

CABINET MEETING – 12 OCTOBER 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Elmore Eco Park and Visitor Centre / Garden Centre Project

Author(s):

Executive Director of Neighbourhoods

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's approval to commence the procurement process and subsequently award the necessary contracts for the capital works required to redevelop the former Elmore Golf Course site in Hetton into an Eco Park, Cafe, Garden and Visitor Centre.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Portfolio Holder for Dynamic City, to procure and award the necessary contracts for the capital works required to redevelop the former Elmore Golf Course site.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The former Elmore Golf Club site has been derelict for a number of years. The redevelopment proposal shall ensure the long-term sustainability of the Elmore green space and shall generate employment opportunities and attract visitors to the site. The procurement process shall identify skilled and experienced contractors to undertake the regeneration works. The value of works to be tendered exceeds £500,000 therefore Cabinet approval is required to both commence the procurement process and subsequently award the contract(s) for works.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The following options have been considered and are recommended to be rejected;

Reuse the Elmore Golf Club site as a golf course. This option is not recommended as the Council previously readvertised the site for this use and there were no expressions of interest.

There are no other economically viable alternatives to achieve the desired outcome, which after significant resident consultation, it is clear that residents wish to see the site brought back into use as an open country park, garden centre, visitor centre and community space.

Impacts analysed;

Equality

Privacy

Sustainability

Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?

Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?

Yes

ELEMORE ECO PARK AND VISITOR CENTRE / GARDEN CENTRE PROJECT

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to commence the procurement process and subsequently award the necessary contracts for the capital works required to redevelop the former Elemore Golf Course site in Hetton into an Eco Park, Garden and Visitor Centre.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Portfolio Holder for Dynamic City, to procure and award the necessary contracts for the capital works required to redevelop the former Elemore Golf Course site.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 On 3rd March 2021, Council approved £1.0m as part of the 2021/2022 Capital Programme to undertake a feasibility study (including significant resident and community consultation) to determine potential opportunities to develop the former Elemore Golf Course at Hetton, and to then undertake capital improvement works but subject to securing £0.5m external funding to supplement the £0.5m of funding provided by the Council within the above gross approved £1.0m budget.
- 3.2 In March 2021, Coalfield Area Committee allocated £0.1m towards the redevelopment of the former Elemore Golf as part of their Neighbourhood Capital Programme, bringing the total available funding to £0.6m. As yet, there are no other external funds secured but bids are in progress that will support any potential further phase of works.
- 3.3 A project group known as the 'Elemore Greenspace Project' has been established, its members are officers, partners, Councillors and members of the local community. A comprehensive action plan has been developed and significant resident consultation undertaken, via Let's Talk Elemore. It was clear from the resident consultation, which included online surveys, social media campaigns, open day events and community meetings, that residents wished to see the site re-used as an open country park, with garden centre and visitor centre facilities, whilst also protecting the extensive ecology which has developed on the site over time, reduce anti-social behaviour and celebrate the heritage of the area.
- 3.4 Planning applications are currently progressing for the change of use to the current building on the Elemore site, as well as creating additional garden centre out-buildings, additional car parking and wider landscape works to the park areas. Approved works in Elemore will include the redevelopment of existing building to transform into café facilities, garden centre, visitor centre and community space, including installation of specialist changing places standard facilities for those residents with severe physical disabilities.

- 3.5 The proposal is to redevelop the former golf club house into a café, garden centre, visitor centre and community space, as well as improve the existing car park and create an additional car park. The building will be accessible and will support all residents and communities. The garden centre and café will support training for adults with disabilities.
- 3.6 It is intended to work with local suppliers and contractors for all works on site, wherever possible to ensure the funding generated through the project is retained within the city.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that, subject to attainment of required planning approvals and the redeveloped facilities works undertaken, that the new garden centre, café, visitor centre and community space will be operational from early Summer 2022.
- 3.8 Following the receipt of planning approval, the works to the building and car park will commence in December 2021.
- 3.9 The works associated with this initial redevelopment phase for the redevelopment of the former golf club house, car park improvements and installation of new car park are estimated to not exceed £0.6m i.e. within the funding currently available.
- 3.10 Works will be tendered via an appropriate approved framework, for example the NEPO of Procure Partnerships Frameworks.

4. Reasons for the Decision

The former Elemore Golf Club site has been derelict for a number of years. The redevelopment proposal shall ensure the long-term sustainability of the Elemore green space and shall generate employment opportunities and attract visitors to the site. The procurement process shall identify skilled and experienced contractors to undertake the regeneration works. The value of works to be tendered exceeds £500,000 therefore Cabinet approval is required to both commence the procurement process and subsequently award the contract(s) for works

5. Alternative Options

The following options have been considered and are recommended to be rejected;

Reuse the Elemore Golf Club site as a golf course. This option is not recommended as the Council previously readvertised the site for this use and there were no expressions of interest.

There are no other economically viable alternatives to achieve the desired outcome, which after significant resident consultation, it is clear that residents wish to see the site brought back into use as an open country park, garden centre, visitor centre and community space.

6. Impact Analysis

Introduction

- a) **Equalities** – The proposals for the regeneration of the Elemore site are based on improving the site and bringing the site and the building on site back into use, for all residents to enjoy.

- b) **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** – There are no privacy impacts identified
- c) **Sustainability** –The recommendations will enable the Council to deliver capital improvement works in a sustainable manner. The redevelopment of the Elemore site includes the protection of and enhancement of Ecology on site, as well as further tree planting. The project includes the development of cycling and walking routes, all of which support Sunderland City Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. The recommendations will result in a facility that will support the ongoing visitor demand at Elemore Eco Park. This will result in the ongoing public investment in the local infrastructure and provide additional long-term demand and support for the wider park
- d) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder** – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion – The proposals to redevelop the site will reduce anti-social behaviour and improve community cohesion through the sites redevelopment and bringing the site and building back into permanent use, 7 days per week.

7. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- (a) **Co-operative Values** –The contract for all works on the Elemore site will be subject to Social Value which is incredibly important to the Council and to the Elemore project, which has been designed alongside the local community. Social Value is the way we identify relevant and measurable social, economic and environmental benefits for the people and communities of Sunderland, specifically:

Jobs: Promote Local Skills and Employment

Growth: Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business

Social: Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities

Environment: Decarbonising and Safeguarding our World

(b) Other Considerations:

- (i) **Financial Implications** – Costs associated with the redevelopment of the former Elemore Golf club building and adjacent car parks are estimated to not exceed £0.6m, being the funding currently available, and will be met from the current approved Capital Programme. It is anticipated that the operating costs of the Elemore Garden and Visitor Centre will be fully met by the tenant and that a revenue income stream will be realised from the rental income payable by the tenant.
- (ii) **Risk Analysis** – The key risks are associated with the delivery of the contract and fulfilling legislative duties both of which will be managed under the contract.
- (iii) **Legal Implications** –The procurement process and subsequent award of works will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Procurement Procedure Rules.

- (iv) **Policy Implications** – The project will be developed and managed in-line with current Council policies.
- (v) **Health & Safety Considerations** – The works are to be procured using contractors experienced in work of this nature. The Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations apply and the successful tenderer will be appointed as Principal Contractor under the Regulations.
- (vi) **Project Management Methodology** – The project will be managed using industry standard NEC Engineering and Construction Contract, with appropriate amendments.
- (vii) **Procurement** – Corporate Procurement are aware of the proposed works, which are to be procured in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules. A Procurement Scoping Strategy report will be prepared by the Corporate Procurement team which will consider all routes to market.
- (viii) **Property Implications** – The site is subject to a restrictive covenant imposed by the British Coal Authority upon transfer to the Council. The Council therefore requires the consent of the Coal Authority to vary the covenant to allow parts of the proposed use. Property Services have approached the Coal Authority to seek the required variation.