



Report to
Cabinet

8 February 2005

Report of
Director of Education & Libraries, Director of Finance & ICT and Director of City Services

Title
Plas Dol-y-Moch Outdoor Education Centre – Letting of Build Contract for Refurbishment Works and the supply of Temporary Accommodation

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the authority for the letting of the build contract for the refurbishment works to be carried out at the Centre and the supply of temporary accommodation to service the Centre during the same period in accordance with Administrative Procedures 4D & 4C respectively of the Councils Standing Orders for Contracts.

2 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to: -

- 2.1 Approve total capital expenditure for the project development.
- 2.2 Authorise the appointment of lowest build cost tenderer to carry out refurbishment works to the Centre as outlined in section 4.1.
- 2.3 Approve the actions proposed regarding the supply of temporary accommodation during the refurbishment works as outlined in section 4.10 and authorise the supply \ purchase from the lowest supply tenderer.
- 2.4 Authorise the approval for Single Tender Action for the provision of specialist play equipment as outlined in section 4.3.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The proposal for the developments at Plas Dol-y-Moch Outdoor Education Centre, the Council owned outdoor education facility located in Maentwrog, North Wales, form part of the Coventry City Council LEA New Opportunities Fund PE & Sport Capital Programme Portfolio, which recently secured a funding allocation of £4.529m, aimed at raising standards of PE & School Sport across the city. One of the criteria of the overall spending package of the Portfolio Fund was that a minimum of 10% was directed towards improving or targeting outdoor education provision.

3.2 The Outdoor Education Centre has recently been awarded grant funding from this overall NOF allocation. Additional funding has also been secured to enable the scheme proposals to be developed up to tender stage and to establish outline financial costing.

3.3 The facilities being proposed have been designed in sections and comprise:

- i) the refurbishment of Main Stable Block to incorporate new en-suite shower \ toilet and wash areas, together with new ventilation, heating, sewerage and fire alarm systems
- ii) rebuilding of the rear corridor entrance to the Main House to provide disabled access and toilets, cloakroom and drying facilities
- iii) construction of a new underground activity known as the 'Tubes Challenge' and an additional hard play area

3.4 Planning and Listed Building Consent were given in June 2004 for the project development. Additional planning consent required for the provision of temporary accommodation and is currently being submitted for approval. Snowdonia National Park Authority has indicated no objection to the temporary application to allow works to commence on site.

3.5 The work is proposed to be completed in 2 phases and during the anticipated building period it is essential that the Centre continues to operate as normally as possible, providing high quality curriculum enrichment to the approximately 85 LEA schools who choose to use the Centre annually:

Phase One - Stable Block, hard play and activity to commence on 21st March 2005 and completed for 11th November 2005.

Phase Two - Rear corridor works to commence on 3rd August 2005 and completed for 7th October 2005.

If these time schedules are met, phase one will be disruptive to the normal operations of the Centre and its services to schools. Phase 2 will largely be undertaken during the summer holiday closure period 2005 with minimum disruption.

3.6 The Centre caters for approximately 50 pupils and accompanying teaching staff and operates 7 days per week during the term time period thus accommodating 3,000 students equating to approximately 11,300 bednights annually. The build period of over 8 months represents 7,000 bednights and £354,000 of income.

3.7 Phase One of the building work will require alternative accommodation to be found for 40% of the Centres capacity i.e. 20 students and their staff each week. During the 8 month build period this represents 3,200 bednights and income worth £150,840.

3.8 A number of options for managing the temporary accommodation have been considered by the Outdoor Education Steering Group and rejected on the basis of cost or impracticality.

- Closure of the Centre and transfer to an alternative site locally

Transferring all or part of the Centre to alternative accommodation is ruled out on the basis of cost. Estimates varied from £50,000 to £120,000 for alternative accommodation off site with minimal savings unless support staff were laid off. It was going to prove difficult to organise activities with specialist equipment such as canoes and trailers from off site. Temporarily accommodating 20 of the 50 residents off site would pose all the problems of a split school site multiplied because of the residential nature of the service provided.

- Partially operating the site with 30 beds available on site and 20 beds off-site

Partial operation with catering facilities for 50 children with off site sleeping was explored. Although generally accommodation could be available, subject to confirmation, it was deemed to be unsuitable as above and the transfer arrangements on a daily basis impractical. The cost of this option was estimated at £35,000 but is unlikely to be available during the summer months.

- Provision of portable cabins and static caravans on site

This option is considered as not viable due to the access to Dol-y-Moch is via a restricted width bridge (7' 6") and neither type of accommodation could access the site. Cost estimates for the provision were made at approximately £65,000 for portable cabins and static caravans are not a suitable layout for sleeping, as most of the space is living room and kitchen space, unrequired. Cabins would require sleeping and showering facilities.

- Caravan Rental

This option has been rejected on the basis of cost. The quotations received were in the order of £240 to £260 per week. With 8 caravans for a projected build period of 8 months this amounted to £2000 per week estimated at a total cost of approximately £60 - £70,000.

3.9 Following review, a preferred option for the provision of Touring Caravans is outlined in sections 4.4 – 4.10.

4. Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

4.1 Following production of tender documentation and request for build contract prices in accordance with Standing Order procedures a total of 4 tenders were submitted. Based on the tender sum information it is requested that approval be given to appoint the successful lowest tenderer for the contract works. This tender was slightly over the anticipated pre-tender budget cost and further information on cost reduction and alternative funding is identified in sections 4.2 and 5.2.3.

4.2 Further negotiation is continuing with the successful tenderer in order to review the current supply and specification for mechanical and electrical items, which may result in a cost reduction and saving to the proposed scheme.

4.3 Following a review of outdoor play equipment required for the Centre, a specialist play equipment supplier is to be appointed for the supply and installation of the 'Tubes Challenge'. It was identified that the nominated supplier were the only company able to provide the required equipment, to the appropriate specification and criteria. Approval to appoint via Single Tender Action is therefore sought.

4.4 In order to service the Centres commitments towards pupils and teaching staff during the anticipated construction period, approval is sought for the purchase of eight, 4 berth, new touring caravans from capital funding. The caravans will be resold on completion of the build programme with depreciation costs met by the surplus within the Centres revenue budget as outlined in section 5.2.4.

4.5 The advantages of this proposal are:

- The caravans can easily access the Plas Dol-y-Moch site
- The internal layout is appropriate for sleeping arrangements.

- New caravans have the most robust fittings and have separate shower and toilet facilities and offer the best resale potential.
- Temporary arrangements for electricity and water can be provided.
- Plas Dol-y-Moch would continue to operate as normally as possible.
- The caravans would occupy the lawned area adjacent to the main centre and be physically and securely separated from the building site.

- 4.6 The costs of purchasing eight touring caravans was estimated at approximately £80,000 and over a nine month period could expect a maximum depreciation of 25 – 30%.
- 4.7 Ideally, it is proposed to purchase eight caravans of the same design and fitments and as caravan production is largely 'to order'. This can take several months, as manufacturers produce one model for a period of time, and then progress to a newer model. Larger dealers with several outlets nationally also indicated they would struggle to provide eight caravans of the same model at short notice.
- 4.8 A performance specification was prepared and tenders requested for the supply of the temporary accommodation, in order to comply with procurement procedures. A total of 5 tenders were received.
- 4.9 Further discussion will continue with the lowest tenderer to determine the future resale value of the touring caravans, which at this stage can only be made verbally, as not to alter the procurement to a lease purchase. The future resale value will be dependent on condition at the end of the build period but early indications from the company have indicated a probable depreciation of approximately £15,000 over the period.
- 4.10 Therefore, based on the principles outlined in 4.4 to 4.9, the proposed actions seeking approval for the procurement for the provision of touring caravans are:
- Authorise the supply of touring caravans from the lowest tenderer and ancillary items
 - Orders to be placed to secure delivery for 14th February 2005 to ensure suppliers can provide delivery of caravans prior to build programme commencing
 - Approve the disposal at the end of use for the best future resale value possible to minimise the call on the Centres revenue budget

5 Other specific implications

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Area Co-ordination		✓
Best Value		✓
Children & Young People		✓
Comparable Benchmark Data		✓
Corporate Parenting		✓
Coventry Community Plan		✓
Crime and Disorder		✓
Equal Opportunities	✓	
Finance	✓	
Health and Safety	✓	
Human Resources		✓

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Human Rights Act		✓
Impact on Partner Organisations	✓	
Information and Communications Technology		✓
Legal Implications		✓
Property Implications		✓
Race Equality Scheme		✓
Risk Management		✓
Sustainable Development		✓
Trade Union Consultation		✓
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		✓

5.1 Equal Opportunities

5.1.1 The alternative accommodation proposal is important so that no school pupils miss the opportunity of outdoor and residential experiences during the build period.

5.2 Finance

5.2.1 Outline project costings were developed in order to establish funding approval from The Big Lottery Fund and subsequent approval was made on 6th September 2004.

5.2.2 Capital Funding for the project has been secured subject to confirmation of section 5.2.3.

5.2.3 Following confirmation of approval to proceed from The Big Lottery Fund, the slight shortfall will be drawn from the overall CCC allocation of Big Lottery Fund resources to ensure total project funds are available. Negotiations on any further cost reductions as described in section 4.2 and any contingency not used as part of the project delivery will be returned to The Big Lottery portfolio to support the other projects currently being developed.

5.2.4 Funding for the capital outlay for the purchase of the touring caravans as outlined in 4.4 – 4.10 will be made from Capital Modernisation Funding resources for Education. Following the resale of the caravans after the build period, Plas Dol-y-Moch will fund any depreciation, which could be in the order of £15,000, from within its own revenue budget. Currently Plas Dol-y-Moch has approved carry forward to support the project and surpluses may be made in 2004 \ 05 and possibly 2005 \ 06 to ensure finance is recouped.

5.3 Health and Safety

5.3.1 A Risk Assessment has been written and Educational Health & Safety Officers have been fully consulted regarding the proposed arrangements.

5.3.2 Risk Management and Insurance Department have also been consulted and have stated that the children would be covered by the Authority's normal insurance policy and the caravans would be covered by an additional insurance cover to be provided.

5.3.3 There would be no gas connections required and fire alarms would be fitted. The proposed site area of the caravans to be enclosed by security fencing.

5.3.4 Further Risk Assessments will need to be undertaken by the site contractors to ensure the safety of the site area during the build period to prevent any unnecessary risks.

5.4 Impact on partner organisations

5.4.1 All schools will be consulted about the temporary arrangements through Headteacher groups and meetings at Elm Bank for all other teachers.

6 Monitoring

6.1 The outcome of this proposal will be monitored and reported back through officers within Education Planning and via both the PE & Sport Capital Programme Steering Group and the Outdoor Education Steering Group which meets on a termly basis.

7 Timescale and expected outcomes

7.1 In order to deliver the project in accordance with the anticipated programme schedule it is proposed that following Cabinet approval, work will continue to conclude contract documentation and appointment of main contractor to ensure work commences on site for the anticipated start date of 21st March 2005.

7.2 Work is scheduled for completion on Friday 11th November 2005.

7.2.1 Following Cabinet approval, the proposed purchase of the caravans will be made in February 2005 to ensure the necessary electricity and water supplies can be made available. It is anticipated that the phase one build period be completed for November 2005 and the resale of caravans will be made towards the end of 2005. Any delay in the approval for the provision may have a detrimental affect on the whole project programme.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Location

None