
TRANSFER OF COCKBURNSPATH FOOTBALL PITCH TO COCKBURNSPATH VILLAGE HALL TRUST

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

16 August 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report proposes that Scottish Borders Council sells the area of 1.66 acres of the Council owned sports pitch in Cockburnspath to the Cockburnspath Village Hall Trust for £1, if asked. A transfer of the pitch to the Hall Trust will facilitate the Trust to apply for grant funding for the development of new sports facilities at the pitch.**
- 1.2 The sports pitch in Cockburnspath has been in Council ownership since 1975 when an area of 2.2 acres was bought from Francis Usher. The village hall is adjacent to the football pitch.
- 1.3 The Cockburnspath Village Hall Trust have drawn up plans to renovate the pitch including the development of a 5 a side pitch, tennis court and running track.
- 1.4 To raise the grant funding for the proposal, the trust require long term security of tenure of the land by way of a transfer of ownership from Scottish Borders Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee authorises the Service Director for Assets & Infrastructure together with the Chief Legal Officer to sell the sports pitch amounting to 1.66 acres for £1, if asked to the Cockburnspath Village Hall Trust (as shown outlined in red on the attached plan).**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 1975 Francis Usher of Dunglass sold an area of 2.2 acres in Cockburnspath to the District Council. This area covered the playing field, children's play park and land next to the old village hall.
- 3.2 A new village hall was built in 2004. It is owned and run by Cockburnspath Village Hall Trust, a registered charity (SCO27488). The playing field is marked out as a football pitch which is maintained by the Council's Neighbourhood Services section.
- 3.3 The pitch is used on an informal basis for local football and the primary school but there is no regular team that play in Cockburnspath. The area of the pitch amounts to 1.66 acres. (see attached plan)
- 3.4 Cockburnspath Community Council and the Village Hall Trust have plans to develop the pitch into a better sports facility with a 5 a side pitch, tennis courts and a running track.
- 3.5 One of the main grant funding bodies for the redevelopment will be the local wind farm funds and they require long term secure tenure rather than a lease from the Council. The Village Hall Trust has therefore requested a transfer of ownership into their name. This will also tie in with their ownership of the adjoining hall.
- 3.6 A change of ownership would reduce the maintenance responsibilities and costs for the Council's Neighbourhood Services section.
- 3.7 The primary school would continue to have use of a pitch if a change of ownership and redevelopment of the facility were to proceed.
- 3.8 A condition of a sale will be that the land is required to be used for sports and amenity use. Any alternative use would require the prior written consent of the Council.
- 3.9 The Council would retain a right of pre-emption so that if the Village Hall Trust ceased the land would revert to the Council at a price of £1.

4 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that the pitch is sold to Cockburnspath Village Hall Trust for a nominal £1, if asked.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The Council's Neighbourhood Services section currently cut the grass at the playing field and an annual saving of £960 could be achieved by passing

that responsibility to the Village Hall Trust. The adjoining play park will continue to be owned and managed by the Council.

The development of the pitch will provide sports facilities for Cockburnspath which the Council could not provide.

The Council classify the playing field as a community asset and therefore it has an asset valuation of Nil.

5.2 Risks and Mitigations

If the sale is not granted an opportunity to facilitate the development of an improved sports facility in Cockburnspath could be lost.

5.3 Equalities

There are no adverse equality implications.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

The sale of land and the development of the sports facilities would help encourage a healthy lifestyle in the community and improve its social well-being.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no effects on carbon emissions as a result of the proposal in this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not affect the Council's rural proofing policy.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, Monitoring Officer, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Officer Audit and Risk, Chief Officer Human Resources, Neighbourhood Services Manager and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Approved by

Martin Joyce

Service Director Assets & Infrastructure Signature

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