

## **Summary Sheet**

### **Council Report**

Improving Places Select Commission, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### **Title**

Rother Valley Country Park Caravan Site Progress

### **Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

### **Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Damien Wilson, Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment Services

### **Report Author(s)**

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### **Ward(s) Affected**

Wales directly but wider impact across the borough.

## **Executive Summary**

Following approval by the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the 13th November 2017, work has started on implementing the Rother Valley Country Park Camping and Caravan Site project. This report presents an update of progress to date.

## **Recommendations**

- 1 Improving Places Select Commission notes that the construction of a new camping and caravan site at Rother Valley Country Park is on track, and that

it is scheduled for completion and handover in March 2019, in line with the original project programme.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 - Construction Progress Photographs

**Background Papers**

Cabinet Report, Proposed Rother Valley Country Park Caravan Site, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Improving Places Select Commission Report, Proposed Rother Valley Country Park Caravan Site, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Title (Main Report)**

### **Rother Valley Country Park Caravan Site Progress**

## **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 Improving Places Select Commission notes that the construction of a new camping and caravan site at Rother Valley Country Park is on track, and that it is scheduled for completion and handover in March 2019, in line with the original project programme.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Proposals to develop a new camping and caravan site at Rother Valley Country Park (RVCP) were previously reported to Improving Places Select Commission on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The proposals had been approved by the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017, and officers were instructed to submit a planning application and to seek tenders for construction of the facility. Planning permission was granted in April 2018. Tenders were invited around the same time.
- 2.2 Five tenders were received. As all exceeded the agreed construction budget, a value engineering exercise was undertaken with the lowest tenderer (Geo. Houlton and Sons Ltd) with a view to omitting some items from the tender. Substantial savings were made by omitting the TV aerial system to individual pitches, adopting simpler door access controls and retaining excess spoil on site. However, all the principal elements of the original scheme, including a second toilet and shower block, will be delivered. The agreed revised tender price was £3.76 million.
- 2.3 The tender cost excludes costs in respect of certain infrastructure works including an electricity sub-station, gas supply and off-site highway improvement works. Such costs are expected to be contained within the £370,000 contingency sum allocated as part of the agreed overall capital budget.
- 2.4 Houltons contract started on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018. Good progress has been made since then, with early works including re-contouring of the site, setting out roadways and pitches, piling for buildings, and casting of concrete floors. Appendix 1 contains recent photographs showing work on site.
- 2.5 Feedback from local residents led to identification of a preferred alternative for provision of off-street car parking on Delves Lane/Waleswood Lane on the approach to Wales Bar junction, which was a planning condition.

Consequently, a revised scheme has been submitted to Planning as an application for variation of condition on the original permission.

### **3. Key Issues**

- 3.1 The contractor's construction programme currently has a completion and handover date of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019. This will allow commissioning and staff training to take place in time for a public launch in April 2019, and the business to operate throughout the 2019-20 financial year as assumed in financial projections.
- 3.2 The confirmed design and specification for the site is still expected to meet the AA 5 Pennant standard. This has been identified as being important to the success of the project, as research has indicated that this standard is a significant driver of customer demand.
- 3.3 Effective pre-launch marketing is also important to achieve projected levels of net income (after loan repayments) to deliver a planned budget saving. Current and planned activity includes procurement of an on-line booking system which is due to go live before the end of 2018, providing links to the booking system from partner web-sites, general and targeted advertising, social media campaign, and media coverage in the run-up to opening.

### **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 A wide range of options was considered, including doing nothing, pursuing alternative invest to save projects, inviting an external body to develop and operate a caravan site at the park under a long lease, developing and operating a caravan site on other Council-owned land elsewhere, and developing and operating a caravan site on land within the park next to Delves Lane. Consequently, the option of developing and operating a caravan site on land at Delves Lane was identified as being most likely to fulfil the project's identified critical success factors.

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The previous report to Improving Places Select Commission described early consultation that took place to establish the business case for a new camping and caravan site, and to identify high-level requirements. For example, it guided decisions about the size and location of the new caravan site, as well as identifying appropriate quality standards.
- 5.2 Since Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting approved the development of a new camping and caravan site there has been further

targeted consultation to help identify detailed requirements and to address any specific concerns. Face-to-face consultation sessions were held with prospective customers, local residents, Wales Parish Councillors, Members and officers of Rotherham Borough Council, Rotherham Youth Cabinet and Access4All. This has guided development of the detailed proposals. For example, consultees advised that additional car park spaces were needed when people staying on the site have friends or relatives visiting them and these have now been included.

- 5.3 Rother Valley Country Park also sought comments from the public via its website and Facebook. This led to 163 email responses and 300 comments on the Facebook page. The park team also consulted with lease holders at the park, and families with disabled children, via the Rotherham Short Breaks Facebook page, which generated 5 responses.

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 6.1 The Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism is accountable for the project in her role as project sponsor. The Leisure and Green Spaces Manager is acting as client project manager, and project implementation is being co-ordinated by the Building Design Team in Asset Management.
- 6.2 The previously reported timetable for implementation remains on track, with completion and handover of the camping and caravan site scheduled to take place in March 2019.

## **7. Finance and Procurement Implications**

- 7.1 Projections of capital expenditure, revenue costs and income remain as reported in the previous report to Improvement Places Select Commission, and are therefore within the approved capital budget for this project. The delivery of the capital project by March 2019 will enable the approved 2019/20 revenue saving of £200k to be achieved. This is on the basis that customer numbers and therefore income and expenditure assumptions in the business plan are met.
- 7.2 This project was procured using the YORbuild2 framework. YORbuild2 is a regional framework for the Yorkshire and Humber region for which the Council is one of the 4 lead authorities. The YORbuild2 framework was approved at the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016. In line with the procurement regulations, all the contractors within the relevant Lot are invited to submit a tender price.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **9. Human Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are no immediate Human Resource implications arising from this report.
- 9.2 Any new staff will be integrated into the existing park staffing structure, where adequate management and administration resources are already in place to ensure compliance with Council HR and financial procedures, and to provide the necessary oversight and direction of the business.

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 10.1 The project will support the delivery of Rotherham's ambition to be a child-centred borough, by creating family-friendly holiday accommodation. This will also widen access to Gulliver's for children, families and vulnerable adults by providing an affordable accommodation offer. The project will support the continued operation of Rother Valley Country Park, which provides recreational, educational and employment opportunities for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## **11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

- 11.1 The project will comply with all planning and building regulations with regard to meeting disabled access requirements. The project increases the availability of affordable holiday accommodation, supporting access to leisure for those of limited means.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

- 12.1 There are no direct implications for partners and other directorates.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The project team continues to monitor and mitigate risks, including those identified in the previous report to Improving Places Select Commission.

13.2 At the time of writing, no new risks have been identified that are expected to impact significantly on prospects of achieving a successful project outcome.

**14. Accountable Officer(s)**

14.1 Polly Hamilton - Assistant Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism.

14.2 Phil Gill - Leisure and Green Spaces Manager.

Approvals obtained from:-

Finance Manager, Regeneration and Environment: Jonathan Baggaley

Legal Service Manager: Stuart Fletcher

Head of Procurement: Karen Middlebrook

Human Resources: John Crutchley

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