

## DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** LEISURE, ARTS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 28 April 2008

**REPORT ON:** CAMPERDOWN PARK/PROPOSED CAFÉ/VISITOR EDUCATION CENTRE

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES

**REPORT NO:** 257-2008

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on withdrawal of the interest from the partner who previously expressed interest in the play barn and to seek authority to progress with an alternative café/visitor centre and education facility based around the entrance of the Wildlife Centre.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee note the position of the Camperdown Play Barn.
- 2.2 That the Committee remits the Director of Leisure & Communities to progress plans for an integrated café/visitor centre and education centre at Camperdown Park Play Area/Wildlife Centre and associated changes to infrastructure including car parking.
- 2.3 A remit is given to Director of Economic Development to seek potential lease/partner for the café/shop element of the project.

### 3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 At this stage there is an allowance of £1,100,000 in the capital budgets for this project. It is also proposed that the Director of Leisure & Communities is remitted to explore the potential for external monies from agencies such as the Forestry Commission.

### 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Reference is made to Article XVI of the Leisure & Arts Services Committee of 20 June 2005 where a number of recommendations in respect of the development of an indoor play area were approved. Hornes Enterprises Ltd and the Council have now mutually agreed not to proceed with the development of an indoor play area.
- 4.2 Despite the continuing popularity of Camperdown Country Park there are still no covered facilities in the park that could enhance the visitor experience. It is therefore proposed that a more modest facility comprising of a café/visitor/education facility based around the Play Complex/Wildlife Centre entrance is constructed. Such a facility could provide both an attractive focal point and key asset in the continuing vision of developing Camperdown Country Park to become a first class visitor destination for the city and the region.

It is envisaged that the café would be open to franchise offers and that there would be the possibility of the franchisee investing in terms of equipment etc in the facility. The facility would be located adjacent to the Wildlife Centre entrance and therefore the visitor/education facility would be accessed through the Wildlife Centre itself. It is envisaged that the shop would be extended and include a bike hire to ensure economical viability and sustainability to any operation. A draft brief is attached in Appendix 1.

- 4.3 It is recommended that the Director of Leisure & Communities be remitted to bring forward proposals for consideration to a further meeting of the Council.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management and there are no major issues.
- 5.2 Improvements to the Country Park will improve its sustainability and will have a minimal environmental impact.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance have been consulted on this report and are in agreement with its contents.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None

**STEWART MURDOCH)**  
**DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES**  
**21 APRIL 2008**

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

### **LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT**

#### **DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR CAMPERDOWN COUNTRY PARK**

#### **CAFÉ/WILDLIFE CENTRE EDUCATION CENTRE/SHOP/PUBLIC TOILETS INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Camperdown Country Park remains one of the most visited locations in the City and has a regional as well as a city audience.

The vision has been to create a country park facility, which can contribute to Dundee's overall visitor attraction portfolio and assist with economic regeneration of the city. In the recent past there have been significant investments in facilities such as the award winning play area and also the Wildlife Centre. These attractions together with the park environment and the number of events have contributed to a large number of visitors.

The one gap of provision at the present moment is that there are no covered facilities in the park. Building on the current popularity of the park, a covered multi-use facility would significantly benefit the overall success and attraction of the park.

There is however an opportunity to develop a modest café/visitor/education facility based around the Wildlife Centre/play complex and an improved vehicle circulation and parking area. Such a facility could provide both an attractive focal point and key asset in the continuing vision of developing Camperdown Country Park to become a first class visitor destination for the city and the region.

### **2. SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND LOCATION**

It is proposed that the location of the facility would be at the entrance of the Wildlife Centre. It is envisaged that part of the building would be accessible only through the Wildlife Centre pay as you go facility while the café and public area would be accessible to users of the park. The detailed position of the facility should be located so that further development opportunities could be easily added for example a potential of office space for Countryside Rangers etc.

The location and concept should take into account/the desire to add value to the mature landscape environment and facilities such as the golf course and the surrounding natural environment together with proposed changes to road layout and car parks.

Accommodating all of the proposed facilities in a relatively compact space will be a design challenge. The brief should be flexible enough to allow design solutions to be explored and even consider alternative locations for the facility.

### **3. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

As there are limited funds available it is proposed that the building is developed on a phased bases with the following features being the priority:

#### **3.1 Design**

The general design of the building should fit into the natural environment of Camperdown Country Park. The building should be stylish and innovative; in keeping with the parkland setting but also bringing the facilities of the park up to date. It may

be that consideration is given to timber construction/cladding, which has a far more natural feel to the facility. Construction along sustainable principles, such as sourcing the use of local and natural materials, the possibility of a green roof to support biodiversity and the recycling of grey water for toilets could be possibilities. In addition to this all aspects of energy efficiency should be maximised. Pioneering systems considered such as wind energy, solar energy, ground heat etc. The building itself should have the potential of handling approximately 150-200 visitors and should have the potential of extending into an external café area for serving during the busier spells and summer months. The surfacing of circulation and seating space should aim to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems.

### 3.2 Café Area

The key part of the facility will be the café and it should be designed so that it can provide services for the various visitor categories that come to Camperdown Country Park. The café area should be designed so that it is accessible for all visitors within the park and also, in terms of the detailed specification, consideration should be given to working in partnership with the potential lessee to develop the facilities that will be viable to businesses and attractive to visitors. This should include the size, number of potential customers that can be catered for and whether fast food type operation for ice creams etc should be included in the design.

### 3.3 Education/Visitor Centre

This aspect of the building should be approximately 120m<sup>2</sup> in size and be accessible through the Wildlife Centre. The size of the building should be big enough to accommodate a small class noting that in particular, there are a number of bus parties from schools, which come to the facility. However this is only two or three months of the year and the facility should be designed to cater for all year round use. The facility should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate small exhibitions or being hired out for functions.

### 3.4 Shop Development

The current size and layout of the shop needs to be looked at from a business perspective. Past experience has shown that the sales are relatively low compare with the number of people who go through the Wildlife Centre and there is the potential to have a more business orientated operation that increase the potential of the shop. Given the success of the shop at the Botanic Garden the possibility of retailing plants grown in the nursery should be investigated. Consideration therefore must be given to whether the shop forms part of the franchise and is accessible to all or whether it continues to be run as part of the Wildlife Centre box office operation. Importantly its location must be considered in the customers journey to maximise potential spend.

### 3.5 Bike Hire

In order to sustain the cycle centre it is proposed that part of the building is given over to cycle hire during the summer. Again the size will need to be discussed. It may be that if the shop forms part of the franchise of the lease then the cycle centre would be retained by the department or integrated with the franchise. Consideration will be made in discussion with potential operators as to the possibility of including hire cycle storage within the facility and do away with the portacabin or limit use of the building to bookings only and retain the existing bike storage cabin.

### 3.6 Toilet Facilities

Adequate toilet facilities will require to be incorporated into the facility. It must service the play area and be accessible to the general public as part of the café. The café

franchisee will control the access to the toilet and a clear understanding will be required to be worked out within the lease.

3.7 External Space

In addition to the building, suitable external meeting/seating space will be required so that the café area can be extended during busy periods in the summer for outdoor use and the entrance to the Wildlife Centre will also have to be taken into account.

3.8 Demolition or Extension of Existing Building

An option appraisal will be required to look to see whether the building is demolished or whether this can be built on i.e. outwards into the park.

**4. LINKS WITH THE CAR PARK AND PLAY COMPLEX**

As part of the overall brief the layout and links with the car park will need to be review and if applicable redesigned to take into account.

**5. ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION**

The existing electrical capacity in Camperdown Country Park is reaching its maximum and a review into the upgrade of the electrics for Camperdown is required based on anticipated use in the next 15 years.

**6. BUDGET**

There is allowance in the capital budget for Leisure & Communities of £1,100,000 for this project.