

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 30 January 2018

Lauriston Castle Lodge House and Garden – Proposed Lease

Item number	8 . 4
Report number	
Routine	
Ward	Almond
Council Commitments	47; 52

Executive Summary

The City of Edinburgh Council is working in partnership with the Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not Garden Trust to create a community sensory garden and 'drop in' centre for people with dementia, and their carers, within the Lauriston Castle Gate Lodge.

Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not Garden Trust is a locally-based charity established to provide a city-wide facility for those suffering from dementia and their carers.

To enable the Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not-Garden Trust to apply to major external funding bodies, the Gate Lodge and garden needs to be secured by the Trust. It is proposed to lease the property to the Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not-Garden Trust for a period of 25 years.

Lauriston Castle Lodge House and Garden – Proposed Lease

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve the location of the Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not sensory garden and ‘drop-in’ centre within the Lauriston Castle Lodge House and garden.
- 1.2 To recommend the approval of a 25 year lease to Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not-Garden Trust (EFMNGT) of Lauriston Castle Lodge House and its garden on the terms outlined in this report and on other necessary terms and conditions proposed by the Executive Director of Place.
- 1.3 To refer this report to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 Over 800,000 United Kingdom residents are currently living with dementia and by 2021 that number is expected to increase to 1,000,000. Dementia is a major health concern, not just to the National Health Service (NHS) but to society. Although treatments are improving there is no cure, and this is placing additional strain on resources to provide care for sufferers and support for carers.
- 2.2 Almond Community Partnership’s key actions (Local Community Plan 2014 – 2017) includes caring for its most vulnerable residents and combating social isolation. That includes working with the local community to develop awareness of the needs of people with dementia and their carers. Western Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership has adopted the same priority in its Local Community Plan (LCP). Edinburgh also declared itself Scotland’s first dementia-friendly city in 2014.
- 2.3 West Edinburgh, given its LCP commitments, has developed an innovative partnership approach to provide support and information to dementia sufferers and their carers in line with Scotland’s Dementia Strategy and post-diagnostic support target. Volunteers from the Cramond and Barnton area, with close links to surrounding community councils, have engaged with organisations that are now key stakeholders in EFMNGT. These include NHS Lothian, Alzheimers Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council and the third sector.

- 2.4 The Lodge House and garden is set within the tranquil grounds of the Lauriston Castle estate and lies on Cramond Road South between Cramond, Davidson Mains and Silverknowes, providing an ideal location for a dementia garden and drop-in centre.
- 2.5 Lauriston Castle and its grounds were left in trust to the Scottish nation in 1926 for “the use of the public in all time coming and the intelligent education of the public taste.....”. Originally the Edinburgh Corporation accepted perpetual trusteeship from the Secretary of State for Scotland, taking over day-to-day responsibility for the castle and grounds, though the Council now serves that function. The city’s councillors are ex-officio trustees of Lauriston Castle Trust.
- 2.6 Lauriston Castle Lodge House is a single storey, stone built bungalow with a single storey, flat roofed extension to the rear. It was built towards the end of the 19th Century. Having been unoccupied for several years, it has now fallen into a state of disrepair. The Council originally instructed a condition survey of the building in March 2010, which was updated in January 2016. The survey advises that the lodge is in a “very dilapidated condition” and values the capital cost of bringing it back to a proper state of repair at £88,000.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Through combining the garden and Lodge House, EFMNGT’s vision is to create a community garden offering therapeutic intervention through sensory planting, reminiscence features and awareness raising installations, and a community ‘drop-in’ centre. The centre will be staffed by volunteers offering informal support and signposting, creating a space for people with dementia and their carers, friends and family.
- 3.2 To be certain that there was no legal impediment to the Lauriston Castle Trust granting a lease of the Lodge House and garden, the Council sought an opinion from Brodies LLP. Brodies advised that the Council does have sufficient power to grant a lease on the basis that it would not be at variance with the provisions of the Trust deed.
- 3.3 Provisionally agreed terms for the lease of the Lodge House and garden are as follows:
 - Subjects: Lauriston Castle Lodge House and Garden;
 - Term: Twenty five years;
 - Rental: £1 per annum;
 - Use: Memory garden and associated dementia ‘drop-in’ centre;
 - Costs: EFMNGT will settle the Council’s reasonable professional fees; and
 - Others: All statutory consents will be obtained by EFMNGT, including planning.

- 3.4 A long lease is proposed on the basis that EFMNGT will invest in the long-term development of the Lodge House and garden. A long lease will allow EFMNGT to apply to major external funding bodies. The proposal is to create the memory garden first, before beginning work to refurbish the Lodge House and create the 'drop-in' centre. The project will be funded by monies raised by EFMNGT. They will not be seeking funding from the Council. As a registered charity, EFMNGT will operate on a not for profit basis, with any surplus funds being re-invested in the further development of the project.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Delivery of a community asset to support sufferers of dementia and their families.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 A concessionary lease is justified in this instance. Edinburgh Forget-Me-Not Garden will save the Council substantial capital expenditure by undertaking the refurbishment of the lodge house and garden at its own expense.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 As the report advises, the Council has sought expert legal opinion to ensure it has power to grant the proposed lease. The advice is that the Council does have such power in terms of the Lauriston Castle Trust Deed.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 This report has been assessed in terms of equalities and human rights. There are no negative equality and rights impacts arising from this report.
- 7.2 The creation of a memory garden and dementia café will improve the lives of many dementia sufferers and their carers living within Edinburgh and the Lothians.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no sustainability issues arising from the recommendations of this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation has taken place with local members and Council services. It appears there is broad support for the project.
- 9.2 In October 2017, an e-mail was sent to elected members in their capacity as ex-officio trustees of Lauriston Castle Trust, advising them on the project's progress and what was proposed to finally deliver it.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 None.

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Location plan.

