

To Whom It May Concern

Having reviewed all the documentation relating to the community asset transfer request for Muirhead Activity Centre(MAC), I wish to lodge my objection to the application on a number of areas. Within the documents there are a number of points that require additional clarification, some aspects have not been covered at all and overall a lack of community involvement has been engaged with this proposal.

On 24th October 2018 the 4 Troon Councillors attended the MTRA meeting and stated there would be a **6 month public consultation period with a public meeting**, which has now been cut to **4 weeks and no public consultation**, straight away the community have been failed by the Council in this respect - why has this initial process not been followed? Not everyone has access to the internet/computer skills to allow them to object in this way.

At the Christmas 2018 event held at DGC [REDACTED] stated to all parents present that "they had secured Muirhead Activity Centre" how would he know this when it had yet to go to public consultation and back to the leadership panel?

At present the activity centre is well used by a wide variety of groups in the community from pre-school to 80yrs+, there is no way this would happen under DGC, the majority of groups have already been looking at alternative venues given the current uncertainty, I know of one who have secured space at Marr College however many of the groups are unable to locate to a suitable alternative be it due to day, time or venue costs and some groups will fold should the activity centre be transferred away from the Council.

Within the asset transfer form I wish to draw attention to the following:

#### **Section 4: Community Proposal**

The opening sentence proposes that MAC will be use "primarily as a gymnastics facility" which specialist equipment for training installed – straight away this takes away completely the use of the main hall for any other group within the community.

The membership stated is in the region of 400, 200 on a waiting list and the business plan looking to double to membership to 800, this combined with the "unable to provide its membership with additional hours"- realistically based on these figures and the intention of increasing training hours, when will the community be able to use the centre, if at all?

"The lack of specialise facilities..... maximising engagement I he sport with the benefits to the individuals involved" – again how does this benefit the wider community? My daughter attends a gymnastics class, not DGC, and I completely understand the want for a world class training facility to save the elite stars travelling to Glasgow to pursue their dream however due consideration needs to be given to everyone as this is only for a very select few and not the vast majority of participants.

Maximising Asset for the Community – referring to the development of the facility and the "strength and fitness equipment along with dance studio/meeting room/education area"

- where are the architect plans for these areas within the current building?
- What is timescale for these developments?
- What if this is not done?
- Who will be checking to ensure the proposals are carried out?

**Objective 1** – “delivery of a range of sports, health and wellbeing activities complimentary to the facility” – a dance studio and strength and fitness equipment has been previously stated in the document – what else is being suggested to compliment the facility?

**Objective 2** – “maximise the opportunity for people to be involved in the sport of gymnastics” – great that DGC want to offer more opportunity but this should not be at the detriment of the local community with the lack of other user groups having access to the venue primarily due to a specialist floor being installed.

**Objective 4** – “to increase participation in sport & leisure.....” – a wide variety of sport will not be on offer to the community again referring to the specialist floor being installed.

“maintain community access to individuals, locals groups.....” – I refer again to where are the architect drawings for the plans for these areas/rooms. Currently the main hall is used for birthday parties with the bouncy castle etc. in situ for the party – if a specialist floor is installed there will be no area for parties.

“the community will predominantly access the centre by booking into timetables structured coach/instructor led activities” – I understand the need for a timetabled approach as with the current booking system for the centre – who are the structured coach/instructor led activities provided by? DGC? Current user groups? Does this mean that you will not be able to book for instance as individuals looking to play badminton or squash? How will this affect the cost to book the centre? There is no detail within this public document on how much the hire cost of the venue would be for individuals/groups/birthday parties etc. #

Given the proposed rate quoted to some business users, this would put many out of business if they do not increase their prices, clients may not want to pay more for the service they receive so the business loses out with declining numbers and may be forced to fold. – how does this engage with the community?

#### 4.2 Economic Development

“Increased footfall to provide boost for local neighbouring retail and food outlets” – yes the Keystore would benefit but the chip shop and Chinese are not health promoting businesses for elite performing athletes to be attending – so really how much of a boost will there be to the neighbouring shops?

“we further access other sports..... required for maintaining performance athletes” – not

everyone wants to be a performance athlete, provision should still be made and not lose site for recreational sport.

“it is proposed to operate daytime and evening, 7 days a week”

- How much of this time will be available to the community
- How much useable space will be available within the building for sports other than gymnastics?
- Nowhere within the document has any provision been made for extension to the current parking facilities or indeed any form of traffic management plan – the current car park is not big enough in its present form for the current service users, given the figures quoted previously this area falls well short of what will be needed. Central Avenue is a busy, busy road cars, buses, pedestrians and serious consideration needs to be given as to how this will be managed

“provision of access for disability sport” – which sports will be available to disabled patrons and who will provide these sports – again a specialist floor will not allow for a number of sports.

#### **4.4 Negative Consequences**

“Proposed equipment set up will mean that the centre will no longer be available for hard court sporting activities” – so for all the talk of inclusion, benefiting the community, offering sports to compliment gymnastics, the vast majority of current service users **WILL NOT** be able to use the centre in its new form. This is not just one or two groups being displaced, this is many groups i.e. Troon Handball, South Ayrshire Netball, South Ayrshire Learn2Gymnastics, OIR, Football, baton twirlers to name but a few and not including all the people who travel to MAC from out with Troon to use the venue for birthday parties. Yes Marr College has been intimated as a potential venue however this can only be used OUTWITH school hours. Not all of the displaced groups will be able to use Marr College due to days, times, costs that other groups already use the facility, how much space is actually available at Marr College and what is the cost difference to MAC. For any school function out-with school hours that the school wish to use the hall, they have priority of booking so service users run the risk of their programme being interrupted. If your service users drive then access to Marr is fine, however a number of users rely on public transport/walking to the facility. From Muirhead I would not ask anyone to walk over the golf course at night in the pitch black, so due consideration will need to be given for the upgrade of lighting, pathways from Muirhead to Marr. To walk from Muirhead via Dundonald Road to Marr would take approx. 15/20 minutes on a good day not accounting for the howling wind and rain. Again the current service users are losing out and how many people will end up dropping out of the activities they currently participate in, again having a negative impact on the current groups memberships/businesses who provide services.

Reference is again made to the creation for a dance studio/meeting room/education room and excellent kids play facilities and children parties – where are the architect drawings/plans for such ambition?

## **Sporting/Health and Fitness Professionals**

“The facility creates an opportunity to build on the existing community” – there will be no community left as the people of the community who use the centre currently will not be able to do so!

“It provides an opportunity to expand access to the community who have an interest in gymnastics” – again this is only engaging with a small targeted specific group within the community and not aimed at the wider community.

No-where within the proposal does it mention about the current SAC after school club catering for children at both Muirhead and Struthers Primaries allowing parents to work knowing their children and being collected and cared for after school. Where would this service be moved to? Or would this be another service lost and will have a detrimental impact on working parents, some of whom completely rely on this service allowing them to work.

In summary, as much as I would hate to see MAC put forward for closure, I feel the Council have a vested interest to protect this facility for the wider community. SAC need to look at streamlining the opening hours, maximising the venue at all times, offering more classes/activities during the school holidays and promoting the centre to its full potential. The vast majority of residents in Muirhead fall into SIMD2, and consideration must be taken into account for this, not everyone wants to be a gymnast, not everyone can afford the exorbitant fees for classes and the club sportswear. As far as I can see the only people this proposed **COMMUNITY** asset transfer will benefit are the people who run DGC, there is no sustainable benefit to the community.

I look forward to receiving a full response to my email and would ask how long it will take for the responses to be published on line as stated on the SAC website?

[REDACTED]