

New ski resort at Hillend approved

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

A new £13.8million Hillend Destination resort in Midlothian took another step forward this week as councillors granted planning permission in principle to the project.

Funding for the proposed redevelopment of Midlothian Snowsport Centre, at Hillend Country Park, had already been approved by the local authority, which is the applicant, and will see the site turned into an all-weather leisure facility.

A report to Midlothian Council's planning committee this week said that the new development would create 80 full-time jobs – 30 with the council itself and 50 through third-party operators at the site.

And it revealed that the timescale for the project was to have it complete within the next two or three years.

Among the plans to redevelop the centre, which is used by local schools as an educational centre as well as a public sports venue, and create a round-the-year venue are hotel accommodation, glamping sites, food courts and cafe facilities.

An alpine coaster and zipline are expected to be added to the outdoor snowsport activities, with plans to create soft play and high ropes areas inside.

The committee was told that concerns over the traffic impact on the access route via the A702, the size of the development and local access had led Damhead Community Council to object to the plans but that it had said it was supportive of much of the proposal.

A report by planning chiefs, however, said the community council was willing to work with the council and other parties to find a solution to its concerns.

No other statutory consultants objected to the project and officers received three representations citing concerns over the scale of the development and its impact on the surrounding areas.

Planning officers recommended the committee grant planning permission in principle, with a wide range of conditions attached covering its development as it moves forward.

The committee unanimously supported the recommendation.