

BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 17 APRIL 2018

ADEN COUNTRY PARK: FORESTER'S COTTAGE FUNDING APPLICATIONS

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

- 1. Note work undertaken to date to develop proposals for the renovation of Forester's cottage in Aden Country Park as part of the Restoration and Development of Aden Country Park;**
- 2. Agree that officers progress a LEADER application and match funding applications to other bodies to deliver the project including undertaking procurement for construction and all necessary pre-application activities: and**
- 3. Agree that officers progress discussions with Buchan Development Initiative as the key delivery partner for the operation of Forester's Cottage as a holiday let including any lease or other management agreement.**

2 Background/Discussion

- 2.1** Members will recall that a bid was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in February for funding support for the Restoration and Development of Aden Country Park. This submission was approved by the Committee at its meeting of 20 February 2018 (Item 9).
- 2.2** Additional to the above application, the Aden Working Group agreed that the restoration of Forester's Cottage was a key project for the Park and by bringing the cottage back into use could generate an income stream as well as restoring part of the built heritage. It is therefore proposed to submit a LEADER funding application for this purpose.
- 2.3** As part of the Aden Project, a business analyses was undertaken around the up-take of letting accommodation in the area and this has highlighted a shortfall of short-term holiday lets. Figures show that over 8,000 people used the caravan park over the summer with an additional 1,000 using the recently opened Glamping Pods. The business plan which has been developed to support the application, also provides strong evidence that the creation of a letting cottage in the Park will be an attractive addition to what is already available.

- 2.4 The application will cover the construction costs and related fees as well as furniture and fittings, floor finishes, security, marketing and promotion. Match funding for this application will be sought from external funders including Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in the form of a Building Repair Grant.
- 2.5 The estimated cost of the renovation works and associated fees are £205,000. An additional allocation of £10,000 will be made for furniture and fittings etc. It would be intended to fund the second element from the award given through the Area Committee Budget in 2017-18 for the Aden project. An in-kind element equivalent to £14,500 for the site works, soft-landscaping, fencing and construction of access driveway and parking has also been identified from Landscape Services. The total value of the project is therefore estimated to be £229,500.
- 2.6 The project will deliver a fully restored cottage providing accommodation comprising two double bedrooms, one single bedroom, living room and kitchen. The surrounding garden area will be landscaped and fenced along with the provision of parking. The sheltered and quiet location of the cottage will be an added attraction for any family who require a peaceful environment for a child or children with special needs.
- 2.7 The following list summarises the proposed project funding sources:
- LEADER programme - £135,000
 - HES - £70,000
 - Aberdeenshire Council (Area Committee Budget) - £10,000
 - Aberdeenshire Council (Landscape Services) in-kind contribution £14,500
- 2.8 It is proposed that Forester's Cottage is operated as an all-year round holiday let via a lease or management agreement with the Buchan Development Initiative alongside the existing Caravan Park and Glamping Pods. This would allow Forester's Cottage to be managed as part of a suite of accommodation in the Park and be jointly promoted and marketed as such. An appropriate arrangement will be made to ensure that the income from the enterprise covers any additional costs to the Council in terms of maintenance and depreciation.

3. Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider this matter under Part 2A – Section B – paragraph 1.1 of the Scheme of Governance as this is a matter specific to the Area not otherwise properly delegated to any other Committee.

4. Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because the content of this report does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

- 4.2 The Council's contributions to the project will be funded from the award given from the Area Initiative Budget (2017-18 budget) with an additional in-kind contribution from Landscape Services which will be funded from the Services revenue budget.
- 4.3 The following risks have been identified at a Corporate, Directorate and Service Level: Budget Pressures; and Working with other organisations (outsourcing and partnership working). No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level and operational risks can be mitigated through the leasing conditions and Service Level Agreements which will be put in place
- 4.4 The Head of Finance has been consulted and is satisfied that the financial implications are as outlined in this report. The Monitoring Officer within Corporate Services has been consulted and agrees with the terms of the report.

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