

**RESPONSE TO DSG ACTION DSG(2008)M017/A031 – HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
REPORT ON SPORTS/ARTS FACILITIES**

The Sports and Arts report has not been in front of the council as yet and is viewed as a long-term issue that would be looked at as part of the Capital Review that would make up the next Capital Plan. The next Capital Plan will likely be 10 year plan rather than the 5 year plans that have been used in the past. The current Capital Plan runs until 2011/12. We are likely to begin the initial review for the next capital plan in April - June 2009 although any outcome from that would probably not be available for a considerable time after that.

The previous administration never discussed the report and it will be unlikely to come before the current administration until the Capital Review begins.

The timescales in the report are very tentative and only conjectural on the part of the consultants.

The costs are merely indicative and will be unlikely to be anywhere near accurate by the time the next Capital Plan is prepared.

The council has also moved away from individual services Capital Planning towards the idea of a whole Capital Plan covering all capital spending.

In view of the above it is not possible to say at present that there is –  
a. an Administration view on the Sports/Arts report or  
b. give an idea of a date when the venues outlined will be included in future Capital Plans

All we can say at present is that the report will be included as part of the review of capital spending that will form the next 10 year Capital Plan. But there are no guarantees that it will be included let alone that they will be built within the timescale of the next Capital Plan. As you are aware there is pressure to improve the facilities at the two high schools and no doubt this will also be looked at as part of the capital review. There are a great many factors to be considered in the capital review covering as it does many services.

There are also a number of unknowns such as the fact that as yet we have no detail on the Scottish Futures Trust that the Scottish Government has said may be a source of finance in the future.

The preferred view of the last Caithness area committee before the report was commissioned was that new facilities in the county should be closely related with the two high schools but it will be for the current administration of the whole Highland council to agree the future Capital Plan.

Other groups with proposals for arts venues may not wish to await the long-term plans of the council especially if they see a way of taking something forward in a much shorter time-scale. Given the increasing pressure and needs of the schools any capital spend in coming years is likely to be focussed in that area and if it is possible to accommodate Arts/Sports facilities as part of that then no doubt they will be looked at as part of the overall plan.

Bill Fernie  
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I have asked Bill as ECS chair to give the administrations response.

My understanding is this.

The report was commissioned by ECS and has been completed you will have no doubt see a copy. The councils capital plan does not currently have anything in place to deal with issues raised in the report and wont have until it is next reviewed. I understand the report has not been submitted to an ECS committee at this stage as until a review of the capital programme is initiated there is little merit in doing so. I would imagine that when a review is initiated this report will form part of that review along with any other pressures. The capital plan will not be reviewed until after the current one ends post 2011-12.

The current and passed administrations have not taken a view on this report as it has never been presented to council. How ever when it is submitted the costings timescale etc will all need to be revised to take into account to reflect any changes in the political and financial environment.

Bill will no doubt want to add something regarding future capital plans which I am not in a position to comment on.

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