

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 29 March 2022

BY: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: East Lothian Council Recognition for Former Council Leader Willie Innes

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 For Council to approve the proposals in recognition of the former Council Leader Willie Innes.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to approve that the East Lothian Youth Games are named, from here on, as the “Willie Innes Youth Games” and that the trophy that the secondary schools play for at the Youth Games is to be named and known, from here on, as the “Willie Innes Trophy”.
- 2.2 Council is asked to approve that the East Lothian Sports Award Scheme is to be named and known, from here on, as the “Willie Innes Sports Award Scheme”.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On Sunday 24 October 2021 East Lothian lost one of its finest sons, and the Council lost an outstanding Councillor and Council Leader. Willie Innes, as reflected in the many tributes paid in the days after his death, made a huge contribution to the lives of so many people over so many years. His contribution to his community of Prestonpans; his Preston, Seton Gosford Ward; East Lothian as a county; and local government nationally, was immense. And it was humbling to hear the tributes paid to him across each of these spheres, but it was heartfelt, true and appropriate for a man who gave so much to so many.
- 3.2 In honour of the contribution Willie Innes made to public life, this report proposes to recognise in a small but meaningful way for Willie and hopefully a lasting way, that his name and memory will live on and forever

be associated with a specific theme that we know was very close to Willie's heart – the power and impact sport can play in individuals', communities' and national life, and the experiences it can give for discipline, hard work, belonging and giving back. Willie believed passionately in the power of sport for his community and the county, and he committed to strategically prioritising this, not for sports' sake, but for the reach and impact it can have for many.

- 3.3 In preparation for the formation of the new East Lothian Council in 1996 and during the shadow year of 1995, Willie Innes, a then East Lothian District Councillor, along with key colleagues, including the then Council Leader Pat O'Brien, a long-time colleague and dear friend to Willie, put the wheels in motion to be the first council in Scotland of the new 32 unitary authorities to put a sports development strategy in place. The strategy which captured Willie's vision and commitment was facilitated by Dr Ian Thomson of the University of Stirling, one of the leading academics in this subject area in Scotland and the UK at the time. The strategy was seen and commented on by the then Scottish Office as a "highly visionary document". The foundations provided in Willie's vision and commitment a generation ago have, and continue to make, a difference today.
- 3.4 A key part of the strategy was on education, training and youth sport, and it is with this and these themes in mind that we propose to recognise and honour Willie Innes's legacy.
- 3.5 The annual East Lothian Secondary Schools Sports Youth Games held at Meadowmill Sports Centre each May, where each of the six secondary schools (soon to be seven) play against each other across a range of sports, was a development directly from the commitment to sport in schools within East Lothian. It is proposed that the Youth Games itself, and the trophy the schools play for, be known as the Willie Innes Youth Games, and the trophy be known as the Willie Innes Trophy.
- 3.6 In addition, and because Willie believed passionately in helping others and assisting where he was able, it is proposed that the Council's Sports Awards Scheme which provides financial assistance to individuals across the county in supporting them prepare, compete, travel, receive qualifications and provide access to facilities, be named and known as the Willie Innes Sports Awards Scheme.
- 3.7 Willie Innes made a colossal contribution to East Lothian over many different subject portfolio areas, as is well recorded. The proposals above hopefully go some way to creating a lasting recognition to him in an area of public life he believed in and supported so passionately over so many decades.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct policy implications contained within this report. However, the report is recognising the significant role that former Council Leader Willie Innes made to East Lothian and, in doing so, is proposing

that that recognition is given in an area of public policy where his contribution and passion was well known and highly regarded.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other – Sport, Countryside & Leisure Service staff will amend the literature aligned to the Council’s Sports Award Scheme and any future communications linked to either the Youth Games and Sports Award Scheme upon confirmation and agreement of the recommendations contained within this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 [Active East Lothian | Grants and Support](#)

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