
CARAVAN SITE - VICTORIA PARK, SELKIRK

Report by Director Resilient Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

16 February 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to invest in remediation and improvement work in advance of the caravan site at Victoria Park, Selkirk opening for business.**
- 1.2 Approval is being sought to allocate up to £150k from the Recovery Fund to enable remediation and development works to the site to allow it to re-open in time for the tourist season and with an aim to achieve a Visit Scotland 2-star accreditation.
- 1.3 The caravan/camping site located at Victoria Park, Selkirk is currently operated by Live Borders, along with the Leisure Centre which is in the same location.
- 1.4 For the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in line with Scottish Government policy at the time, the site was designated as the Borders base for the gypsy travelling community. In the report to Council in June 2022 on Gypsy Traveller Site Provision Members were advised that remediation work would be undertaken to ensure the caravan site could re-open and operate.
- 1.5 The Victoria Park Action Group have ambitions for the future development of the site and these will form part of the place making work which is currently being undertaken in Selkirk. Recent Community Engagement events led by the Selkirk Community and facilitated by Scottish Futures Trust have also highlighted the need to improve and upgrade the site as part of a wider set of measures to improve the riverside area and provide the infrastructure to support tourism in the town and the wider area.
- 1.6 A summary of the key works needed to both remediate and improve the site to a Visit Scotland 2-star standard is set out in Table 2 of the report which proposes that funding of £150K is made available to enable them.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Scottish Borders Council:

Approves an allocation of up to £150K from the Recovery Fund to fund the required works to enable the Caravan site at Victoria Park, Selkirk to reopen for the new season and aim for a 2-star rating from Visit Scotland.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The caravan/camping site located at Victoria Park, Selkirk is currently operated by Live Borders, along with the Leisure Centre which is in the same location.
- 3.2 For the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in line with Scottish Government policy at the time, the site was designated as the Borders base for the gypsy travelling community.
- 3.3 In the report to Council in June 2022 on Gypsy Traveller Site Provision Members were advised that remediation work would be undertaken to ensure the caravan site could re-open and operate. Since then, Live Borders have been asked to assess the work required but in addition to look at the improvement works required to be of a quality standard that will achieve a Visit Scotland 2-star accreditation.
- 3.4 The community in Selkirk and the Victoria Park Action Group would like to see the work progressing at the site as soon as possible and for it to be open and welcoming guests from April.
- 3.5 The Victoria Park Action Group have ambitions for the future development of the site and these will form part of the place making work which is currently being undertaken in Selkirk. In parallel, South of Scotland Enterprise will provide a Business Adviser to work with all relevant parties in the short and medium term to identify opportunities for further improvements and options to develop the camping and caravanning visitor offer in Selkirk.
- 3.6 Recent Community Engagement events led by the Selkirk Community and facilitated by Scottish Futures Trust have also highlighted the need to improve and upgrade the site as part of a wider set of measures to improve the riverside area and provide the infrastructure to support tourism in the town and the wider area. While these ideas will be further developed as part of the local Place Making process, the works proposed in this report are both linked and consistent with this approach and address immediate priorities to get the site into a serviceable state ahead of the main tourist season. It is anticipated that, as a Place Plan for the Town and surrounding communities develops, further phases of works will be identified. Remediating and developing the site to a Visit Scotland 2-star standard provides a foundation for potential further phases.
- 3.6 Visit Scotland's accreditation is based on a range of quality assessment criteria under 8 sections which are highlighted in Appendix 1 and used to rate a facility as per the table below. As indicated cleanliness is critical and must score a minimum of 60% otherwise no accreditation will be awarded regardless of other works and investment.

	1-Star "Acceptable"	2-Star "Good"	3-Star "Very Good"	4-Star "Excellent"	5-Star "Exceptional"
Overall %	34 - 47%	48 - 59%	60 - 74%	75 - 86%	87 - 100%
Cleanliness	60 - 74%	60 - 74%	60 - 74%	75 - 86%	87 - 100%
No section to score less than	34%	34%	48%	60%	75%

3.7 Visit Scotland’s minimum requirements in the context of the Victoria Park site are set out in Appendix 2. The proposed remedial and development works aim to enable a 2-star accreditation.

3.8 To enable the site to be ready for the Tourist season the desire is to have the works completed by 1st of April. This will be a challenging timescale and requires the project to commence at the earliest opportunity.

4 PLANNED WORKS

4.1 A summary of the key works needed to remediate and improve the site to a standard that can achieve Visit Scotland 2-star accreditation is set out in Table 2 below.

Refurbishment Area	Works
Shower Block	Full refurbishment and redecoration of the Shower Block including installation of heating.
Sluice/ Chemical toilet	Full refurbishment/re-instatement of sluice and chemical toilet facility
Electrical Supply	New electrical supply to pitches
Disabled Access	New disabled access ramp
Hard standing	Hard standing created for 10-12 pitches. Adjacent to the electrical power supplies
Line-marking	Line marking of the car park area to designate vehicle parking for pitches (e.g.) bays relined and re-marked with pitch number relating to pitch parking spot
Entrance gate	New entrance gate installed. Height restriction, electronically controlled
Signage & Lighting	Improved signage
	Improved lighting in the car park
Booking system/ Remote entry	New booking system and related processes in place to allow access when Selkirk Leisure Centre is not open
Fire Safety	Fire cabinet, extinguisher, etc....
Water Spouts/spigots	Water tap in addition to supply at sluice area.
Other Facilities	Installation of picnic tables and BBQ areas

4.2 Estimated capital costs for the above works have been prepared by Live Borders and, based on this, it is proposed that funding of up to £150K is made available to enable them.

4.3 The Victoria Park Action Group and the community of Selkirk are looking to carry out additional work in and around the site to make it more attractive and welcoming for visitors to the town.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The paper seeks approval from Members to allocate up to £150k from the Recovery Fund to progress the works outlined at section 4.1 to successfully open the caravan site for business.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that the planned works will take longer than is currently estimated to complete which will delay the opening of the site. Discussion took place with the Victoria Park Action Group about this and it was agreed that the work required is critically important and should be completed before opening even if that pushed back the opening date to May 2023.

There is a risk that the actual costs of the works exceed the estimates. This will be closely monitored.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An IIA checklist has been completed. The works aim to improve disabled access to the Shower Block at the site and associated facilities within the building.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

The remediation and improvement works will be undertaken using local skills and trades wherever possible

5.5 Climate Change

The proposals in the report will enhance the local amenities and the climate change checklist will be considered as part of the tender process.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This proposal will have a positive effect on the community of Selkirk by increasing visitors to the town and maximising the use of the prominent site.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Acting Chief Financial Officer, the Acting Chief Corporate Governance Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance &

Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received will be reported verbally to members.

Approved by

Jenni Craig

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Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Nil

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