

Midlothian Snowsports Centre / Hillend Country Park: Draft Stage One Planning Brief

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

22nd July 2011

Purpose of report

- 1 To update the Joint Committee about Midlothian Council's proposals for the development of Midlothian Snowsports Centre and other land within Hillend Country Park.

Main report

- 2 At a special meeting held on 27th August 2010 and following an extended period of uncertainty, Midlothian Council decided to keep Midlothian Snowsports Centre open subject to the implementation of efficiency and restructuring proposals and continued negotiation about future funding with Sportscotland.
- 3 Following these negotiations, £553,000 of capital funding has been secured from Sportscotland to improve infrastructure and facilities. A further £400,000 of revenue funding has been made available from the Scottish Government's Active Schools programme to support use by schools throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians.
- 4 In order to support the longer term financial sustainability of the Snowsports Centre, Midlothian Council is proposing to enable complimentary commercial development on land within Hillend Country Park.
- 5 A draft Stage One Planning Brief has been prepared and was approved in principle by Midlothian Council's Planning Committee on 11th January 2011 and tabled at a meeting of the full Council held on 22nd March 2011. Midlothian Council would now like to consult with key stakeholders on the draft Stage One Planning Brief.
- 6 The draft Stage One Planning Brief (Appendix 1) described the planning policy context and extent of potential development opportunities.
- 7 The Snowsports Centre and Hillend Country Park are located within an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), Green Belt and the Pentland Hills Regional

Park. The importance of these designations and the wider landscape, habitat and amenity value of the area are reflected in local planning policy. The draft Brief aims to indicate the potential for appropriate development within the limits of existing planning constraints.

Financial Implications

- 8 Midlothian Council intends that development of complementary facilities would generate additional revenue and increase the customer base of the Snowsports Centre. It is intended that this would contribute to the longer term financial sustainability of the Snowsports Centre.
- 9 Development of new facilities at Hillend may support local economic development by acting as a 'hub', not only for snowsports, but as a gateway for wider public enjoyment of the Pentland Hills for outdoor recreation.

Environmental Impact

- 10 Hillend is an important upland landscape and an important place for recreational access to the Pentland Hills. This sensitivity is reflected in the existing designations and Planning Policies that apply.
- 11 New development would have the potential for adverse impact on landscape quality and the overall character of the Country Park. The draft Stage 1 Planning Brief aims to minimise this impact by identifying land which is screened by existing topography and indicating the type of built development that might be sympathetic to the site.

Recommendations

- 12 It is recommended that the Joint Committee:
 - a) notes the contents of the draft Stage One Planning Brief for Snowsports Centre and Hillend Country Park;
 - b) requests that Officers from Midlothian Council make a presentation on the proposals to the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum; and
 - c) receives regular update reports on the proposals.

David Jamieson
Parks & Greenspace Manager

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Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Relevant to the following National Outcomes: 1 We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe. 2 We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people. 6 We live longer, healthier lives. 10 We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need. 11 We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others. 12 We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations 13 We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity. 14 We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and Production. 15 Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
Background Papers	None