercise, indicate that the construction project will be in the region of £350,000. After discussions with the Armed Forces, we are confident that this project qualifies for community covenant funding (but does not guarantee it) and it is our intention to submit a bid to that funding stream. It is administered from London but must have (and has) support from the Edinburgh Garrison, who we are liaising with very closely. In addition, we are exploring funding through sportscotland and via developer contributions towards community facilities as the Greenlaw Mains development in Penicuik is in close proximity to Beeslack CHS. PACFC are also expected to raise considerable funds towards the construction of the pitch and they will contribute towards its maintenance thereafter, through an annual charge. As stated in section 2.3 above, the project is structured to be cost-neutral to the Council as far as additional funds are concerned.

3.2 Risk

a) The Community Covenant fund is a national programme and there is a risk that this bid would not be successful. At the moment, the success of this bid means that the project would be practically cost-neutral to the Council so if the bid fails the project would have to either rely heavily on other external funding streams or be abandoned.

b) This project currently depends on MLC leasing / committing the land for up to 10 years. If this or any other aspect of the multi-agency collaboration falls through, the project’s future would be in serious jeopardy. The headteacher chairs the steering group for the project and is in continuous discussions with various stakeholders to ensure this risk is mitigated as much as possible.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

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

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Both the proposed funding and use of this facility are examples of the Council working with other organisations and the wider community to obtain new resources and optimise the use of existing ones. This promotes the Council’s position on different models of service delivery and contributes to desired outcomes for best value, co-production, community cohesion and health & wellbeing.
3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Well documented evidence clearly shows a strong link between engaging young people in sports and reduced youth crime levels and anti-social behaviour. Providing facilities both for the school and the Athletic Club will make a significant contribution to engaging the area’s young people.

The facility will also provide added opportunities for other age groups to engage in physical activities in support of the Council’s promotion of active and healthier lifestyles, thereby contributing to the prevention of some health-related conditions.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Numerous discussions have taken place with members of the local and regional armed forces, community groups, local councillors, sportscotland and officers within the Council. Both the funding and the running/maintenance of the facility will be through adopting a co-productive approach.

All key stakeholders believe that this project will further enhance community cohesion by promoting and supporting the integration of Armed Service Families into wider community organisations and activities.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

The facilities will be DDA compliant and will be open to all sections of the community.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Construction will comply with the required environmental standards.

3.9 IT Issues

There are no IT implications.

4 Recommendations

a) To consider the contents of the report.

b) To approve the proposal to bid for funds for a new 3G pitch at Beeslack Community High School bearing in mind the implications of the land arrangements that would need to be in place.

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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: Opportunity for new football pitch at Beeslack Community High School.

Meeting Presented to: CMT

Author of Report: Ogo Onwuchekwa

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.