

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

8 JUNE 1999

SUBJECT: ARBROATH ABBEY DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report updates the Committee on progress made in taking forward the development of visitor facilities at Arbroath Abbey and seeks authority to refer the matter to the meeting of Angus Council on 1 July 1999.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position with regard to the development of visitor facilities at Arbroath Abbey as outlined in this report and agrees to a further report on the matter being submitted to the meeting of Angus Council on 1 July 1999.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of the development of visitor facilities at the Abbey, the Committee previously agreed to proceed with stage one on an archaeological assessment and had allocated £10,000 to cover the cost. Further, Angus Council at its meeting on 4 May 1999 approved the appointment of the consultancy team led by Simpson & Brown, Architects, and agreed to meet 75% of the first stage of the consultancy fee amounting to £50,000. It also noted that the total fee for the full consultancy service is £269,346.

3 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Members may be aware that Heritage Lottery Funding is essential to make up the shortfall caused by the withdrawal of Historic Scotland capital funding. An application has now been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund with the request that it be dealt with as a matter of urgency. The Committee will be kept apprised of progress.
- 3.2 Archaeological consultants have been appointed to undertake the first stage of the archaeological assessment at a cost of £5,409. Stage One comprises a geophysical survey of the area to the west of the Abbey church (including Hamilton Green) and the opening of a number of trial trenches in order to assess the likely extent of archaeological remains. This will allow a costed assessment to be made of any further work required to investigate all archaeological features within the area. The Stage One assessment will be completed by mid-June.
- 3.3 The consultancy team led by Simpson & Brown, Architects, have also been appointed and are progressing the designs for the visitor facilities. The initial agreed fee payment of £50,000 will be sufficient to allow the design team to keep to the programme up to the end of June, by which time the designs should be of adequate detail for submission of planning permission and Scheduled Monument Consent.

4 THE WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 The programme for the Abbey project has to be extremely tight if it is to be legally committed by the end of December 1999; a prerequisite of ERDF funding. It is crucial therefore that delays to the programme be avoided whenever possible.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that the consultants will be recommending that the Stage Two archaeological assessment be carried out as soon as possible as the outcome of this work could impact directly on the designs, particularly those for the visitor centre. However, the extent and cost of Stage Two will not be known until Stage One has been completed which, as stated earlier, will not be until mid-June.
- 4.3 It will also be necessary to approve a further stage payment of consultancy fees before the end of June so that the preparation of detailed designs, submission for Building Warrant etc. can proceed on programme. However, it is felt that it would be inappropriate to do so until members have had sight of the more detailed designs. Again, as stated earlier, these will not be available until the latter half of June.
- 4.4 In view of the above, it is recommended that a further report on these matters be submitted to the meeting of Angus Council on 1 July 1999. This would avoid any delay due to the summer recess.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications of proceeding with the Stage Two archaeological assessment and incurring further design fees will be dealt with in the report to Angus Council. It is nonetheless worth highlighting that, due to the tight timescale, the Council will have to be willing to incur costs particularly in respect of consultancy fees before the funding package is confirmed. Every effort will however be made to minimise the financial risk to the Council throughout the development of the project.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Law & Administration and Director of Property Services have been consulted during the preparation of this report.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/RM/KW/IAL
1 June 1999

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport