

# Anyone for tennis? New courts may be on the way

Councillors on the Culture and Sport Committee will be asked next week to bring under-used sports facilities back into use by agreeing funding to upgrade some pitches and construct new courts in Sighthill, Queensferry and Trinity.

When the committee meets on Tuesday 10 March 2015 members will be asked to agree an investment of £130,000 into pre-existing rugby and football facilities and new tennis and basketball courts.

The Sport Partnership Projects: capital contributions by Culture and Sport report has outlined a funding package designed to boost participation in outdoor sport in the Capital.



These courts in Leith Links were opened by Cllr Hinds in 2013

Under the proposals, Councillors will be asked to allocate £50,000 as the Council works in partnership with Scottish Rugby and Edinburgh Napier University to locate the BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy in Sighthill. The project will enable a stream of selected young players to follow their performance pathway, alongside hosting rugby skills camps through contacts with local schools. The changing pavilion in Sighthill Park will be upgraded as part of the works being undertaken for the Academy, and Edinburgh Leisure will continue to manage the bookings for the pitches which will remain accessible to local people and clubs.



Councillor Richard Lewis, Culture & Sport Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “We have [a range of outdoor courts and pitches in Edinburgh](#) but some sites are being better used than others. By upgrading and adding to the facilities we already have, we will hope to inspire more people to get into outdoor sport and physical activity.

“The BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy will support young and aspiring rugby players as they develop their skills and aim to reach their full potential, whether at a club or professional level, but we are also conscious of the needs of local pitch users. In Sighthill Park we have five football pitches but they are being under-used. By partnering with the University, we could offer a new home for Napier’s pitch sports teams, while also offering better facilities for local users, schools and community groups.”

Mark Dodson, Chief Executive of Scottish Rugby added: “The BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academies are a key pillar of our strategy to give young, talented boys and girls the chance to develop their rugby and life skills, close to home. We have been working for some time with our partners, Edinburgh Napier University and City of Edinburgh Council to develop this project and we hope this important first step at Sighthill can be taken.”

A spokesman for Edinburgh Napier University commented: “The prospect of a BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy based at Sighthill is an exciting one, and we support the idea of growing the use of the Sighthill Park pitches for the benefit of the local community, Scotland’s emerging rugby stars and our students.

“We hope that the ongoing discussions, including the plan to improve the sports pavilion at the park, are successful. In the meantime, it’s important that local voices are heard and so we will be continuing to engage with community groups to get their take on the proposals.”

The Council will also be asked to provide £10,000 to complete the re-instatement of two tennis courts and creation of a new basketball court in Victoria Park, to be opened in time for the school summer break with free taster sessions. The rest of the cost is being met by the North Edinburgh Partnership and sportscotland.

Under a Section 75 Agreement with developers of the former Agilent site in Queensferry, £70,000 is available to the Council to be reinvested in local sports facilities in the area. Councillors will consider using the funding to convert grass football pitches into all-weather 3G pitches which can accommodate rugby as well as football training.