

THE PENTLAND HILLS REGIONAL PARK JOINT COMMITTEE

25 November 2004 at 10:00 am in the Regional Park HQ,
Boghall Farmhouse, Biggar Road, Edinburgh

Pentland Hills Regional Park – Proposed New Headquarters

Purpose of report

- 1 To seek the approval of the Joint Committee to establish a new Headquarters and Visitor Centre for the Pentland Hills Regional Park at Flotterstone.

Main report

- 2 The Regional Park Joint Committee of 29 March 2004 noted that discussions were ongoing between the City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils on the matter of identification of a new headquarters for the Regional Park.
- 3 The present Headquarters are located at Boghall Farmhouse which were made available free of charge until 2000. As from 2001, the Scottish Agricultural College who own the building have charged a rental of £13,000 per year based on a month by month lease. The Scottish Agricultural College has indicated that in the medium term they will require the building for other purposes.
- 4 Officers of the Pentland Hills Management Group have had discussions on various sites which may be suitable for locating a building to serve as the HQ for the Regional Park and favour the site at Flotterstone Car Park as the best location.
- 5 At present, a small interpretative building is located within the car park at Flotterstone which it may be possible to extend. There is also sufficient space to enable a complete new building to be constructed. A feasibility study has yet to be carried out.
- 6 Midlothian Council have indicated that they are willing to rent the area of land on which any new building is erected to the City of Edinburgh Council on a

very long lease at minimal rent. Discussions are ongoing between Legal Services and Estates in Edinburgh and Midlothian.

- 7 Any new building as well as serving the purpose of the Headquarters for the Pentland Hills Regional Park, would have interpretative facilities for visitors as well as a teaching room for visiting schools from the Lothians. In addition, the farmers in the Pentland Hills have expressed an interest in the possibility of space which would be used as an outlet for Pentland Hills produce.
- 8 The route to the hills from Flotterstone is the most used route by visitors to the Pentland Hills, and at present, there is little to make visitors aware of the extent of this valuable natural resource to residents of the Lothians and Visitors. The establishment of the Pentland Hills HQ and Visitor Centre at Flotterstone would raise the value placed on the Pentland Hills Regional Park by Edinburgh, Midlothian, West Lothian Council and other partners involved in the management of the park.
- 9 The cost of constructing the new headquarters and Visitor Centre can be met by finance from the City of Edinburgh's Culture and Leisure Department's Capital Programme, grant aid from Scottish Natural Heritage, Midlothian Council's Leader plus programme, the sale of other properties within the Regional Park e.g. Currie Engine Shed and adjacent land, Clubbiedean Cottage and associated buildings. A review of all property within the Regional Park is currently being carried out.

Recommendation

- 10 The Joint Committee is requested to:
 - Approve that a new Headquarters and Visitor Centre for the Pentland Hills Regional Park be established at Flotterstone
 - Approve that design proposals be drawn up by the City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils.
 - Refer this report to Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils for approval.

Iain Park
Acting Parks Manager

Appendices N/A

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Wards affected

Background Papers Available from Director of Culture and Leisure, 23 Waterloo Place