

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

12 March 2015

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Sports Facilities – Inverness West

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

The decision to develop enhanced recreational and sporting facilities in the areas around the Bught and Torvean area of Inverness was made by Council on 1 March 2012. Since that time, a number of projects have been developed, in tandem with the development of the West Link. This report sets out the context, current position and programmed delivery of enhanced facilities at Torvean Golf Course, Canal Parks and the Torvean Sports Hub/Regional Sports Facility.

Council is asked to:

- note progress with the development of sports facilities in the west of Inverness;
- approve the ongoing development of the Torvean Golf Course on the basis of the layout and cost set out in Section 2 and Appendix A;
- approve the development of the Canal Parks Enhancement Project on the basis of the layout and cost set out in Section 3 and Appendix B; and
- agree to the continued development of the Regional Sports Facility on the basis of the context and costs set out in Section 4, recognising that a further report will be considered by the Education, Children, and Adult Services Committee in May 2015.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Highland Council, at its meeting on 1 March 2012, agreed to work with all relevant stakeholders and ensure the enhancement of the recreational and sporting facilities in the areas around the Bught and Torvean.
- 1.2 A design workshop (charrette) was held in early September 2012, and was attended by over 200 members of the community and other interested stakeholders, including sporting, recreational, landowner, and development industry interests. The charrette process established a broad consensus on the future land use within the Torvean and Ness-side area. A draft Development Brief was issued for public consultation in April 2013, following approval at the City of Inverness Area Committee.
- 1.3 The City of Inverness Area Committee on the 12 August 2013 considered the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief (Report Ref CIA-38-13), and the Torvean Golf Course and Sports Hub Report (Ref CIA-40-13) following public

consultation. The Development Brief was agreed by the Committee, and was adopted as statutory Supplementary Guidance in November 2013 following final approval at the Planning, Environment, and Development Committee in September 2013.

- 1.4 A report on the Inverness West Link was brought to Full Council on 5 September 2013, (Report Ref. HC/31/13) which also contained an update on the recreational enhancements.
- 1.5 The Highland Council meeting of 5 September 2013 was advised that, “based on the design work and indicative layouts already prepared, the projected investment for sporting and recreational infrastructure in the area lies in the range £6m to £9.5m. These are gross figures, which will be reduced as opportunities for external funding become clearer and are realised”.
- 1.6 The planning application for the West Link road was considered at the South Planning Applications Committee on 8 April 2014 (Report Ref PLS/020/14). The Committee decision was to grant planning permission subject to conditions. The formal decision notice was issued on 14 April 2014 and a number of conditions were attached to the planning permission including those related to the re-orientation of the Canal Park rugby pitches.
- 1.7 An application for planning permission in principle for the Torvean Golf Course, Sports Hub, Kilvean Cemetery Extension and Parkland was submitted on 9 January 2014. Due to issues over the viability of constructing the cemetery, this element was removed from the application. The planning application was considered at the South Planning Application Committee on 8 April 2014 (Report Ref PLS/021/14), with the decision being to grant planning permission. The decision was issued on 14 April 2014.

2. Torvean Golf Course

- 2.1 The detailed design for the layout of the golf course, a clubhouse, and maintenance building commenced following the outcome of negotiations with the owner of land to the north of the A82 trunk road being considered by the Finance, Housing and Resources Committee on 22 January 2014.
- 2.2 The agreed layout allows the golf course to be located within one area of land north of the A82, thereby removing the current arrangement of golfers having to cross the A82 and General Booth Road. This is the layout which was favoured in the public consultation on the draft Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief, and supported by members when the final version was adopted at the City of Inverness Area Committee and the Planning Environment and Development Committee. Torvean Golf Club meets the Project Team on a monthly basis to discuss the detailed design development of the course, practice area, clubhouse, and maintenance building. The design work is well advanced, and a ground investigation for each element has recently been completed. A planning application for the detailed layout and design of the golf course development was submitted on 23 January 2015, and is currently being considered by officers, prior to being reported to the South Planning Application Committee on 19 May 2015. Details of the proposed layout is set out in **Appendix A**.

- 2.3 The allowance in the currently agreed West Link capital budget relating to the golf course is £1.3m, which represents the minimum investment required to relocate the golf holes required to deliver the road. The enhancements to the golf course for consideration by members is estimated to cost an additional £7.41m (December 14), and this figure includes:
- location of the golf course in one area of land;
 - access road to service the Clubhouse and Maintenance buildings and proposed Highland Council Housing Project;
 - clubhouse, like for like replacement but increased to accommodate a Junior Room, external trolley store and cycle storage area;
 - a practice area that allows for the Club to expand it to SGU Development Standard status;
 - maintenance buildings;
 - the costs for providing services to the buildings;
 - inflation; and
 - a contingency allowance..
- 2.4 At a meeting with SportScotland on 24 October 2014 a proposed funding contribution of approximately £50k for the Junior Room element of the Clubhouse was discussed and SportScotland advised the project team on how to progress the funding application for this. The funding application is about to be submitted and a decision is awaited.
- 2.5 The Inverness West Link Stage 2 impacts on the golf course to the south of the A82 as well holes 9 and 15 north of the A82. It will therefore be necessary to construct the golf course and for it to become playable prior to the commencement of construction of Stage 2 of the West Link. A planning condition requires that Torvean Golf Course has 18 holes available for play at all stages of the construction for the West Link project and the Torvean Golf Course project. This is a key risk to the project as construction commences and will need careful management and communication to ensure mitigation is always in place for a full course to be available.
- 2.6 It is planned to commence the construction of the golf course in 2016, with the buildings and access road elements starting slightly later, all to become operational in 2019. It is then programmed to construct Stage 2 of the West Link on land which will then be residual from the old golf course.
- 2.7 Land negotiations and agreements are well advanced to enable the purchase of the land necessary for the golf course. It should be noted that land to the south of the A82 and to the east of General Booth Road, which will become surplus when the new golf course is operational, is in Highland Council ownership.
- 2.8 As highlighted in the approved Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief, this relocation of the golf course will also release residual existing golf course land to the East of General Booth Road to enable the development of a sports hub. This is referred to in Section 4 of this report. Land to the South of the A82 at this important gateway to Inverness will also be freed up for informal public open space, and a mixed use development adjacent to the canal. This mixed use development has the potential to deliver a capital receipt for the Council at the appropriate time.

Discussions are ongoing with Scottish Canals to consider detailed opportunities and bring these forward for further consideration.

- 2.9 Members are asked to agree to the continued development of the golf course project based on the costs set out below. The construction programme identified above recognises that capital funds will be required over the financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19. If the capital figure, at December 2014 prices, is profiled out to coincide with the construction, then, due to the extended time frame for the construction, it is recognised that inflation to these profiled budgets will be required. Applying inflation over this period identifies a capital allocation of £8.227m, and it is this figure and cost profile that is included in the Capital Programme for member's consideration at Committee Item **18**. Grant assistance towards a junior club room is expected from the Scottish Golf Union (£50k).

3 Canal Parks Enhancement Project

- 3.1 As set out in paragraph 1.6 above, the planning permission for the West Link road includes a condition requiring the re-orientation of the Canal Park rugby pitches. A project has been developed to enhance the canal parks facility in order to meet the requirements of the condition, but also to deliver wider benefits.
- 3.2 The Canal Parks Enhancement Project meets the aspiration of the Highland Rugby Football Club (HRFC) to remain at Canal Parks as opposed to moving to the west side of the canal. A great deal of liaison has taken place over the last year to develop the project to not only meet that aspiration, but also to provide a community facility managed by Highlife Highland which will enable wider public access to the new facilities.
- 3.3 The current allowance within the West Link budget for canal parks is £300k and this represents the minimum investment required to deliver the road, by re-grading one pitch and revising car parking facilities for the rugby club. Enhancements to the Canal Parks for consideration by members is estimated to cost an additional £3.724m (December 14) and includes:
- a new artificial pitch to International Rugby Board standards;
 - two grass pitches;
 - new 8 room changing and clubhouse facilities;
 - car and bus parking;
 - boundary fencing, including ball stop fencing;
 - a footway/cycleway along the south boundary to join with IWL footway / cycleway;
 - inflation; and
 - a contingency allowance.
- 3.4 Proposals for the clubhouse building and pitches have been prepared with SportScotland assistance in developing the internal layout details. Discussions have also been held with SEPA as the pitches are located within the River Ness flooding extents, and there is therefore a need to avoid damage to the artificial pitch and club house by locating them out-with the flood risk area.

- 3.5 As the proposed enhancements go beyond that shown as part of the West Link planning permission, a new planning application must be submitted. Pre-application consultation on the proposal was subject to a public display on 27 January 2015. The current programme is for the planning application to be submitted in April 2015, with a report being made to the South Planning Applications Committee in due course. Details of the proposed planning application are contained in **Appendix B**.
- 3.6 With part of the West Link Stage 1 works located immediately adjacent to the Canal Parks project, it is proposed that these two projects will be moved forward as one Contract, with specialist sub-contractors engaged for the pitches work and the clubhouse building works. This will avoid two separate Contractors being delayed or affected by each other's works. The cost allocation for the West Link and the Canal Parks work can be established by contract drafting.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that a start would be made on the main West Link Stage 1 works, including the Canal Parks Enhancement project, in 2016 with completion in 2017.
- 3.8 The Canal Parks Enhancement Project will be a community facility, managed by Highlife Highland and, as such, will enable wider public access to the new facilities whilst accommodating the needs of HRFC. These facilities will go a significant way towards delivering some of the additional community facilities envisaged by the Sports Hub to the west of the canal. The artificial pitch proposed is anticipated to be used for rugby and football, but can also potentially be used by other sports including hockey, shinty and american football.
- 3.9 Members are asked to agree to the continued development of the Canal Parks Enhancement Project based on the costs set out below. The construction programme identified above recognises that capital funds will be required over the financial years 2014/15 to 2017/18. If the capital figure, at December 2014 prices, is profiled to coincide with the construction, then, due to the extended time frame for the construction, it is recognised that inflation to these profiled budgets will be required. Applying inflation over this period identifies a capital allocation of £4.144m, and it is this figure and cost profile that are included in the Capital Programme for member's consideration at Committee Item 18. Grant assistance towards this project is expected to come from SportScotland (£500k), and the Scottish Rugby Union (£100k).

4 Sports Hub/Regional Sports Facility

- 4.1 The Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief identifies and protects part of the area to the west side of the canal for the development of a sports hub (**Appendix C**) which complements and enhances the existing provision in this part of the city. The outline design for the sports hub is in place. The drawing proposals, shown at **Appendix D**, comprise a 10 changing room facility, car parking, a double synthetic pitch and one grass pitch. The double synthetic pitch could be used for shinty as well as other sports. The Torvean and Ness-side Development brief makes provision for developer contributions of £550,000 towards the delivery of this sports hub, on a per house basis from the sites identified in the development brief.

4.2 However, the proposal for the sports hub has opened the way for discussion with SportScotland and work to determine the feasibility of a Regional Sports Facility for the Highlands being located in Inverness. Clearly the area identified for the sports hub would be one of the prime site options for the location of such a facility. Highlife Highland has commissioned a study to determine the potential for a Regional Sports Facility. This follows an offer of part funding from SportScotland announced following the Commonwealth Games. The study considers the needs of all sports, with a focus on:

- enabling Highland athletes to take the next performance steps without the requirement to travel south;
- filling gaps in the pathway in key sports;
- expanding opportunities for disabled people;
- promoting wider community use; and
- generating economic impact from events.

There are a number of core elements that could comprise such a Highland facility, and the study will consider the potential for a gymnastics arena, indoor athletics straight, indoor tennis centre, and gym and conditioning centre. Other potential facilities, including an indoor velodrome or indoor synthetic pitch, are also being assessed. The study is due to report in March 2015. The costs for a Regional Sports Facility are estimated to be in the order of £30m with grant from SportScotland expected to be in the order of £5m.

4.3 The progression of the Torvean sports hub will be informed by the decisions taken relating to the Regional Sports Facility.

4.4 A Business Case and report setting out the potential for the Regional Sports Facility, including detailed capital and ongoing revenue costs, and site options, will be brought to the Education, Children, and Adult Services Committee in May 2015. Members are asked to agree to the continued development of the Regional Sports Facility project based on the costs set out in 4.2 above. Members are being asked, to agree that this funding space is retained within the Capital Plan at Committee Item 18.

4.5 Following consideration of the Regional Sports Facility issue, further work can be undertaken on the detailed design of whichever solution is brought forward. This work will involve discussions on provision elsewhere in the city, including Inverness Campus. It should be noted that in the interim the area at Torvean will remain as usable open space for informal sports and recreation, and will be protected as such given the classification of the land within the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief.

5. Implications

5.1 Resource

Cost implications have been set out in this report, and will be reflected in the Capital Plan at item 18 of this committee.

5.2 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

Due consideration within the detailed design of the buildings will be taken to reduce the carbon footprint and enhance opportunities for active travel.

5.3 Equality

In regard to equalities the design takes account of access requirements for people with disabilities.

5.4 Risk

The risk implications are being managed through standard project management procedure and risk register as required by good practice. The risks are managed through the governance provided by the Project Board, chaired by the Director of Development and Infrastructure. The current key risks for the projects outlined in this report include funding for the individual sports facilities not being made available, public support for the projects not being forthcoming, media negativity being focussed on the projects and tender costs exceeding the pre-tender estimates.

5.5 Legal

The legal implications of lease arrangements for future facilities are being managed through the project governance procedures.

5.6 Rural and Gaelic

The Canal Parks Enhancement Project will benefit the wider Highland area as no similar facility is available for rugby in the Highlands.

The Regional Sports Facility will offer opportunities for athletes from the wider region, who currently have to travel to the central belt or Aberdeen for similar facilities, to train.

6 Fit with the Programme for the Highland Council 2012-2017

6.1 Commitment 6 within the 'better Infrastructure' theme states that working with partners, the Council will support the delivery of the Inverness West Link road and the associated amenity and leisure improvements.

7. Fit with the Single Outcome Agreement

7.1 Delivering enhanced sports facilities assists the Council in delivering commitments relating to health inequalities and physical activity.

Recommendation

Council is asked to:

- note progress with the development of sports facilities in the west of Inverness;
- approve the ongoing development of the Torvean Golf Course on the basis of the layout and cost set out in Section 2 and Appendix A;
- approve the development of the Canal Parks Enhancement Project on the basis of the layout and cost set out in Section 3 and Appendix B; and
- agree to the continued development of the Regional Sports Facility on the basis of the context and costs set out in Section 4, recognising that a further report will be considered by the Education, Children, and Adult Services Committee in May 2015.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure/ Director of Finance

Date: 3 March 2015

Author: Malcolm Macleod/Colin Howell