

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT – 3RD OCTOBER 2007

ADDITIONAL STREETSPORT CAGES

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request that the Cabinet approve the installation of two new StreetSport Cages in Crosshouse and Newmilns, and agree the proposed site for the similar facility in Darvel subject to the satisfactory outcome of consultation exercises.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the success of existing Multi-use Games Areas in Shortlees and North West Kilmarnock, Leisure Services have worked in partnership with East Ayrshire Sports Council to develop a network of these facilities across East Ayrshire. These new facilities now known as StreetSport Cages, compliment and extend the range of play facilities being made available through the Council's Playpark Improvement Programme.
- 2.2 Further to Committee approval at Community Services Committee on 8th November 2006, a network of facilities was developed via a range of external and internal funding allocations. The development and subsequent installation of this network demonstrated East Ayrshire's forward thinking approach to the development of Community Sport and its commitment to providing young people with positive alternatives to Youth Crime. This was highlighted nationally with the Council being featured on BBC Radio Scotland's Good Morning Scotland Show and on BBC TV's Reporting Scotland.
- 2.3 A subsequent report to Community Services Committee on 31st January 2007 approved the allocation of an additional StreetSport Cage to Darvel. Final implementation, however, was to be subject to a community consultation process.
- 2.4 The original proposal for the Darvel StreetSport Cage was to site it within the boundaries of Morton Park as the majority of youth disorder complaints being received from Darvel focused on this area. However, following community consultation with the residents local to this area and Darvel Community Council it was agreed that the initial location within the park was not suitable and therefore alternative sites would be considered.
- 2.5 The Community Services Committee at its meeting on 28th March 2007 agreed that decisions relating to the geographical location of the proposed site should be postponed until the new Council was in place.
- 2.6 Following the installation of the new facilities in 15 communities in East Ayrshire, a high level of demand has come from various sectors of the local authority area including residents groups and housing associations, community police and other professionals such as Social Workers and Community Workers.

- 2.7 Crosshouse and Newmilns have been identified by leisure staff and partners as the next highest priority areas to receive a StreetSport Cage as a result of issues around perceived anti-social behaviour by young people and the limited access to existing leisure facilities.

3. CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 In relation to Darvel, since March 2007 a range of alternative sites have been investigated to find the most appropriate and beneficial geographical location. These included several alternative sites within the Morton Park area, a further site at Recreation Park, the area around Gavin Hamilton Games Hall and within the grounds of Darvel Primary School.
- 3.2 A number of suitable locations exist within the Park however staff involved in the on-going development of New Sporting Futures incorporating StreetSport Cages are extremely concerned about the potential installation of the facility in this area. Despite the fact that anti-social behaviour is already prevalent within the area, such is the strength of feeling from residents opposed to the new facility it is likely that any future incidence of youth disorder would be attributed by them to the installation of the StreetSport Cage. This could ensure the programme's failure and damage the excellent reputation of the New Sporting Futures project.
- 3.3 Following a number of site visits and internal meetings in recent weeks, an area adjacent to the Gavin Hamilton Sports Centre, in close proximity to the existing grass football pitch, is now considered as being suitable for the development. The community consultation regarding this site has now commenced.
- 3.4 Crosshouse has for some time been perceived as a community which would benefit from youth diversion activities. However, given the limited access to appropriate facilities to deliver these within the community only minimal work has taken place. This has included StreetSport Express visits over the past two years with between 23 and 32 young people attending at the visits.
- 3.5 The local Community Police Constable and senior Police Officers are very supportive of the plan to install a StreetSport Cage in the community and have given an undertaking to provide activities and promote services at the proposed facility. Similarly the local community group, Crosshouse Action Now, have also been long supporters of the proposal and approached this department via the North Communities Federation in July 2006 to express this support.
- 3.6 Although StreetSport Cages already exist within several areas of the Irvine Valley, local Community Police and the Core Support team of Social Workers and Community Link Workers working within the Loudoun Learning Partnership have in the last year highlighted their concerns that no similar facility had been installed in Newmilns.
- 3.7 These professionals recognise Newmilns as home to a particularly excluded group of young people who would benefit greatly from community based youth diversion activities which would also serve to improve confidence and self-esteem via the promotion of leadership opportunities and general involvement in the positive activities promoted at StreetSport Cages.

- 3.8 If approved it will be necessary to meet with local elected members, identify appropriate sites and begin the process of community consultation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed facility at Darvel will have no further cost implications to the Council. This facility is being provided free as part of the initial tender and subsequent contract with installation company Jupiter Play.
- 4.2 The cost of the new facilities will be subject to official estimates from Jupiter Play. It is likely that the total cost for both of the sites including, the multi-Sport units, groundwork, installation of access paths and lighting, and surfaces and floodlighting will not exceed £130,000. This can be allocated from existing departmental balances.
- 4.3 It will also be necessary to appoint a specialist Playpark Inspection Officer for a period of 5 years to work as part of the Outdoor Amenities Team and ensure the on-going maintenance of these and the 18 other StreetSport Facilities is carried out to the standards required by Health & Safety and in line with ROSPA guidance. In addition funding will be required to provide activities and localised training across the network of facilities.
- 4.4 Funding of approximately £100,000 to cover the maintenance and promotion of programmes at the cages until March 2010, and again this can be met from department balances.

5. POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The installation of further StreetSport Cages directly delivers on the Improving Community Safety element of the Community Plan as well as contributing to the Council's actions within the Youth Justice and Anti-Social Behaviour Strategies. Further, this programme directly reflects the Scottish Executive's new Strategy for Sport: "Reaching Higher" which recognises that Sport has the potential to contribute to and compliment work in a range of other areas, including "building, strong, vibrant and cohesive communities"; closing the opportunity gap and increasing participation amongst the most disadvantaged communities"; and "providing diversionary activities particularly in the most disadvantaged communities".
- 5.2 The Council is responsible for their premises and the safety of those working, visiting or operating within them. They therefore have duty under the following legislation to ensure that their premises are safe places: -
- (a) Local Government (Scotland) Act
 - (b) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - (c) The Management of Health and Safety at Work at 1999
 - (d) Occupiers Liability Act
 - (e) Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) Guidance

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The establishment of a network of community based StreetSport Cages clearly demonstrates East Ayrshire's commitment to diverting young people from anti-social behaviour and encouraging involvement in sport as a positive and healthy alternative.
- 6.2 East Ayrshire Council has gained excellent profile from the innovative development of StreetSport Cages both locally and nationally.
- 6.3 In considering the social and demographic circumstances of East Ayrshire and the views and concerns of partner agencies, Crosshouse, Darvel and Newmilns would clearly benefit from the installation of new informal sports facilities for young people.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:-
- (i) note the installation of the Darvel StreetSport Cage at the location identified at Hutchison Drive, close to Gavin Hamilton Sports Centre subject to community consultation;
 - (ii) agree the allocation of two further StreetSport Cages at Crosshouse and Newmilns with sites to be determined subject to community consultation;
 - (iii) agree the allocation of funding for installation, on-going maintenance and service delivery as outlined in section 4 of this report
 - (iv) remit to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to agree sites, consult the community and progress the initiative; and
 - (v) otherwise note the content of the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/KK/BMcC

3rd September 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Community Services Committee: Developing A Network of Multi-Use Games Areas – 8th November 2006
2. Report to Community Services Committee: Allocation of Additional Multi-Use Games Area – 31st January 2007

Any person wishing to inspect any background papers relating to this report, should contact, John Griffiths, Head of Leisure on telephone number (01563) 578179, or by email to - john.griffiths@east-ayrshire.gov.uk