

Update on the Craggs Sports Centre and Queensferry Recreation Centre

Culture and Leisure Committee

26 April 2011

Purpose of report

- 1 This report provides a brief update on plans to transfer the operation of the Craggs Sports Centre and Queensferry Recreation Centre to new providers.

Main report

- 2 Edinburgh Leisure withdrew from the Craggs Sports Centre at the end of December last year. Since that time discussions have been held with several sports organisations and local groups regarding the potential transfer of the operation of the building to a new provider.
- 3 The Council's Procurement Section advised that any transfer of the operation of the building must be exposed to competition, and that the most efficient way to achieve this would be by way of an advertisement in the commercial property section of the Council's website.
- 4 Consequently an advertisement was placed on the Council's website inviting expressions of interest from prospective tenants who wished to operate the building for sports use. A closing date of 9 March was set, and 12 notes of interest were received.
- 5 Letters were sent to all the interested parties requesting details of their organisation, their plans for the Centre, and whether they might consider working alongside another organisation to broaden the range of activities on offer and to help deliver a viable business plan.
- 6 The deadline for interested parties to respond to this letter was 13 April. At the time of writing, a selection panel will shortly consider the applications, and will draw up a short list for interview, based on the set criteria.
- 7 One criterion is the prospective operator's proposals for community access to the Centre. For this reason, a representative from the local community will sit on the selection panel as an observer throughout the selection procedure.
- 8 It is hoped that the Craggs can be offered to the successful organisation for a nominal annual rent, as long as that organisation is registered as a not-for-profit body. As with all such proposals to offer Council property at below market value, this will be subject to approval by the Finance and Resources Committee. In the meantime, the Craggs Sports Centre will be used to process

postal votes for the Scottish Parliamentary 5 May election and the referendum to be held on the same day, on the voting system for UK Parliamentary elections.

- 9 Edinburgh Leisure withdrew from Queensferry Recreation Centre on 27 March. The building has been decommissioned and secured. The associated pitches are still in use and Children and Families has agreed that the changing facilities at Queensferry Community High School will be available to users of the pitches in the evenings and at weekends.
- 10 Discussions have been held with local groups who have shown an interest in taking over the building. Expressions of interest will be invited shortly, and will be considered using the same process as for the Craggs, with the intention of offering the building for a nominal rent to a not-for-profit body, subject to approval by the Finance and Resources Committee. However, Queensferry Recreation Centre is not in the city centre and does not have a sports hall: it is essentially a football changing pavilion with a function room. Consequently, it is unlikely to generate the same level of interest as the Craggs.
- 11 If alternative providers are not found for either or both of the Centres, other options for their future use will be considered. A further update will be provided to Committee at its June meeting.

Financial Implications

- 12 The cost of securing both Centres is currently met from existing Culture and Sport budgets. This cannot be sustained in the long term.

Environmental Impact

- 13 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

- 14 The work described above aims to achieve a positive impact on quality of life for former users of the Craggs Sports Centre and Queensferry Recreation Centre, by finding new operators for both venues. As described above, discussions have been held with local stakeholders and a representative of the local community will observe the proceedings of each selection panel.
- 15 Edinburgh Leisure has conducted an Equality Impact Assessment for the closure of each of these facilities. The report's contents and recommendations are of some relevance to equalities and human rights duties. Local groups who have expressed concern have been involved in the work to date to find new operators, and local interests are embedded in the expressions of interest and selection process for new operators. The recommendations should result in a positive impact on quality of life. For these reasons, the overall equalities relevance score is 4 (out of a possible 9) and a further Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

Recommendations

- 16 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report and notes that an update on progress will be presented to its June meeting.

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Appendices

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Wards affected Almond and Southside/Newington.

Single Outcome Agreement Supports National Outcome 6 “We live longer, healthier lives”

Background Papers