



# ASSET



## PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN WEST CALDER AND POLBETH

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The new medical centre facilities comprise doctors' surgeries, consultant rooms, and treatment rooms. In addition there are clinics and offices for physiotherapy, midwifery, speech & language, podiatry, health education and patient support. Completion of the new facility has allowed the GP's to serve a wider catchment area.

Additional benefits derived from the project are improved sports facilities for the communities of West Calder and Polbeth. This includes a modern stadium plus improved pitches and pavilions to benefit a number of clubs.

All these facilities will contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the local community whilst meeting the West Lothian.

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# PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN WEST CALDER AND POLBETH

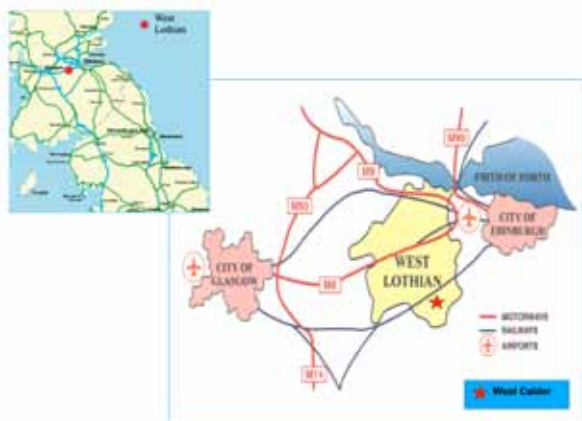
## INTRODUCTION

I am a surveyor at West Lothian Council, in the internal estates management service. The team focuses on the management of the council's non-operational property portfolio and delivers a professional surveying service to internal and external customers. This project is typical of our day-to-day workload except we seldom have the opportunity to take stock and look at the wider context. Whilst this project was not exceptional the number of stakeholders involved and the extended timescale, 5 years from beginning to end, complicated it.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the contribution a professional surveyor can make to a complex partnership project.

## Objective and background

The objective of this project was to promote health and wellbeing in West Calder and Polbeth. West Lothian Council is a unitary authority created in the 1996 Local Government Reorganisation. It is located to the eastern end of the central belt between Edinburgh and Glasgow. The population is about 170,000. It is the fastest growing area in Scotland. The population is centred on five historic burghs, a number of villages and a 1970s new town, Livingston.



One of the aims of the council's Community and Corporate Plan is to work with other public sector partners to improve the health and reduce inequalities between the people of West Lothian. This is to be measured by people living longer and healthier lives and by reducing the gap between the most and least healthy.

This project's focus was on the villages of West Calder and Polbeth. These are located 3 miles to the southwest of Livingston and have a joint population of about 6,000. The villages' historic growth came from oil shale extraction but they are now dormitory settlements feeding larger employment areas.

The original health facilities were located close to the centre of West Calder and comprised a separate GP Surgery that was too small and Clinic listed as obsolete for sometime. So NHS Lothian engaged General Practice Investment Corporation Ltd (GPI) to provide the new medical centre with the objective of providing a new and dramatically improved health facility for West Calder in a state of the art building to include

- 12 doctors' surgeries and
- 7 consulting and treatment rooms and
- Clinics and offices for various uses such as physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, health education, and administration

This has enabled the participating GPs to expand their catchment areas.

## The site

After an extensive search, a site of 4.42 acres at Burngrange, already owned by the council, was identified as the most suitable location for the new development. The site is located next to the main road making it easily accessible, but unfortunately it was leased to West Calder United Football Club. This increased the number of external parties involved and the outcomes to be achieved. The Council's main property role was to make the site available for sale to GPI, to facilitate the successful delivery of this multi-faceted project.

## Added benefits

The additional benefits for the communities of West Calder and Polbeth were the creation of improved sports facilities, a children's play area at Polbeth and new social housing at Burngrange.

## Partnership working

The facilities will contribute to the improvement of the health and well being of both communities and help the Council to meet other corporate objectives include Partnership Working with both internal and external partners.

## Geographical context



This plan shows the villages of West Calder and Polbeth. These are less than 1½ miles apart. Hermand Park is midway between the two. The plan also shows the locations of the former GP Surgery and clinic, the new medical facilities, Hermand Park and Limefield Park.

## The parties

In addition to the developer GPI other parties and roles identified were

- West Calder United Football Club: a local adult team, playing in a semi-professional league. To release Burngrange, the club had to be relocated and the preferred location was Hermand Park, which Polbeth United were currently using.
- Polbeth United: is community based and runs youth teams across various age groups. To release Hermand Park for the juniors new facilities were required at Polbeth for the team.
- sportscotland approval was needed for the proposals as their remit is to safeguard and enhance sporting facilities.
- Scottish Junior Football Association approval was needed for the new facilities for the juniors.
- West Lothian Council had to agree the terms of the sale of the Burngrange site to GPI.
- Housing Association interest in the remainder of the Burngrange site had to be secured and sale terms agreed to enable the provision of social housing.
- Also there were legal issues related to the relocation of the GP Practice from the old surgery, to the new medical centre, both owned by GPI, and the delivery of the project required collaboration with the council's Social Policy, Sports and Outdoor Education, Legal and Planning Departments.

The coordination and leadership of the project fell to the council, as both playingfields are Council assets.

## The solution

The emerging solution included the following.

The developer GPI

- Provided funding for the purchase of the land at Burngrange, (which gave the council a capital receipt in line with budget of £280,000); and £80,000 to fund the additional pitch at Polbeth.
- Procured design and build contracts for the new 1,877 sm medical centre, cost about £ 3 million and the 260sqm pavilion at Hermand Park and fencing, at a cost of about £0.5 million and
- Ensured compliance with planning and transport requirements

West Calder United Football Club Juniors had exclusive occupation of Burngrange under a long lease until 30 June 2010 so simultaneous agreement was reached for

- The renunciation of the lease
- A licence to occupy enabling continued occupation until Hermand Park was ready and
- An agreement for lease allowed for the rent to remain unchanged until 30 June 2010 and then increase from 1st July 2010.

The difficulty was that the new home ground had to be in West Calder, had to be for the Club's exclusive use, meet the specification agreed with the juniors and the rigid requirements of the Scottish Junior Football Association. This included a new pavilion with changing facilities for the home team, the away team and the match officials, and have a spectators' stand and fencing around of the playing area. Hermand Park, the preferred site, was extensively used by Polbeth United. Fortunately local community groups agreed to the team relocating to Polbeth, where the facilities have been upgraded.

sportscotland is a Scottish government quango and a statutory consultee on all planning applications involving development of playing fields and remit in this case was to ensure that even though the number of football facilities remain static, the quality of them had to be improved.

Planning Permission for the new medical Centre, and the new pavilions was achieved through liaison with West Lothian planning department, external partners and sportscotland

Timing was critical as the football teams had to continue playing during the works. To facilitate this the council co-ordinated

- The negotiations and agreement of the legal documentation
- The move of Polbeth United to Polbeth in order to provide vacant possession of Hermand Park and so allow the new pavilion to be built
- On completion of the new facilities at Hermand Park these were handed over to the council and at the same time West Calder Juniors entered into a lease and relocated thus giving vacant possession of Burngrange
- This enabled the sale of part of site to GPI and completion of the new medical centre.
- The remaining 2.8 acres at Burngrange was subsequently sold in March 2009 to Castle Rock Housing Association

who have submitted a planning application for 26 Houses and 14 flats – a decision is awaited

Whilst negotiating with the Football Clubs, I negotiated the sale of 1.62 acres at Burngrange to GPI, which due to the leasing structure of the new medical centre involved the solicitors for the Council, GPI, the NHS and the GPs. The result has been about £850,000 worth of new council assets at nil cost. The council agreed to recycle the capital receipt from the sale of Burngrange to fund the new pavilion at Polbeth and to provide the sites required to relocate the football teams. I undertook the negotiations and legal discussions with both the Juniors and GPI to provide vacant possession of Burngrange and Hermand Park.

At the same time I acted as intermediary and facilitator between GPI, NHS and GPs helping them to reach agreements relating to the occupancy of the existing surgery and new Health Centre. In order to deliver the project it was important to understand the culture of all partners, the way they operate and the constraints they are under. It is also essential to cultivate trust, and be transparent. Using these principles I was able to persuade the partners that a partnership approach would best achieve their objectives.

## Outcomes



These were

- The Principal Objective: to build a new medical centre, to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in a growing community with good housing and environment.
- Additional benefits: these are improved community sports facilities, a children's play area and social housing.
- Good practice: the project demonstrates how a comprehensive, holistic, inclusive partnership approach, involving both public and private sectors, and the local community, can realise far wider benefits than originally anticipated, whilst fulfilling the objectives of all Community Planning partners

The contribution of professional asset and project management skills were invaluable, especially in site assembly, negotiation, coordinating parties and partnership management; all of which ensured the completion of the

project. This professional approach to a multi faceted project has shown that by careful planning, a constructive and creative approach, and the use of both internal and external resources the local community can receive improved health and sporting facilities plus social housing for rent.

## Conclusions

Looking back on it now I think this project would form part of a local partnership centre that would encompass health, education, leisure, police and third parties. We already have these in West Lothian with more to come, funding permitting

The Council's Corporate Plan incorporates Life Stages planning and covers from the cradle to the grave, and this project covers from birth through all stages of life. But what I haven't told you so far is that the council is now developing a new cemetery adjacent to the football facilities at Hermand Park. And, I have subsequently used the same project and asset management skills to identify a further opportunity for GPI and the Council. This relates to the future use of the old GP Surgery and the Council's adjoining land for the provision of additional Social Housing thus removing GPI's ongoing management issues of a vacant building.

## Other thoughts

Rent. The Juniors' rent was £25 pa. However in view of the quality of the new facilities and their right to sole occupation a rent of £250pa was agreed and will come into effect on 1st July 2010.

Hermand Pavilion. The Juniors wanted a Rolls Royce and were extremely reluctant to settle for anything less. However after extensive discussions they finally agreed that it was this or nothing.

Planning. The original plan for the fencing only surrounded the pitch and the front of the pavilion. In order to avoid issues with vandalism I negotiated with the planners for the extension of the fencing to encompass the whole of the pavilion.

Legal. The Council should not have been involved in the negotiations between GPI, the GPs and NHS regarding the lease for the new medical centre. However the negotiations stalled over some minor issues and to get things moving again a meeting was held with GPI's solicitor, the client and the solicitor of the GPs and NHS. I asked the parties if they actually wanted a new medical centre or not because if this impasse continued it would not happen. This caused the parties to refocus.

Rent Levels. There were issues with the level of rent to be paid by the GPs to GPI. This was negotiated between the DV and GPI; it took them a long time to settle!

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