AGENDA ITEM NO 20

REPORT NO 515/11

ANGUS COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 18 AUGUST 2011

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WEST LINKS PLAY AREA

JOINT REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND THE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

ABSTRACT: This report seeks approval, in principle, of the outline proposals for the new West Links Play Area and seeks authority to undertake public consultation on the outline proposals and submit an application for planning permission in due course. It also seeks approval for the Head of Roads to proceed with the procurement of the works.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1.1 It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Services Committee:-

(i) approves, in principle, the outline proposals for the development of a new West Links play area as outlined in this report and agrees to public consultation being undertaken on the proposals;

(ii) notes that an application for planning permission will be submitted;

(iii) authorises the Head of Roads to work in partnership with the Head of Environmental Management to undertake detailed design work and procurement of the construction works;

(iv) agree to delegate authority to procure to the Head of Roads and to invite expressions of interest from contractors and award a contract to the successful bidder following a pre-qualification exercise and evaluation of all competitive tenders;

(v) notes that the capital expenditure of a maximum of £500,000 can be met from the contingencies sum of the Local Capital Fund as approved by the Council on 22 June 2011.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In June 2011, Angus Council gave approval for the use of up to a maximum of £500,000 of resources from the Local Capital Fund to finance a new play area at West Links, Arbroath to enhance the visitor experience at the popular seaside recreation area. Angus Council also agreed to remit the Director of Neighbourhood Services to develop the design for the play area on the basis of a maximum £500,000 budget.

3. OUTLINE PROPOSAL

3.1 An outline proposal for the play area has been drawn up by the Director of Neighbourhood Services (Appendix 1). A location plan showing the extent of the proposed redevelopment is also appended to this report (Appendix 2). A larger scale drawing of the outline proposals is available in the Members’ Lounge and will be on display at the Committee meeting.

3.2 The outline proposals seek to provide exciting play opportunities for children from 1 to 18 years. In the Adventure Play Area, next to the site entrance, a range of equipment will provide play value for 6 to 18 year olds. A focal point in this area is a bespoke 3m high climbing wall, which will be designed to resemble parts of the Seaton cliffs. The aim is to recreate well-known cliff sections like the Deil’s Heid and the Needle E’e in coloured concrete, similar in look to the local red sandstone.

3.3 The tower play equipment will be moved from the existing play area and set into the sand safety surfacing. A range of new equipment will be chosen to provide a wide range of play activities and will be determined in consultation with local youngsters.
3.4 The play area adjacent will be developed as an inclusive play area for children of all ages and abilities with some equipment also for the use of smaller children under 5 years. It will be accessible and safe through a continuous wet pour rubber granule surfacing. The equipment and the surface graphics are themed on popular board and family games and it is proposed to commission bespoke play sculptures like chess pawns or dice.

3.5 The proposals show the Toddler and Inclusive Play Area extending up the slopes of the grass mound to provide climbing, sliding and balancing equipment on the embankment. Towards the north side the rubber surface is shaped in mounds and folds to allow children to run up and along the contours and a shelf around the periphery provides informal seating for parents.

3.6 Coloured concrete walls with cut-outs will provide imaginative play and also act as a screen from the winds. The existing grass bund in the south is increased to approximately 1.8m height to provide further wind shelter and to increase the play opportunities available. A new asphalt path on its ridge connects the play area to the seafront promenade and allows an alternative elevated route to enjoy the views out to sea. The grass on the seaward side of the mound will be protected by erosion control matting and seeded with a suitable grass mixture.

3.7 While it would be ideal to enclose the play area with fencing for security reasons and to control access by dogs to the area this provision, at an estimated cost of £75000, is not included in the current proposal due to budget constraints. However external funding opportunities are being investigated and if this can be sourced then the fencing will be provided and would have laser cut artwork attached in selected sections, which could be designed in collaboration with local schoolchildren.

3.8 The new play area has been moved to a more prominent location at the entrance to the Links to be visible from a distance.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 Assuming that the outline proposals are approved, in principle, it is recommended that further public consultation is undertaken to gauge the public response to the proposed development. The outline proposals would be refined and further developed into detailed proposals, taking account of the feedback from the consultation exercise.

4.2 Due to the nature and scale of the proposed redevelopment works, planning permission will be required. Assuming that no substantial amendments are required to the outline proposals as a result of the consultations, it is recommended that the application for planning permission be submitted to the Development Control Section of Planning & Transport in November 2011. It is anticipated that the application will be considered by the Development Standards Committee in January 2012. This would avoid any unnecessary delay in progressing the project to the implementation stage, but it should be noted that the proposed timetable could be subject to change, dependant on the length and outcome of public consultation and if planning consent has not been achieved as timetabled.

4.3 Project Timescale

The proposed timescale of the project given below is very tight and it should be noted, that if significant objections are received, the planning application would have to be referred to the Scottish Government for determination which would inevitably cause delays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Target date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Services Committee</td>
<td>Approval of outline proposals and timescale;</td>
<td>18 August 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approval to submit Planning Application;</td>
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<td>Authorisation of Head of Roads to undertake procurement.</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public consultation on concept</td>
<td>September 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>design, development of proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Application</td>
<td>Submit by November 2011.</td>
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<td>Final Design</td>
<td>Design Work; Consultation for Play area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project out to tender</td>
<td>January 2012</td>
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<td>Tender return</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
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<td>Authorisation under delegated</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
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<td>authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start on Site</td>
<td>Late May 2012</td>
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<td>Completion</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
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5. PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY

5.1 The procurement procedure will be in line with the 2-stage (restricted) procedure.

5.2 Stage 1 - Public advertisement and assessment to prepare a select list of tenderers based on qualification criteria. The evaluation of expressions of interest will be based on a number of minimum qualification criteria, namely:- economic and financial standing; technical or professional ability, insurances, equal opportunities and health and safety. All eligible expressions of interest will then be evaluated against the following criteria with weighting shown in brackets:-

(i) Relevant experience in delivering comparable projects (40%);
(ii) References/Past Customer perceptions (15%);
(iii) Sufficiency of resources and organisational capacity to adequately support the proposed contract (30%);
(iv) Sufficient stability of turnover to assure business stability (10%);
(v) Adequacy of quality control accreditation and assurance process (5%).

5.3 Stage 2 – Tendering procedure with select list with lowest price being the success criterion for contract award.

5.4 It is proposed that the Head of Roads will evaluate the resulting applications in order to prepare a select list of a maximum of 8 No. contractors and a minimum of 5 No. who will be invited to submit tenders for the project.

5.5 The Committee is, therefore, asked to authorise the Head of Roads to procure the construction works in accordance with the process stated above. In accordance with Financial Regulation 16.8, approval of this report would mean that, subject to overall costs following receipts of the tenders being within the approved budget then, the contract can be accepted without further approval by this Committee. This procurement is not considered to be a “major procurement” in accordance with the new arrangements (i.e. one which would account for a significant part of the Chief Officer’s approved budget or is expected to be of significant public interest), therefore, tender evaluation and award information will be provided to the Head of Finance and reported to Committee retrospectively as required in accordance with Financial Regulation 16.8.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Capital Expenditure

6.1.1 The estimated cost for the proposed project is £ 500,000 as detailed below:-
6.1.2 In June 2011, Angus Council gave approval for the use of up to a maximum of £500,000 of contingencies from the Local Capital Fund to fund this project. It should be noted, however, that this is the maximum contribution which will be available from the Local Capital Fund. In the meantime opportunities for external funding are being explored.

6.1.3. One possible source for external funding is a potential contribution from Scottish Enterprise for the provision of a fence (with artwork) surrounding the new play area as detailed in paragraph 3.7. Discussions are ongoing with representatives from Scottish Enterprise, but it should be noted that any contribution would be ring fenced for the fencing provision, which is currently not included in the budget cost of £500,000. Should it not be possible to source external funding to cover the full cost of provision, fencing would remain excluded from the project.

6.1.4. Subject to Members’ approval, the project will be captured in the Council’s Financial Plan at its next review in September 2011.

6.2 Revenue Expenditure

6.2.1. The existing play equipment and associated furniture and surfacing is maintained by the Environmental Management Division of Neighbourhood Services. The maintenance costs associated with the existing play area are £5,090 per annum. The maintenance costs of the relocated play area are difficult to estimate until detailed designs have been concluded but consideration will be taken within the design to try and contain these annual maintenance costs within existing expenditure levels.

6.2.2. The running costs associated with the new West Links facility, once constructed, will be assessed in more detail as part of the overall revenue budget setting process for 2013/14, the partnership arrangement developments across the West Link site and the ongoing audit of play provision within the Angus area.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment has been completed.

9. RISK ISSUES

9.1 As this project is relatively straightforward, the main risks of any significance are potential cost overruns and not achieving Planning Approval as timetabled. This can, however, be avoided by robust contract management by the Council’s in-house professional staff.

9.2 The risk of competitive tenders being significantly higher than anticipated is considered to be small as the pre-tender estimate was updated recently. In the unlikely event that this occurs, adjustments would be made to the project to contain it within the available budget.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Infrastructure Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.
11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The West Links is a popular and extensive recreation area which has been very successful in the past, providing a wide range of leisure facilities for the local community, visitors and tourists to Angus. The West Links Play Area enhancements will improve the quality of the play facilities, enhancing the image of the town and potentially increasing visitor numbers.

11.2 This project will provide a new play facility offering considerable play value as most of the current play area provision is relatively basic and fairly old. It will provide interesting design and equipment to a range of age groups in conjunction with improved access and visibility.

RON ASHTON
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

ERIC LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

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 a material extent in preparing the above report.

EnvManagement/NS/RA/DFI