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Dundonald Gymnastics Club (SCIO)

Response to Public Consultation

1 Introduction

This document addresses the issues highlighted in the responses gathered during the consultation process.

The formal asset transfer form is available on the SAC website together with DGC Business Plan, Constitution and Intelligence Report.

We believe they provide a consistent representation of our vision, objectives and values built up over 10 years of operating a successful club, demonstrating our integrity of purpose and benefiting the community.

The principles and regulations surrounding CAT are also published on SAC website and we defer to them for any relevant comments on issues raised regarding the process.

DGC's CAT application is a community of interest application applicable under the legislation and not primarily targeting the geographic community. Gymnastics is a very popular sport and we provide access to the sport for anyone wishing to take part, not just in Dundonald, but throughout South, North and East Ayrshire. We intend to continue to attract participation from throughout the regional area with an aspect of what we do providing a centre of excellence for the delivery of our sport at all levels.

In this regard Muirhead forms a part of the defined community. We are committed to delivering a full range of activities that local people can enjoy and maintain the centre as an important part of the local geographical community.

Muirhead's close proximity to Marr College has seen the area benefit from the multi million pound investment in the regeneration of sports facilities as part of the school rebuild. This project received significant additional SportScotland funding on the condition that it ensured general community access.

Alongside the range of facilities available in Troon, DGC's operation of Muirhead Activity Centre (MAC) will diversify the range of opportunities for the whole community. We question whether so many 'multi-purpose' halls, in close proximity, truly support the development of a diverse range of sporting options or engage in a full range of potential social activities.

The public consultation resulted in a total of 56 responses both supporting the application and raising concerns about the proposal. A summary of the key points relevant to DGC is provided below with a full response in section 4. We have also highlighted those issues that need to be addressed by SAC.

2 The issues raised for DGC to address and a summary of our response -

- **Single sport activity** - gymnastics is a generic term and covers a wide range of activities for people of all ages and abilities. The installation of a sprung floor will provide opportunities for other sports and activities.
- **Viability and sustainability** - the charity currently operates with a small surplus. This is re-invested for the benefit of all members. The Scottish Gymnastics Intelligence Document shows increasing demand for the sport and we believe this provides a sound basis for expanding activities at Muirhead.
- **Governance** - Dundonald Gymnastics Club (DGC) is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation regulated by Office of Scottish Charity Regulator and as such operates within the law as defined in the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- **Traffic** - current car park should meet our needs. Staggering of classes will all for smoothing of traffic flows.

3 The issues raised that SAC should address -

- **Current usage and sustainability** - the documented levels of usage in the centre are not at a level that provide a sustainable long-term future for the premises. The threat of closure has not resulted in an increase in usage or income and the centre is currently operating with reduced opening hours and staffing and no investment. Without investment and a 'change of focus' MAC will lose out to the higher quality nearby facilities.
- **Displacement of current clubs** - SAC is to work with the displaced groups i.e. the hard court sports we cannot accommodate but we would very much like to work with members of Troon OIR and Good Companions and other organisations which could take advantage of the new opportunities we can provide.
- **After School Club** - our understanding is that any new group taking on the facility would require to seek accreditation for provision of this service. MAC does not meet the current standards for gaining this accreditation as it has no access to controlled outdoor areas. The displacement of this service needs to be addressed by SAC.

4 The Issues in Full

4.1 Single Sport Activity

DGC is primarily a gymnastics club and this activity will be the primary sport available within the centre. Gymnastics as a sport has established programs for participants from cradle to grave with mother toddler and pre school classes through to adult gymnastics and activity programs for elderly, disabled and now even dementia based programs. We seek to use our sport to proactively engage and attract membership from all sectors of the community for their benefit.

DGC's plan does indeed confirm that the main hall would no longer be available for hard court sports. SAC is engaged in a process of the management of displaced activities to affordable and local facilities.

Our primary customers are children, with the majority spending large amounts of time at school. The business model needs to be diverse both in the activities it provides and the cross section of the community it appeals to. Redevelopment is key to maximising both gymnastics and non-gymnastics activity.

We intend to provide a gymnastics floor within the main hall. This is a 12m x 12m matted area that provides a degree of rebound. It is entirely suitable for a range of soft kids play activities, birthday party activities and fitness and dance training. There are a host of activities that would benefit from the availability of permanent matted facilities and we would seek to work with local clubs to maximise these opportunities.

4.2 Viability and sustainability

DGC currently operates at a surplus, investing this surplus back into the club. The membership in excess of 400, with an extensive waiting list. The income generated from existing and growing gymnastics membership will provide a strong financial basis for the operation of MAC. With the planned redevelopment of the centre to incorporate a studio room it will also provide the ability to offer lets for a range of activities at reasonable rates.

The consultation process and our own meetings with users highlight a reluctance to see increased pricing for lets. The reality is that the current pricing levels are unsustainable. We will explore all options with potential users including safe, manageable shared use. The goal is to maximise usage to a wide customer base. Affordable is a key aspect of this delivery. Current 'business' users are effectively being subsidised at the taxpayer's expense.

The primary aspect of the business plan is based around gymnastics and is more detailed in this regard. We have an established income and can make reasonable projections around growth in a full-time facility. Dance and health and fitness aspects are an area we will develop based on our own use of professionals in these areas. Further aspects of the plan will be based around an understanding of real demand, needs of existing users and service providers. We do not intend being prescriptive in this regard. Whilst there will be change, multi usage facility access will be available to the community to access.

We will build the future of MAC in the same way we built DGC, ensuring decisions are customer focussed and making affordable investment taking account of key priorities.

4.3 Governance

Dundonald Gymnastics Club (DGC) is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation regulated by Office of Scottish Charity Regulator and as such operates within the law as defined in the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

We are following the legal process for consideration of Community Asset Transfer (CAT) in an open and transparent manner in accordance with SAC published procedures.

For 10 years our club structures and delivery have absolutely aligned to the principles of the SportScotland, British and Scottish Gymnastics and local authority sports strategies. These documents are strongly linked to further government strategy documents such as Reaching Higher for Scotland, Let our Communities Flourish and SAC Local Outcomes Improvement Plans.

Gymnastics is a diverse sport offering multiple disciplines within the sport for all levels and abilities. Our consistent delivery of the sports strategies through gymnastics provides a track record of the delivery of the valuable social, health and economic benefits that the provision of sport and recreational facilities provide.

We work with schools in the delivery of CPD for teachers in their delivery of curriculum based gymnastics, deliver support to school health and wellbeing events, provide after school club activities through Active Schools and have initiated the annual South Ayrshire Schools Gymnastics Competition. Holiday taster events and supporting organisations requesting provision of gymnastics sessions and coach education are all part of our current delivery.

The club provides employment to all its coaches. These are skilled jobs requiring investment in training and opportunities in continued professional development.

A British Gymnastics apprenticeship scheme is also available providing us an opportunity to engage with young people wishing to begin a career in sport.

A full time centre will involve recruiting further coaches and staff to maintain the club and the services it provides, increasing employment opportunities in the local area.

We value club volunteers, child protection officers, management and fundraising committees and now a board of trustees, all involved in the responsible management of the club.

Club representatives also serve the sport as officials on the Scottish Gymnastics Technical Panels and as judges at Scottish and British Gymnastics events.

4.4 Traffic

Parking and access issues were considered when the property was built and were deemed fit for purpose.

We envisage that the current car parking facilities will meet our needs. Operating a full time facility will provide the opportunity to spread classes over a longer period, with staggered start times to reduce potential traffic issues.

5. Conclusion

We have responded to the key issues raised during the consultation process and while we recognise that our proposal will result in the displacement of some of the current sports, it will create opportunities for other sport and leisure activities.

The transfer of the Muirhead Activity Centre to Dundonald Gymnastics Club (SCIO) will allow us to:

- create a regional centre of excellence in gymnastics,
- regenerate Muirhead Activity Centre in an innovative way which compliments the alternative sporting activities available in the local area,
- increase participation in sport & leisure,
- improve the quality of life of individuals and communities,
- improve wellbeing,
- counter anti-social behaviour,
- promote social inclusion,
- raise self-esteem,
- increase confidence and widen horizons.

A Centre with a vibrant future for the community of interest and the local community.