
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

1st May 2018

Cabinet

Title: Quarry Road, Irvine – Proposals for Phase Two

Purpose: To provide an update on the second phase of development proposals for Quarry Road, Irvine.

Recommendation: That Cabinet agree:

- To proceed with the proposed specification for the second phase, developed in association with the project design team and KA Leisure;
- To note and support the application submitted for external funding support to SportScotland; and,
- To further explore the potential sale of the existing tennis courts at Thornhouse Avenue and the use of any financial receipt to contribute to the later delivery of new tennis courts within the Quarry Road proposals.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Land to the south of Quarry Road is being promoted as a new destination for employment, leisure and community activity within Irvine town centre. The project is significant in terms of its scale, ambition, profile and its impact in improving an underutilised area of land and bringing people into Irvine town centre.
- 1.2 A phased approach is necessitated by the availability of external funding, and by project development work. The first phase office development commenced in February 2017. A preferred option for a second phase of development was approved by Cabinet on 29th August 2017, which proposed the provision of a full size synthetic outdoor pitch, a mid-size indoor sports facility, a closed cycling loop and tennis courts. Cabinet have also noted the potential for a third phase comprising health and social care facilities.
- 1.3 Following approval of the preferred option for phase two, a design and contractor team were appointed through the SW Hub procurement route on 30th November 2017. The further development of detailed proposals for the second phase has led to a requirement for changes to the specification presented to Cabinet. The changes suggested include a reduction in the length of the proposed cycle loop, and the removal of the tennis courts from the current procurement contract. The courts will however be retained within the

masterplan proposals with a view to their later delivery, and a proposal is presented to consider their funding via the sale of the existing courts at Thornhouse Avenue.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Quarry Road project has been the subject of previous reports to Cabinet, most recently on 29th August 2017 when Cabinet agreed to:
- a) the preferred option identified for the second phase of the proposals;
 - b) that applications for additional external funding in support of the preferred option are submitted;
 - c) the purchase of additional land to facilitate the proposals; and,
 - d) note the emerging intentions for the development of a third phase in association with the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Phase One - Office and Infrastructure Facilities

- 2.2 The Council were informed in late February 2016 that an application for funding support from the Scottish Government (SG) Regeneration Capital Grant Fund towards phase one had been successful. The phase one proposals started on site in February 2017 and are now due to be completed in May, which represents a five month delay to the construction contract. The offices will be occupied by KA Leisure Ltd and will accommodate around 80 members of staff. Additionally, the Council's Business Development Team will be relocated to the site, providing Business Gateway services and on site assistance for small businesses within the available start up space. Visuals of the initial phase are included at Appendix 1.

Phase Two - Sports Facilities

- 2.3 Members have previously been advised of the intention for a second phase of the project incorporating sports facilities. Cabinet of 29th August approved proposals for a preferred option for phase 2 comprising a full size outdoor 3G pitch, a mid size indoor 3G pitch, a cycle loop and outdoor tennis courts.
- 2.4 Following approval of the preferred option, a design team comprising architect, project manager, cost consultants, engineer and contractor was appointed through the SW Hub procurement route. This has seen regular design team meetings to develop the design into a fully designed and costed proposal.
- 2.5 This process identified an increased in the projected cost associated with the proposed specification, and due in part to site specific issues relating to drainage and ground conditions. In parallel, ongoing discussions with potential funding partners (primarily SportScotland and Tennis Scotland), have suggested reduced expectations in terms of the level of external finance that may be brought to the project.
- 2.6 In recognition of the above, Cabinet of 20th March 2018 agreed to provide an additional £0.6M from the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Fund allocation towards

the project. This increased the funding available for the project from the £4.82M envisaged at Cabinet in August 2017, to £5.4M.

- 2.7 Even with this additional funding, the specification previously suggested to Cabinet cannot be delivered within the available budget. Officers have therefore worked with the design team to develop a project as close to the original specification as possible within the available budget, while meeting the expectations of KA Leisure as operators of the facility, and the public. The table below provides a comparison of the specification previously agreed against what is now envisaged:

Preferred Option August 2017	Proposed Change in Specification
Full size 100m x 60m outdoor 3G pitch for football and rugby.	
Mid size indoor 3G pitch of 67m x 59m to allow all weather training and coaching for football, rugby, five a side football provision and events.	Pitch of 67 x 49m. Potential removal of shock pads would limit use for rugby.
A closed 1km cycling loop supporting a 'BMX pump' track for the development of cycling skills.	Reduced length of track to 750m but with internal loop of 250m to allow a 1km lap to be taken. Removal of BMX track.
3 outdoor hard surface tennis courts.	Propose to retain within masterplan, but not procure through the SW Hub contract. An alternative proposal for funding and delivery is identified below.

- 2.8 The most significant change to the project would therefore be the removal of the tennis courts, necessitated by the limitation on available funding and reduced expectations on the funding available from Tennis Scotland. The Tennis organisations do remain keen to contribute to facilities within Irvine and discussions continue with a view to securing funding towards the £200,000 cost of facilities, should the council identify an additional source of finance for the majority of the cost.
- 2.9 The potential to fund this through an alternative business plan is therefore being explored. Recognising the limitations on the agreed capital programme, one option is to consider the sale of the existing site at Thornhouse Avenue for development. The grant of planning consent for the development of housing on this site would require to demonstrate compliance with the Local Development Plan, and that the associated loss of sports facilities would lead to 'alternative provision of similar or improved community benefit and accessibility being made available in a location which is convenient for its users'.

- 2.10 Cabinet are therefore asked to consider the use of any receipts secured from the Thornhouse Avenue site in contributing to new facilities at Quarry Road. As well as far more modern facilities, this would allow much improved management and operation of the courts, as well as the potential for increased interest arising from users of the other sports facilities.
- 2.11 A masterplan illustrating the revised proposals is included within Appendix 2. The total cost of this option is £5.4M, with funds in place subject to the approval of funding applications submitted to:
- SportScotland. An application for the maximum sum of £100,000 was submitted in advance of the deadline of 1st May. The project would represent excellent sporting outcomes and financial leverage for the national sports body and represents a strong case for funding.
 - Landfill tax credit scheme. Application for £50,000 is to be submitted.

Planning and Programme

- 2.12 A pre application planning consultation notice was published on 13th February 2018, allowing for the submission of a detailed planning application from 8th May. A public consultation event was held on 17th April to inform the submission, the latest in a number of consultation events since the inception of the proposals as noted at 5.1-5.3.
- 2.13 Issues identified through the planning consultation event include traffic, parking and drainage. Technical information in support of the proposals will be submitted alongside the planning application. Following consideration of this by planning officers and statutory consultees, as well as consideration of any representations submitted by members of the public or sports groups, it is envisaged that the planning application may be determined by August. Subject to a positive recommendation this would allow a site start to be achieved by September 2018.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agree:
- To proceed with the proposed specification for the second phase, developed in association with the project design team and KA Leisure;
 - To note and support the application submitted for external funding support to SportScotland; and,
 - To further explore the potential sale of the existing tennis courts at Thornhouse Avenue and the use of any financial receipt to contribute to the later delivery of new tennis courts within the Quarry Road proposals.

4. Implications

Financial:	The total capital cost of phase two is projected to be £5.4M inclusive of each of the sports elements within the preferred option, fees and contingency. Of this, £0.15M will be sought from Sportscotland and the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme.
Human Resources:	There are no Human Resource implications arising from the report.
Legal:	The occupation of the office facility and operation of the sports facility will be subject to agreements with KA Leisure.
Equality:	There are no equality implications arising from the report.
Children and Young People:	The sports facilities will offer significant opportunity to children and young people through pathways into sport.
Environmental & Sustainability:	The proposals would involve the development and improvement of brownfield and underutilised land within Irvine town centre. Proposals for new buildings will be developed in line with best practice sustainability principles.
Key Priorities:	This proposal supports the Council Plan core priority 1 – ‘Growing our economy, increasing employment and regenerating towns.’
Community Benefits:	Any construction contracts let will see the provision of appropriate community benefit in line with the Council's community benefit policy.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 An extensive programme of public consultation followed the approval of the proposals by Cabinet on 23 June 2015. This included public workshops attended by 571 people, the distribution of over 1,000 leaflets to local residents and businesses and consultation with Irvine Community Council on the use of common good land.
- 5.2 In developing the phase two proposals further, 20 local stakeholders were consulted including national sports agencies, local sports clubs, schools and the Ayrshire College. A consultation on the proposals has been undertaken through the KA Leisure website. Specific briefings with local Members were also held on 12th December 2016 and 20th February 2017.
- 5.3 As part of the pre planning application consultation process, a well-attended consultation event was held on 17th April 2018 to inform the content of the submitted planning application. The planning application process will allow the opportunity for representations and comments to be submitted on the detail of the proposals.



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For further information please contact **Alasdair Laurenson** on **01294 324758**.

Background Papers

Insert titles of any background papers or N/A