

NOTICE OF REPRESENTATIONS

Community Asset Transfer Request

Ralston Community Sports Centre – Kelburne Hockey and Community Sports Club

REPRESENTATIONS: AGAINST THE COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

INTRODUCTION

Following notification of a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Request in relation to Ralston Community Sports Centre (RCSC) published on Tuesday 31st of May 2022, a total of **2941** Representations were received by the end date for representations of 1st July.

The CAT Request, submitted by Kelburne Hockey and Community Sports Club, is for a long-term lease of the sports centre and playing fields for the purpose of redeveloping the Sports Centre to provide a wider range of sports and activities, extend the opening hours of the Centre and to create an all level Hockey pitch.

Within the total representations, **272** were received by post or into the CAT Mailbox on or before the 1st of July. This figure included **31** representations that did not provide a full address; **6** that did not state if they were in favour or against the CAT Request; and **27** representations that did not provide any reason for why they either supported or rejected the CAT Request. **1263** signed letters were delivered to the Council on 1st July and are included in the total and breakdown of representations below. A further **1406** signatures were provided in the form of petitions. These have been included in the total but **are not included** in the breakdown below.

The total number of representations received **excluding** petitions is **1535**. Of these, **118** (7.7%) are in favour of the CAT and **1417** (92.3%) are against.

Further analysis of the 1535 representations **excluding** petitions, shows that **900** (58.6%) came from the PA1 postcode area of Paisley; a further **308** (20.7%) came from other parts of Renfrewshire and **287** (18.7%) from other parts of Scotland. The balance of 40 representation (2.61%) did not provide an address or postcode.

Due to the scale of the representations received, the Council is unable to publish each one. Instead, each representation received, including bulk letters but **excluding petitions**, has been recorded and analysed to identify common themes. Two separate notices, *FOR* and *AGAINST*, are being published on the Council Website with numbers for and against each theme identified. Where a single representation cited more than one theme in their reasons, each reason provided has been counted under the appropriate theme.

Representations AGAINST the CAT Transfer Request

The number of representations received **AGAINST** the CAT Request are **1417**, which includes **30** representations made which were non-compliant and **27 (3)** which did not provide any reason for their objection. This figure **INCLUDES** all letters delivered to the Council on 1st July but **EXCLUDES PETITIONS**. Representations not fully compliant are provided in brackets below.

The comments included below have been selected as an illustration of all comments made under each theme and represent the wide breadth of comments made. These are all direct quotes from the representations made and do not reflect the opinions of Renfrewshire Council

The numbers below refer to the total number of representations citing the theme as a reason for their objection.

THEME 1: Loss of Football Provision and Ralston Skills 636 (15)

Comments include:

- “The [Ralston Skills] programme is a massive asset to the community, a local treasure, well respected and a very celebrated part of the local community with local children at the heart of it”, *Local Resident*
- “It’s a myth if anyone who says there are plenty of facilities to use...all football pitches are booked to capacity for Training Monday to Friday 1730 -2130...as a team we have struggled to book other pitches when Ralston is not available”, *Parent Local Football Club*
- “Over 1000 children, boys & girls, play matches and train in Ralston on a weekly basis”, *Various*
- “As a league we use this facility every Saturday and Sunday... the grass area has never been suitable for young people to play football on. I hope you consider the impact to the wider community”, *Renfrewshire Football League*
- “This piece of land has been incredibly well used by youths for over 2 decades who wish to play football. Over 1000 youths and adults use the football pitch every week. If this CAT were to go ahead, hundreds of these youths would have nowhere to go and it would see the end of the current Ralston skills class that runs every Saturday that gives young kids the chance to develop their skills before they can join a youth team. This would be incredibly detrimental for the future of football in Scotland”, *Local Resident*
- “My son, like many other children in the local area goes to Ralston Skills faithfully every Saturday morning. It plays a big part in developing his social skills as well as his overall health and well-being. If Kelburne Hockey Club are successful in their application, Ralston Skills would cease to exist which would be an absolute travesty”, *Local Resident and Parent*
- “I object because this transfer would directly impact on my own club...we have teams who use this facility on a regular basis...impact on wider local YFL... now looking to perhaps taking all of their business to Inverclyde”, *Renfrewshire Football Club*
- “For this asset to be given to a hockey club would be the wrong decision as football has more participants and this facility has been utilised by [local] league for many years”, *Renfrewshire Football Club*

THEME 2: Loss of Greenspace 312 (6)

Comments include:

- “Do not take away this public space from the children of Ralston and the wider Paisley community that need this hub space for organised football”, *Local Resident*
- “...potential that youths who used this ground would then turn to anti -social behaviour, hanging about on the streets as they no longer have green space to play on”, *Local Resident*
- “If the CAT goes ahead then there will be no public, open green space in Ralston”, *Various*
- “Without this area, there is nowhere for local people to allow their kids a little freedom, come to play with their friends in a safe environment, no traffic and away from the main road...not to mention the many of us that use the grass and surrounding area to walk our dogs again with no traffic”, *Local Resident*

THEME 3: Concerns about Ownership of RCSC 518 (5)

Comments include:

- “...our community sports centre should remain in public ownership”, *Local Resident*
- “It’s important to ensure the whole grass area, including the sports centre, remains a public asset. It’s space for young and old to use freely”, *Local Resident*
- “I would like to see the Sports Centre stay within the community”, *Local Resident*
- “I completely object to the single public green sports space available in the Ralston area being transferred to a single private sports club. (Kelburne Hockey Club)”, *Local Resident*
- “I wish to have Ralston Community Sports in public ownership”, *Local Resident*
- “I believe that RCSC should continue to be run by OneRen on behalf of Renfrewshire Council”, *RCC Letters*
- “The only way to ensure this facility is available for the maximum benefit of Renfrewshire residents is to retain it as publicly owned and managed”, *Local Resident*

THEME 4: Use of Public Grants 264 (0)

Comments include:

- “I don’t believe they should be using public money to fund a private club” *Local Resident*
- Kelburne Hockey Club are requesting hundreds of thousands of pounds from the public purse....as a Council Taxpayer I would prefer my money to be invested in a publicly owned facility or not at all”, *Local Resident*
- “If the council are willing to grant this funding then why can’t this money (600k) be used to upgrade and develop the current facility which was widely used by local groups”, *Local Resident*
- I find it nothing short of a disgrace that public money would be used in order to refurbish the facility prior to any asset transfer”, *Local Resident*
- “Instead of granting KHC a large sum of public funds to take Ralston Sports Centre out of public hands, Renfrewshire Council should be promoting and developing the Ralston facility for community use” *RCC Letters*

THEME 5: Concerns about Environmental Impacts 24 (0)

Comments include:

- “The proposal....inevitably will evolve to include a license, which of course brings its own issues.... no concerns addressed regarding additional traffic flow whilst there were abrasive responses from the Kelburne representative during the meetings”, *Local Resident*
- “Many parents use the sports centre car park to drop their children off at school and pick them up again. This is an extremely busy place at these times without adding more cars from Kelburne Hockey Club into the mix”, *Local Resident*
- “With heavier traffic, comes the additional risk of traffic accidents - I'm especially worried for the young children who play locally”, *Local Resident*

THEME 6: Long-term Lack of Investment in RCSC 236 (0)

Comments include:

- [The facility] “...is well used by the community but there is no doubt it could be enhanced and better used”, *Political Representative*
- “Renfrewshire Leisure/One Ren has not promoted the centre. While it has become a successful football venue, the gym and fitness classes available at Ralston Community Sports Centre have never been promoted as they could have been.”, *Local Resident*
- “The mere fact this facility has been wilfully neglected in an attempt to meet the criteria for asset transfer is a scandal”, *Local Resident*
- “Renfrewshire leisure have failed to promote this facility over the past three years and look as if they have actively tried to run this facility down using the COVID pandemic as an excuse”, *Local Resident*

THEME 7: Kelburne Hockey Club Capability 372 (5)

Comments include:

- “I have grave concerns on just how actually KHC aim to maintain the services and remain compliant with building services”, *Local Resident*
- “Kelburne Hockey Club's consultation with the local community has been dreadful and it has caused much anger and dis-trust”, *Local Resident*
- “The charity which KHC have recently set up only gives voting rights to adult hockey members...local residents can join as associate members but would not have voting rights [and] would have no way of influencing how the centre was run which in principle is wrong and makes RCSC a private club not a community asset”, *Local Resident*
- “The CAT is a moving feast which makes it impossible for people to comment on”, *Local Resident*
- “The CAT makes no realistic provision for the up to 1000 players, many of them children, who use the Astroturf pitch currently”, *Football Club*
- “[KHC] incompetent job of running public meeting...question ability to run facility”, *RCC Letters*

- “KHC simply don't have the finance or expertise to run such an operation as their business plan sets out....their figures don't stand up, either in running costs or maintenance”, *Local Resident*
- “Kelburne Hockey Club’s consultation with the local community has been awful throughout this process and very inconsistent....I am left baffled why there are inconsistencies at such a late stage in their application”, *Local Resident*
- “A solution exists for Kelburne at the Onyx hockey pitch at Linwood. There is no need for it to move to Ralston and cause so much disruption”, *Local Resident*
- “Financial details deleted....prevents proper assessment of viability”, RCC Letters

END