

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date

26 September 2019



To: [REDACTED], Team Leader (Communities)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Margo Williamson

Dear [REDACTED]

Community Asset Transfer – Astro Pitch at Arbroath Sports Centre

I write in reference to the above Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application. This letter constitutes the formal response from the Schools & Learning Service.

As you will be aware the pitch is owned and utilised by Schools & Learning with Angus Alive and Active Schools using it outside of school hours. As the owners and main users of the pitch Schools & Learning have several concerns with the application.

Firstly the hours that Skilz Academy have suggested the school would be able to use the pitch (9am-4pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-1pm on Fridays) would be insufficient to meet the needs of the School as it does not take into account existing after schools clubs, inter school and school competitions which frequently go beyond the school day. The school have suggested that they would need exclusive use from 8am-5pm Monday to Friday as a minimum. This would provide flexibility for their PE curriculum and open use to the school community during school hours. I understand the community campuses operate a similar arrangement with Angus Alive.

We also have concerns about diversity of access to the pitch and need assurance that bookings will be managed in such a way to ensure all clubs have a fair chance to access 'in demand' time slots, irrespective of the groups being catered for. We note the possibility of a flexible pricing structure however are also aware that financial projections are based on the £60p/h rate. We want to avoid a situation, as has occurred in other locations, where youth and community groups are at a disadvantage compared to private, recreational groups.

The school has also highlighted security concerns as the pitch can only be accessed either by walking through the school grounds (a fenced off pathway that would need to be unlocked), around the school or around the sports centre. There is no path or road access around the buildings to the pitch.

In addition as there are no existing changing facilities associated with the pitch, groups may expect to use the sport centre or school's changing facilities. Increased footfall may put additional pressure on these facilities. This would need careful consideration and planning to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all users of facilities on these sites. Overall management of, access to and use of the facility would need to be coordinated with Angus Alive and the School and their arrangements and programmes with potential for disruption and conflicting requirements.

The location of the pitch at the centre of the school grounds poses an issue for future potential improvements by both the group and Schools & Learning. Releasing the asset would limit available space for future Schools & Learning developments and current and on-going activities and programmes. The access issue would again pose a problem for the group looking to get machinery and materials in to build the proposed community building and replace the playing surface with the potential for significant safety concerns and disruption if the building works happened during term time.

We note that the application contains little detail on the anticipated costs of renovating the facility. The pitch does have drainage issues and we are concerned that the costs of addressing this and re-laying the AstroTurf has not been fully considered.

Finally the business case outlines that the group would pay for the electricity for the floodlights. To enable this a separate meter would be required.

Yours sincerely



Manager – Support Services