

AGENDA ITEM

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: Community Use of PFI Class '98 Schools
Meeting: Education and Leisure Committee
Date: 20 May 2008
Author: Director of Community Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details of proposed arrangements for access to Braes and Larbert High Schools to the wider Community.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, an ongoing issue for the community and the Council has been gaining affordable and reasonable access times to the Class '98 schools. The current lack of informal access for recreational purposes is particularly apparent in two local communities, Larbert and the Braes, where there are few immediate facilities for the community to participate in leisure activity. This is reflected in the current uptake of lets by the community of both schools, with access dominated by organised clubs, with very little informal access by individuals and families of the immediate communities.
- 2.2 This lack of access has had and continues to have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Council, its partners and community groups to encourage community leisure activity and addressing this issue is fundamental to securing sustainable improvement in these areas.
- 2.3 Having recognised this, the Council, through its allocation of additional resources in 2008/09 budget, recognise the importance of this being addressed and this report outlines the basis of the access and how it is proposed to be delivered from 30 June 2008.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The detailed staffing requirements to support a programme of access has been worked up which will facilitate access by the community to these particular schools at times similar to that offered through the provision of the other sport and leisure facilities across the area.
- 3.2 The times proposed for the schools to be open for wider community access during school term time (39 weeks) is proposed as follows:

Day	Time
Monday – Friday	5.30pm – 10.00pm
Saturday	9.00am – 6.00pm
Sunday	Closed

- 3.4 During school term time, community access will be run in tandem with school extra curricular activities on Saturday mornings across a number of school facilities. Close dialogue will be established with each of the schools to ensure a working relationship is fostered that ensures school and community demands are satisfied as effectively as possible.
- 3.5 During school holidays it is proposed that a separate timetable will operate offering more comprehensive access to the community. It is recommended that the Easter, Summer and October breaks are recognised (10 weeks) for this programme, with the exception being Christmas, as this is traditionally a very quiet period and that Public Holidays and in-service days will not be covered under this proposal.

The times proposed for opening of the schools during school holiday periods are as follows:

Day	Time
Monday – Friday	1.00pm – 10.00pm
Saturday	9.00am – 6.00pm
Sunday	Closed

4 PROGRAMME

- 4.1 A programme of activity is currently being developed to offer to the public in order that opportunities will exist for the wider community to participate in sports and leisure activity.
- 4.2 Planned activities on offer will be casual swimming, sports hall activities including badminton, basketball, aerobics and martial arts classes. In addition, there will be access opportunities developed in conjunction with Community Education for other leisure activities.
- 4.3 As Members will be aware, there is currently existing clubs and organisations hiring the facilities at each of the schools on a regular basis for activities. Displacement of groups is not desirable therefore in order to accommodate casual access by the public, it is proposed to dovetail existing group use with that of the public. This will enable extensive casual use for the additional community access times planned, to be fully available. Such access will cover both swimming pool activity and dry side activity.
- 4.4 Greater flexibility will be available, particularly for swimming clubs and development squads, when the new Community Schools open starting with Grangemouth High School in December later this year.

- 4.5 In order that the new community access timetable is accommodated, meetings have and continue to be had with existing hiring groups at each of the two schools in order to accommodate recreational access times. Such dialogue has taken place with the Council's Swimming Development Team, Falkirk Otters, Grangemouth Amateur Swimming Club and organisers of specific Health Initiative Programmes.
- 4.6 The outcome of these discussions is for access to be available for casual use to both the dry and wet side facilities at the following times:-

Braes and Larbert High Schools

School Term Time

- Monday – Friday 5.30pm to 10.00pm
- Saturday 9.00am to 6.00pm

School Holidays

- Monday – Friday 1.00pm to 10.00pm
- Saturday 9.00am to 6.00pm

- 4.7 It should be noted that existing hiring groups usage will be accommodated during the above access times.
- 4.8 It is proposed that the Sport and Leisure Charges used in the Leisure Centres operated by Community Services, be adopted as the charges to be levied to all individuals and groups utilising the facilities during the community access times. Groups who currently obtain free access under the policy adopted by the Education Services Department should however be recognised and continued (free to Under 18 groups).
- 4.9 Staffing
Key to the effective operation of the school facilities will be the employment of appropriate staffing. This will include the appointment of a temporary Principal Officer to oversee the general management of the schools programmed use and its development in the future. In addition, up to four temporary Leisure Assistant posts per school will be required to fulfil the general day-to-day duties and responsibilities associated with community access. The budgeted cost of staffing the operations of the two schools will be £165K.

5. UPGRADE WORKS

- 5.1 An essential element of facilitating greater community access will be adaptations to existing entrance and reception areas, including bookings and management systems, pay points and general control functions associated with community access to the schools.
- 5.2 Surveys of the schools have recently been carried out and to determine the specific requirements for the sound operational management of the communities use of the facilities.
- 5.3 The budget cost for these works is some £30K.

6 FINANCE

- 6.1 The total budget costs associated with providing the proposed community access is:

Expenditure

Staffing	£165K
Class '98 Charge – Term Time	£60K
Class '98 Charge – Holiday's	£45K
Marketing & Promotion	£10K
Consumables	£10K
Capital Works	£30K

Income £30K

Net Cost £290K

- 6.2 The level of income to be derived from the extended core opening hours is estimated to be some £30,000. In determining this level, a number of assumptions have been made:-
- Income from swimming activity : £18k
 - Income from Dry side activity (includes synthetic surface) : £12k

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The decision to secure community wide access to the Braes and Larbert High Schools is considered key in enabling participation in more active forms of leisure activity in these particular communities.
- 7.2 The proposals detailed above will enable community wide access to be delivered.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the proposals for access and opening times.
- Consider the recommendation on the charges to be levied for access to the facilities by the public being based on the charges levied by Sport and Leisure Services and refer to Policy and Resources Committee for approval.
- To note that free access afforded to junior groups (Under 18's) under the policy operated by Education Services will be retained.
- Seek an update report following the October 2008 break to ascertain how the programme is working and assess user feedback.

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Director

Date: 6th May 2008

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL