

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING – 22 APRIL 2009

DALDORCH FOOTBRIDGE CATRINE – UPDATE

Joint Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support and the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to allocate funds to enable the Council to proceed with the purchase of the temporary replacement footbridge across the River Ayr at Daldorch, Catrine. It also seeks the retention of the allocated Corporate Support funds towards the future removal of the old footbridge and the construction of a new permanent footbridge to assist in sourcing external funding for the replacement bridge.

2. BACKGROUND

The original Victorian category “C(s)” listed footbridge crossing the River Ayr between Catrine and Daldorch was declared unsafe and closed to the public in November 2006. The footbridge is an important link from the National Autistic Society School at Daldorch to Catrine and also as part of the “Source to Sea” River Ayr Walk. Historic Scotland agreed to the installation of a temporary footbridge as a short term measure on the basis that proposals for a new permanent replacement footbridge would be developed to a high quality design.

The 5 November 2008 Cabinet agreed to:-

- (i) the two phased approach to this project, phase 1 the removal of the old footbridge and the construction of a new permanent footbridge at Daldorch, Catrine, and phase 2 the upgrading of the Catrine to Sorn footpath to cyclepath; and
- (ii) the re-allocation of £30,000 from the Roads and Transport Division’s Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets budget for 2008/2009 and £12,000 from the contingency budget within the Capital Programme to allow the removal of the old footbridge and construction of a new footbridge at Daldorch, Catrine to proceed this financial year.

2.3 The estimated cost for the removal of the old footbridge and construction of the new permanent footbridge was approximately £220,000. Approval by Cabinet completed the estimated funding required package to carry out the first phase of the project.

2.4 The funding package for the project included the following:-

£50,000 – Planning & Economic Development Service Revenue Budget

£60,000 – Corporate Support's Departmental General Fund Balances

£68,000 – Roads & Transportation's Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS) budget 2008/09

£30,000 – Additional funding from the Roads & Transportation's CWSS budget 2008/09

£12,000 – Capital Budget contingency plan.

£220,000 Total Budget approved.

2.5 The tender was issued to seven suitable companies in November 2008, and seven tenders were received on the 12 December 2008. Unfortunately, the lowest tender submitted was for £329,790, with four of the seven being within £20,000 of each other indicating that the lowest tender was very competitive.

2.6 There was therefore a funding gap of £110,000 excluding any contingency. The Roads and Transport Service and Planning & Economic Development Service, investigated ways to bridge this funding gap through the availability of external funding but were unable to do so before the end of the financial year.

3 PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

The temporary footbridge is currently under a hire agreement between East Ayrshire Council and Mitchell Bridges Ltd, who have offered to extend the hire beyond the original agreement date at an increased rate of £10,400 per annum or alternatively to sell the bridge to East Ayrshire Council at a cost of £27,000, exclusive of VAT, with an option from Mitchell Bridges Ltd to purchase it back within the next three years if it is no longer required.

3.2 The offer to purchase the temporary footbridge with a buy back opportunity under the sliding scale proposed by Mitchell Bridges Ltd has some advantages over the open ended extension of the hire. The sliding scale approach will allow the Council to recover some of the purchase cost and also has a potential saving against the hire cost. For example if the bridge is sold back within 1 year at £20,000, there is a loss of £7,000 but this is offset against the hire cost of £10,400. Selling within 2 years at £10,000, there is a loss of £17,000, offset against a hire cost of £20,800 and selling within 3 years at £5,000 there is a loss of £22,000, against a hire cost of £31,200. This assumes that Mitchell Bridges Ltd is still trading and still wishes to purchase the bridge.

3.3 If the Cabinet agrees to allocate up to £27,000 to purchase the bridge works, as outlined in 3.1 and 3.2 above, this will secure a crossing over the River Ayr for the foreseeable future, whilst allowing further

investigations into external funding to proceed with the original plan, to remove the original footbridge and install a permanent new bridge.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposal is to re-allocate up to £27,000 of the Planning and Economic Development Services £50,000 Revenue Budget allocation for the removal of the old footbridge and installation of the new footbridge, to purchase the temporary footbridge at Daldorch, Catrine. It is also proposed that the balance of this allocation and the £60,000 allocated from the Department of Corporate Support's General Fund Balances be retained as a contribution to the future removal of the old footbridge and installation of the new footbridge

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is understood that the Council owns the ground on one side of the bridge but that the ground on the other side is owned by Daldorch Estates who have leased the area to the National Autistic Society Scotland and that the only consent that the Council has to the use of the ground in this way is by an informal letter. This gave permission for the construction of the temporary bridge on their land and to provide an access footpath link to the existing footpath. This might cause problems in the future in the event of a change of ownership of the ground if the use was to be denied.
- 5.2 It is recommended that if the Council is to proceed to purchase the bridge which might require to be in use for some years before the new bridge is constructed a more formal agreement should be entered into with the owners of the ground. This could be done by way of an access agreement or a license to occupy which would ensure that the access over the bridge was open to the Council and members of the public for as long as it is required..

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no personnel implications

7. COMMUNITY PLAN/ POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The proposal to purchase the temporary footbridge at Daldorch will contribute towards meeting the draft aims and aspirations of the 'Delivering Community Regeneration' Action Plan which is currently being prepared.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The footbridge will be included in the Roads and Transport Division's inspection and maintenance schedule and will be included in the register of EAC assets and insurances.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Agree to the allocation of up to £27,000 from the Department of Corporate Support Revenue budget to enable the purchase of the footbridge;
- (ii) Agree to seek external funding to allow the removal the original footbridge and install a permanent new bridge;
- (iii) Retain the balance of the funds allocated from the Department of Corporate Support Revenue budget and General Balances amounting to £83,000 as a contribution to the removal of the original bridge, the installation of a new bridge and as a match fund to attract external funding.
- (iv) Authorise the Solicitor to the Council to enter into a formal agreement with Daldorch Estates to ensure the continued public access over the footbridge.

7 April 2009
FV-AN

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/
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William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (1) Report to Cabinet – 2 July 2008 “Regeneration Projects and Budget Allocations”
- (2) Report to Cabinet – 5 November 2008 “Daldorch Footbridge Catrine”

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