

Skate park and pump track set to go before councillors for approval

Plans for a skate park, pump track and basketball court next to a community sports pitch in Dunbar have been called before councillors for a decision after splitting the community.

The proposals for the park at Hallhill, in the town, have been recommended for approval by East Lothian Council's planning officers.

But it will be decided at a meeting of elected members after two councillors called it in for debate in the wake of local support and objections.

A report to councillors says 76 representations were made over the application with 55 objecting and 20 supporting the project with one neither for or against.

Objectors raised concerns about the impact on local wildlife and safety of children describing the area planned for the site as a "secluded area where young people congregate to drink, take drugs and make fires etc".

Supporter said the new facilities would provide young people with something to do as well as offering multi-generational activities to families and had the "ability to inspire and improve the lives of the whole community by providing much

needed community space”.

The officers report said Dunbar Community Development and Heritage Trust (DCDHT), who own the land at Hallhill Sports Centre and surrounding woods, brought the application on behalf of community groups.

IT said: “The proposed skate park, basketball court, changing rooms and café will be delivered through the DCDHT for the community and that DCDHT will also manage the day-to-day operation of the facilities through an agreement with another community organisation.”

It also acknowledged that council leader and planning convenor Councillor Norman Hampshire is chairman of the DCDHT adding: ” This planning application was submitted by the Development Company Trustee, Mr Robert Peters, as Councillor Hampshire is a member of the planning committee.

“Councillor Hampshire has been supporting the skateboarding group named ‘Space Dunbar’ to help develop their plans for the new skatepark and council officers have been working on the development of the design of the pump track along with other proposed tracks across East Lothian.”

Officers are recommending the plans are given the go ahead saying they fit into the Local Development Plan. The committee meets on Tuesday to hear the application.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter