



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Date of Meeting: 4 July 2005

Public*

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: PROPOSED TRANSFER OF TALKIN TARN ESTATE

Report of: HEAD OF PROPERTY SERVICES

Report reference: PS 09/05

Summary:

The City Council resolved to proceed with the transfer of the Estate on 18 January 2005. This was subject to a number of conditions being met. A Council budget has also been formally set. This report provides a Business Plan for consideration by the Executive in order that a decision can be made on a way forward.

Recommendations: It is recommended:

1. To consider the report and any comments from Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to determine whether the outstanding conditions have now been satisfactorily addressed to enable the Executive to authorise the purchase to be completed.

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Note: in compliance with Section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: PS02/04 Report to Executive – Proposed Transfer of Talkin Tarn Estate from County Council to City Council; PS16/04 report to Community O & S – Proposed Transfer of Talkin Tarn from County Council to City Council, PS19a/04 & PS19b/04 to Executive and PS20a/04 & PS20b/04 to Community O & S; PS01/05 – Implications arising from Full Council resolution and 13 June report PS 06/05 – Proposed Transfer of Talkin Tarn Estate.

Resolutions:

City Council resolution 23 November 2004 - C230/04 proposals from the Executive in relation to the Council's budget and policy framework – Talkin Tarn; City Council 18 January 2005 - C15/05 proposals from the Executive in relation to the Council's budget and policy framework – Talkin Tarn.

INTRODUCTION

1. This report provides clarification for the Executive in order that a decision may be taken about the transfer of Talkin Tarn estate on the basis of the terms proposed by Cumbria County Council.
2. There has been consultation about the principles behind the transfer, the terms of agreement and budgetary arrangements to support the project.
3. Officers have undertaken further work to clarify issues. These are encapsulated in a Business Plan which has been prepared in order that a decision may be taken on the basis of a structured report.
4. Matters are now at a position where Officers can advise the Executive on a way forward.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

5. The Full Council resolution on 18 January 2005 was:-

“That this Council is agreed to the City Council taking over responsibility for Talkin Tarn, conditional on addressing the issues raised in (1) and (2) below with regard to dealing with the blue-green algae and in a way that reduces the risk to the Council. This is outlined in the Head of Property Services report (PS1/05). At the same time the Executive is to take whatever steps are necessary to make the business case more secure.

That the Officers of the City Council enter into joint discussion with the County Council into means by which we jointly address the issues of blue-green algae.

(1) Toxic Blue-Green Algae Problem:

To deal with the heavy and persistent infestation of the lake as detailed in the consultants’ report commissioned by the County and City Councils.

(2) Business Case:

The business case to be strengthened and the level of uncertainty identified in minute volume 31(4) page 301 to be addressed to give a greater level of certainty in the outcome of this project.

6. Minute volume 31(4), page 301, should have referred to page 1301. This page relates to the capital and revenue costs of the scheme proposed within the business case.
7. The Council's budget for 2005/06 includes Talkin Tarn – as agreed at Full Council on 11 February 2005 – more particularly extracted and being:-

Schedule 3 – Recurring Spending Proposals			
Recurring Spending Proposals:	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Talkin Tarn	70,000	70,000	70,000

Schedule 8 – Proposed Capital Programme			
New Spending Proposals:	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Talkin Tarn	1,009,000	474,000	0

BLUE GREEN ALGAE

8. Following the Full Council resolution, Officers have discussed the matter further with the County Council – the current owners of the estate. The County have indicated that they are prepared to indemnify the City for a period of 2 years – subject to agreement of the final amount.
9. Officers also commissioned a further report about the blue-green algae problem.
10. The conclusions of the further report are that the algae cannot be fully eradicated – but it can be managed. There have been discussions about a grant that may be available from the Cumbria Waste Management Environmental Trust to assist in dealing with the issue. At the time of writing, this is not formally confirmed.
11. The reports have been placed in the Members' rooms.

THE BUSINESS CASE – CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

12. Following consultation with Members and stakeholders at Community Overview and Scrutiny, the local Parish Councils in the area, staff at the Tarn and user groups, a number of concerns have been raised – particularly in relation to the scale of the proposed capital programme for the two more complex schemes.
13. The overriding conclusion from these meetings is that the proposal for the City Council to take over stewardship in accordance with its standards for assets is to be welcomed.

14. However, the proposal for the larger schemes could lead to a conflict between increasing visitor numbers to help with running costs versus environmental conservation and protection.

THE BUSINESS PLAN

15. It is concluded that there are sound reasons for shelving the larger schemes until and unless major external sources of funding were to be made available.
16. Consequently, a Business Plan is now presented to Members on the basis of a smaller scheme.
17. This is attached for Members' consideration.
18. It is on the basis of this Business Plan that a decision is recommended.

FURTHER WORK

19. One area of work to be undertaken by officers is cost estimating.
20. The Council has set a budget of £95,000 for this to proceed to what is known as Stage G in cost estimate terminology as defined by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

WAY FORWARD

21. It is advised that the Executive carefully considers the Business Plan and if it is of the opinion that the outstanding conditions flowing from the Council resolution of 18 January 2005 have been satisfactorily addressed, proceed as follows:-
 - (i) To transfer the estate on the basis of the terms proposed by the County Council;
 - (ii) Delegate the Head of Culture Leisure and Sport to take over the overall stewardship of the estate on the basis of the net revenue budget set by this Council (plus income generated from the estate);

- (iii) That the capital programme be reduced to the scheme proposed within the budget set by the Council and as outlined.
- (iv) That any more advanced scheme only be prepared in partnership with stakeholders and external funding sources in a revised proposal at a much later stage, (including the probability that the estate will be run on a trust basis).

CONCLUSIONS

- 22. This report provides clarification about the present position concerning the transfer of the Talkin Tarn estate.
- 23. It recommends a way forward for the Executive, if it still wishes to proceed with the transfer, if it is of the view that the Council resolution of 18 January 2005 has been complied with.
- 24. The cost estimates have been updated with a further inflationary element. However, before final legal transfer, this will be investigated to check that the costs in the Business Plan are prudent and realistic according to the budget set by the City Council.

CONSULTATION

- 1. **Consultation/Briefings to date:** County Council, corporate colleagues in the City Council, District Valuer and Valuation Officer, private building surveyors, private ecological consultants, private catering consultant, East Cumbria Countryside Project, Special Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee (26 October), User Group (21 October), Brampton Parish Council (26 October), Farlam Parish Council (1 November), Hayton Parish Council (19 January 2005), Full Council (18 January & 11 February 2005); staff at the estate; ECCP.
- 2. **Consultation/Briefings proposed:** External bodies, particularly in relation to future options for funding; staff at the estate, Brampton Neighbourhood Forum.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended:

To consider the report and any comments from Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to determine whether the outstanding conditions have now been satisfactorily addressed to enable the Executive to authorise the purchase to be completed.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make a decision about the future of the Talkin Tarn estate, in consideration of the terms proposed by the County Council and the management arrangements for the City Council if a transfer were to take place.

IMPLICATIONS

STAFFING / RESOURCES - The staff will transfer on a TUPE basis. The County Council have confirmed that the staff will take place on what they describe as a fully funded basis.

However, the number of staff involved number four contracted staff and eleven casuals (assuming that they are “casual” in reality and have not acquired any employment rights), so the numbers involved are small.

FINANCIAL:

The 2005/06 budget process resulted in the following approvals:

Capital budget : £1,009,000 and £474,000 in 2005/06 and 2006/07 respectively, totalling £1,483,000.

Recurring revenue budget of £70k from 2005/06

A further one off budget of £95k for additional preparatory works on the scheme subject to a further report being produced by the Head of Property Services.

The revised business case now presented is for a scheme with a capital budget of £308,500 in 2005/06 and £710,125 2006/07 amounting to £1,018,625.

The revenue budget as set out in the 'Costs' Appendix averages £63,000 in the first five years rising to an estimated £82,210 p.a. from year six onwards.

The £95k remains as required for preparatory works.

This is a new area of business for the authority and actual revenue costs arising will require careful management and control.

The Council will be subject to an external appraisal of its use of resources and needs to be clear about how this fits with the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

LEGAL:

1. Members will recall that substantive legal comments dealing with the powers to acquire the estate, the mechanics of the acquisition of the asset and the need for the Executive to undertake a risk and fiduciary duty analysis were set out in Report PS.19a/04 which was considered by the Executive on 11 October last. It is not intended to rehearse these comments here but the earlier report is available for Members if they so wish.
2. The only additional point to raise in connection with the mechanics of the acquisition is the position relating to the Stamp Duty Land Tax potentially payable. The new stamp duty regime was introduced in 2003 and duty is payable by the purchaser of land at banded rates, dependent on the value of the land or any obligation or restriction, affecting the value these currently being: -

- 0 – 120,000 - 0%
- 120,001 – 250,000 - 1%
- 250,001 – 500,000 - 3%
- 501,000 upwards - 4%

Whilst the proposed terms of acquisition involve the County Council transferring the land to the City at nil value, there is a “dowry” to be paid to the City as particularised in the terms set out in Appendix A and the SDLT office will take into account all the terms of the acquisition in determining how much (if any) duty might be payable. It is not possible to predict precisely at this stage what determination the SDLT office will make when the documentation is submitted to them for adjudication, but the Head of Property Services has made provision in the acquisition budget for the sum of £20,000 to be set aside as a contingency.

3. Members will see from paragraph 6 that Council approval to proceed was given, subject to addressing the conditions set out in the Council resolution. The report sets out how those conditions have been addressed and it is therefore a matter for the Executive to satisfy itself that they have been complied with prior to giving final approval to proceed.

CORPORATE - A corporate approach has been adopted in relation to the management of this case according to the Council's Project Management Guidance.

RISK MANAGEMENT - A risk managed approach has been adopted. A risk assessment is in the Members' rooms.

EQUALITY ISSUES - Additional resources may be required to further adapt the estate to comply with disabled discrimination legislation. This will be monitored.

ENVIRONMENTAL - An environmental impact statement has previously been reported.

CRIME & DISORDER - The estate needs to be managed in an appropriate way to mitigate any antisocial behaviour issues.

IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS – Previous reports outline the link between the transfer of the estate, level of investment, and corporate objectives in order to maintain proper and appropriate public access.

FURTHER REPORTS - If Members' require the detailed reports in respect to building condition, asset valuation, environmental investigation, catering assessment and health & safety issues, these are available upon request.

**CARLISLE
CITY COUNCIL**



**TALKIN TARN ESTATE
BUSINESS PLAN**

JUNE 2005

THE CORPORATE TALKIN TARN TEAM

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1. BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

1.1 Talkin Tarn is a naturally beautiful and popular country park located in Northeast Cumbria.

1.2 The business is about:

Ensuring that local people and visitors from away can enjoy access to Talkin Tarn for informal countryside recreation and quiet water based sports;

Providing interpretation of the natural environment and raising awareness of the countryside;

Conserving, protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of the site.

Support to Council Priorities

1.3 The Council is currently identifying its new priorities of:

- ◆ Learning City
- ◆ Cleaner, greener and safer

1.4 Learning City – Talkin Tarn already has strong links to educational visits both for children and adults in the urban and rural areas. This Business Plan proposes both a physical updating of facilities, additional staff to guide visitors and a more proactive strategy for educational awareness.

1.5 Cleaner, greener and safer – there is considerable further potential to underpin this area of work, particularly in the field of health and wellbeing.

1.6 Therefore, the scheme is intended to be developed so as to clearly further these priorities.

2. PREMISES

General

- 2.1 Talkin Tarn estate is located 12 miles east of the sub-regional centre of Carlisle and 1 mile south of the town of Brampton. The park comprises 73.26 hectares (181 acres), including a 26 hectare tarn (65 acres) surrounded by mature woodland, farmland and wet grassland. There is a tea room, shop, rowing club building, education portacabin, two boathouses and an area designated as a campsite.

Natural Heritage ¹

- 2.2 Just under half the site is covered by deep water (26 ha) which is periodically affected by blue/green algae. The estate includes ancient broadleaf woodland (8 ha), Scot's pine plantation (0.75 hectares), marshy grassland (2.25 ha) and a small area of wet heath (2.5 ha).
- 2.3 Approximately one hundred bird species have been recorded in the park including barn owl, great northern diver, crossbill, wood warbler, osprey and hen harrier. In mid-winter the Tarn is of county importance for goosander, and many years supports enough birds to be of national importance. Large flocks of brambling are regular winter visitors.
- 2.4 Breeding bird species include tufted duck, canada goose, common sandpiper, grey wagtail, redstart, wood warbler and tree pipit. Passage birds include avocet, green and wood sandpiper, greenshank, black-tailed godwit, dunlin, turnstone, black tern and little gull.
- 2.5 The nationally scarce and declining sword-leaved helleborine is present at this site in good numbers. The Tarn also supports the nationally scarce longstalked pondweed and red squirrel.
- 2.6 The site is included in the Cumbria Wildlife Sites Register as being of County Wildlife importance.

The Built Environment ²

- 2.7
- (i) Tea Room – A substantial building of two-storeys, of stone and pitched slate roof construction overlooking the Tarn, containing a tea room and gift shop in good structural order but requiring some general updating and access adaptations.

¹ East Cumbria Countryside Project Report December 2003

² Hyde Harrington report on the condition of built assets: April 2004

- (II) Two boathouses – adjoining the Tarn itself, both of stone and pitched roof construction, which require considerable repair.
- (III) A stable / storeroom – of timber and pitched roof construction in poor condition.
- (IV) Store – occupied by the Talkin Tarn Amateur Rowing Club, of mono pitched roof and timber and concrete walled construction, in good condition.
- (V) Public toilets – a timber walled and tiled pitched roof constructed, detached building with adjoining septic tank, in poor condition.
- (VI) Warden's office and education facilities – a portacabin of timber construction with a flat roof in poor condition.
- (VII) Car park – of gravelled surface in adequate order.
- (VIII) Unadopted highway access – from the main road to the site.
- (IX) Footpaths – in good order (upgraded 2005).
- (X) Services - electricity and water connections but no gas or mains sewerage system.

Recreational Facilities

- 2.8 Talkin Tarn has been used for public recreation since the Victorian period.
- 2.9 There is a historical link with the North East as well as Cumbria.
- 2.10 Activities include sailing, rowing, educational visits, walking, occasional camping and visits to the tea room.
- 2.11 In terms of water quality for recreational purposes, the Tarn is good – nearly reaching the guideline requirements for bathing waters. ³
- 2.12 There is a public right of way all around the Tarn.

³ ICREW (Improving Coastal and Recreational Waters for all Project) April 2005 (European Union)

Title

- 2.13 Cumbria County Council own the freehold in perpetuity. A report on title considers that it is marketable. ⁴

Valuation

- 2.14 As a community asset the estate has a nil market value.
- 2.15 As a private entity the asset is worth a positive value. It could be sold for a monetary consideration.
- 2.16 The proposal is that it is to be transferred from the County Council subject to a dowry for five years to cover some costs of maintenance. This is on the assumption that the City Council manages the asset as a community resource. The Heads of Terms are attached at Appendix A.
- 2.17 The estate has significant cultural and ecological value.
- 2.18 For the purposes of clarity, Tarn End Hotel is excluded from the proposed transfer to the City Council.

⁴ Cumbria County Council Report on Title January 2004

3. THE SCHEME AND SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Consultation

- 3.1 The 2004 Business Case previously outlined three schemes which were put out to consultation.
- 3.2 These ranged from a smaller scale updating of the existing estate to larger scale proposals.
- 3.3 The general concern is that although the City Council's stewardship is to be welcomed, there is no public appetite for large-scale change.
- 3.4 The Council has been asked to focus on consolidating recreation within a conserved environment.
- 3.5 The estate, when transferred to the City Council, requires upgrading in order to provide a decent minimum standard which is sustainable and fit for purpose for the long term.
- 3.6 It is proposed in this Business Plan to implement a scheme known previously as Scheme 1. This is one where works relate primarily to a remedial and refurbishment level with a concentration on pro-active ecological management to conserve and preserve the site.

Building Project Specification

3.7 Definition

The replacement or refurbishment of existing facilities on the same footprint as that which currently stands at the estate.

3.8 Generally

- ◆ Implement works which comply with Health and Safety / Disabled legislation.
- ◆ Demolition of the existing public toilets and replacement with new facilities.
- ◆ Demolition of the existing classroom portacabin and replacement with new portacabin style facilities of the same size with internet access.
- ◆ Upgrade the existing tea room.
- ◆ Demolition of the existing shed/container and construction of a new storage facility.

- ◆ Upgrade of Alex boat house into a basic store.
- ◆ Refurbishment and underpinning of Farlam boathouse into a bird hide.
- ◆ Car park and footpath works.

3.9 Specifically

- ◆ Toilets:-
 - Gents toilets – 3 urinals, 2 WC compartments – wash hand basins.
 - Ladies toilets – 4 WC compartments, wash hand basins.
 - Disabled toilet – Radar Key access.
 - Gents and Ladies - to both have baby change facilities.
 - Frost protection.
- ◆ Alex Boathouse:-
 - To undertake remedial works to a basic level.
- ◆ Farlam Boathouse:-
 - Basic modification for use as a wildlife hide.
 - Make secure wet dock area below.
 - Services not required.
- ◆ Tea Room:-
 - Ground Floor – below tea room – general upgrade and refurbishment to be allowed use all year to bring in flexibility.
 - First Floor – general redecoration.
- ◆ Sewerage Disposal
 - New bio digester for waste water.
- ◆ Car Park/Access Road
 - Car park area to be improved in a style in keeping with the rural surroundings.
 - The access drive to be repaired, pot holes filled.

- 3.10 A building facilities management ethos will be introduced to maintain the fabric properly, similar to the way other City Council assets are managed.⁵

Environmental Specification

Water

- 3.11 Talkin Tarn water is of good quality. In a spring 2005⁶ EU funded report, it scores 83%, with a 3 star rating out of 4 for bathing.
- 3.12 The key is to improve the water quality further and the reduction or eradication of blue-green algae through a long-term restoration and management project. The lake shall be maintained and managed so as to reduce the incidence of the algal blooms and increase the amenity and recreational value of the lake and its surrounds. Additionally, the strategy will have the objective of improving the ecology of the lake to add to the ecological diversity and value of the site.
- 3.13 Significant costs are associated with the management of such lakes and problems with recurrent blue-green algal blooms are notoriously difficult to resolve. No single management strategy or combination of management strategies can guarantee to completely resolve the issue and even after the implementation of a management plan, blue-green algal blooms may well reoccur from time to time.
- 3.14 However, after undertaking such management strategies the frequency of the algal bloom events can be reduced and it is intended to introduce:-
- Installation of an aeration system
 - Planting of marginal emergent plants
 - Management of aquatic vegetation
 - Removal of leaf litter
 - Reduce nutrient enrichment

⁵ Carlisle City Council 2005 Asset Management Plan

⁶ ICREW (Improving Coastal and Recreational Waters for all Project) April 2005

Table 1 Management measures for blue-green algae (based on Scottish Executive model) ⁷

Trigger Level	Observed Effect	Health Risks	Management Action
Concentration over 100,000 cells/ml water (Red Alert)	Floating scum, often deep turquoise colour. Water looks cloudy.	Possible acute or long term illness. Skin irritations. Gastrointestinal illness.	Immediate action to prevent contact. Swimming ban. Advise pet owners to prevent drinking from affected water.
Up to 100,000 cells/ml water (Amber Alert)	Clumps of algal cells suspended in water. Discoloration.	Potential long term effects with some species. Skin irritations. Gastrointestinal illness.	Post on-site risk advisory notices. Inform relevant authorities. * Discourage bathing. Monitor for scum formation.
Up to 20,000 cells/ml water (Green Alert)	Cells visible, clumps forming. Slight discoloration of water.	Skin irritation. Gastrointestinal illness.	Post on-site risk advisory notices.
<p>* Relevant authorities in the case of Talkin Tarn would include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency (for water analysis and toxin identification) • Environmental Health (Carlisle City Council) • Primary Care Trust (for public health information). 			

3.15 No human fatalities have been attributed to blue-green algae poisoning in the UK, and the readily-observed discoloration of the water and scum formation makes the task of risk assessment relatively straightforward.

3.16 A further mitigating factor in the management of blue-green algae at Talkin Tarn is the way in which the water-body is used for recreation. The risk of ingesting significant quantities of algae to cause health effects are increased by swimming in infested waters. At Talkin Tarn, swimming has been discouraged by managers for many years, and occurs only infrequently. No organised swimming activities take place at the Tarn, partly as a result of public information being provided.

3.17 This policy will be continued.

Trees ⁸

3.18 A number of trees require proactive management because of their poor condition and represent a threat to health and safety of the users of the park. In total, 22 trees have been identified as potentially dangerous and need to be removed – whoever owns the estate.

⁷ www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/environment/bgac-16.asp

⁸ Capita Arboricultural Report March 2004

Learning City

- 3.19 At present the Tarn is used as a venue for school visits in an uncoordinated manner. Schools that have historically visited the Tarn continue to do so periodically, but there is potential for developing this activity. In 2004-05, 8 Carlisle-based schools will visit the site, bringing a total of around 600 students at different stages of the National Curriculum. Informal discussions with teachers suggest that this figure could be improved. Currently, schools are charged £1.50 per student for Tarn visits.
- 3.20 Proposals for service development will include:-
- Develop resource pack for schools
 - National curriculum tie-ins
 - Dedicated member of staff
 - Outreach visits to all local schools
 - Improved facilities (equipment etc)
- 3.21 A member of the on-site staff will have specific responsibility for developing the educational potential of the site. Regular contact with schools and teachers' networks to encourage wider uptake of visits. Programmes to be developed to allow schools to manage their own visits, or use the services of a member of staff.
- 3.22 Additional elements of the school visit will be offered, for example a picnic lunch, at an additional charge.
- 3.23 The same member of staff will use the experience gained from this development work to widen the "learning experience". Adult education, guided walks and tourist activities would be offered. In school holidays, the resources would be used to provide "play-scheme" opportunities.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.24 Physical activity is a major contributor to health promotion, especially in non-sports formats. Staff shall provide a "mentoring service" for health walkers, and a regular programme of activities suitable for beginners.
- 3.25 Mental wellbeing and the management of stress levels would also be addressed. Opportunities for quiet relaxation in the natural setting of the Tarn.

Sport and Recreation

- 3.26 Talkin Tarn currently hosts a number of sports clubs and activities. Rowing and sailing are well-established at the site, with the rowing club having been in existence for well over 100 years. The annual regatta, held on the first weekend in July, attracts hundreds of competitors from all over the north of England and south Scotland. Sailing is similarly well-organised. Working with the existing clubs, the intention would be to increase participation in these activities, providing opportunities for all.
- 3.27 Other sporting activities held regularly at the Tarn include annual mountain bike and schools' orienteering events, and schools' cross-country runs. Canoeing and kayaking are organised by a number of outdoor activity centres based in north Cumbria, as well as by local schools. All of these activities generate income either in the form of direct charges, or by bringing additional customers to the tea-room. These activities, and charging policies, would be rationalised in consultation with users in order to make sure that income and costs are appropriate.
- 3.28 Angling is the other form of organised activity taking place at the Tarn. Anglers buy a day ticket from site staff, with designated fishing areas and no-fishing zones clearly identified around the lake. Principal species are pike and perch. There is no stocking of the water, and a closed season is in force from March to June in order that natural breeding cycles are maintained.
- 3.29 Informal recreation is usually in the form of walking events. Many local charities, community groups and schools use Talkin Tarn as a venue for sponsored walks. National events such as the Kellogg's Corn Flakes Great Walk, and ITV's 'Britain on the Move' event will bring a total of about 1,000 visitors to Talkin Tarn in 2005. Again, rationalisation is needed to ensure that these events take place safely and with minimum impact on the smooth running of the site. A simple booking system, together with clear safety procedures from organisers are the minimum requirement.
- 3.30 Camping has been closed since summer 2003, as the unsupervised site had attracted repeated anti-social behaviour from a minority of campers. Specifically, there had been a spate of attacks on nearby farm property, including physical intimidation of the farmer and his family. The intention would only be to re-introduce camping in a controlled environment.

Social Inclusion

- Develop links with community services in Carlisle
- Work with Carlisle Disabled Access Forum

- Contacts with community associations and groups
 - Contacts with ethnic and other minority communities
- 3.31 People from the inner wards of Carlisle may have difficulty in accessing the Tarn, so the Council will work with Community Services to provide specific opportunities, including transport, at specific times.
- 3.32 Carlisle Disabled Access Forum will be included in planning improved facilities for disabled people. More information will be provided to assist in planning a visit. The intention will be to comply with the Disabled Discrimination Act as far as it is reasonable to do so.
- 3.33 People from minority ethnic groups are under-represented as visitors to the countryside, and the Council will work to provide information about the opportunities at Talkin Tarn in formats that encourage them to participate with confidence.

Community Involvement

- Set up mechanisms for public participation in decision making
 - Organise regular forums and consultations
 - Liaison with parish councils and voluntary sector groups
 - Development of website and newsletter
- 3.34 Many local people have expressed an interest in helping to provide better services at Talkin Tarn Country Park. Tarn staff will assist by setting up a "Friends" group, and holding regular sessions in which people can participate. There will be regular consultation and forums through which local people will be able to make suggestions, comments or criticisms. Staff will produce regular newsletters to keep visitors informed.
- 3.35 Staff will make regular visits to local Parish meetings and the Brampton Neighbourhood Forum to inform on improvement and events.

Training and Skills

- Establish training opportunities
- Develop the site as a demonstration site for "best practice"
- Encourage wider public participation via events

- Develop links with existing training organisations
- 3.36 Staff will liaise with colleagues from Newton Rigg, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and others to provide opportunities for using the site as a demonstration area, and provide opportunities for “hands-on” training.

Promoting Carlisle

- Improve the quality of visitor experience
 - Promote Talkin Tarn as a regional destination for day visits
 - Promote Talkin Tarn for day visitors from Carlisle
- 3.37 The renaissance of Talkin Tarn as a centre of excellence will provide an opportunity to broaden the audience for Carlisle’s visitor “offer”. Staff will build on the established pattern of visitors from Tyneside, and work to increase the profile of Talkin Tarn as a destination.

Rural Regeneration

- Increasing visitor numbers and spend at the Tarn
 - Development of a “shop-window” for local products and businesses
- 3.38 Staff will look at ways of increasing the revenue-generating potential of the Tarn in ways that build on its natural attractiveness. It will be promoted as a focal point which new visitors may be encouraged to explore Carlisle and Cumbria.
- 3.39 Links with attractions like Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site and the North Pennines AONB will be actively developed.
- 3.40 Partnerships with local producers will be sought, in order to add value. Local craft workers will be encouraged to use the site to “show case” their skills (for example, wooden bench seats). Made in Cumbria products will be sold and a Farmers’ Market encouraged.

Improved and New Staffing Roles

- 3.41 Talkin Tarn Country Park, Park Manager. Responsible for: -
- Site management
 - Recreational developments
 - Commercial developments and rural regeneration
 - Formal partnerships

- Budget and financial planning and monitoring
- Staff supervision, recruitment and training

3.42 Talkin Tarn Country Park – Education Ranger. Responsible for:-

- Educational development and outreach
- Training developments, liaison and partnership
- Community liaison and activities
- Newsletters, meetings and forums
- Website development and updating
- Social inclusion
- Interpretation, activities and events

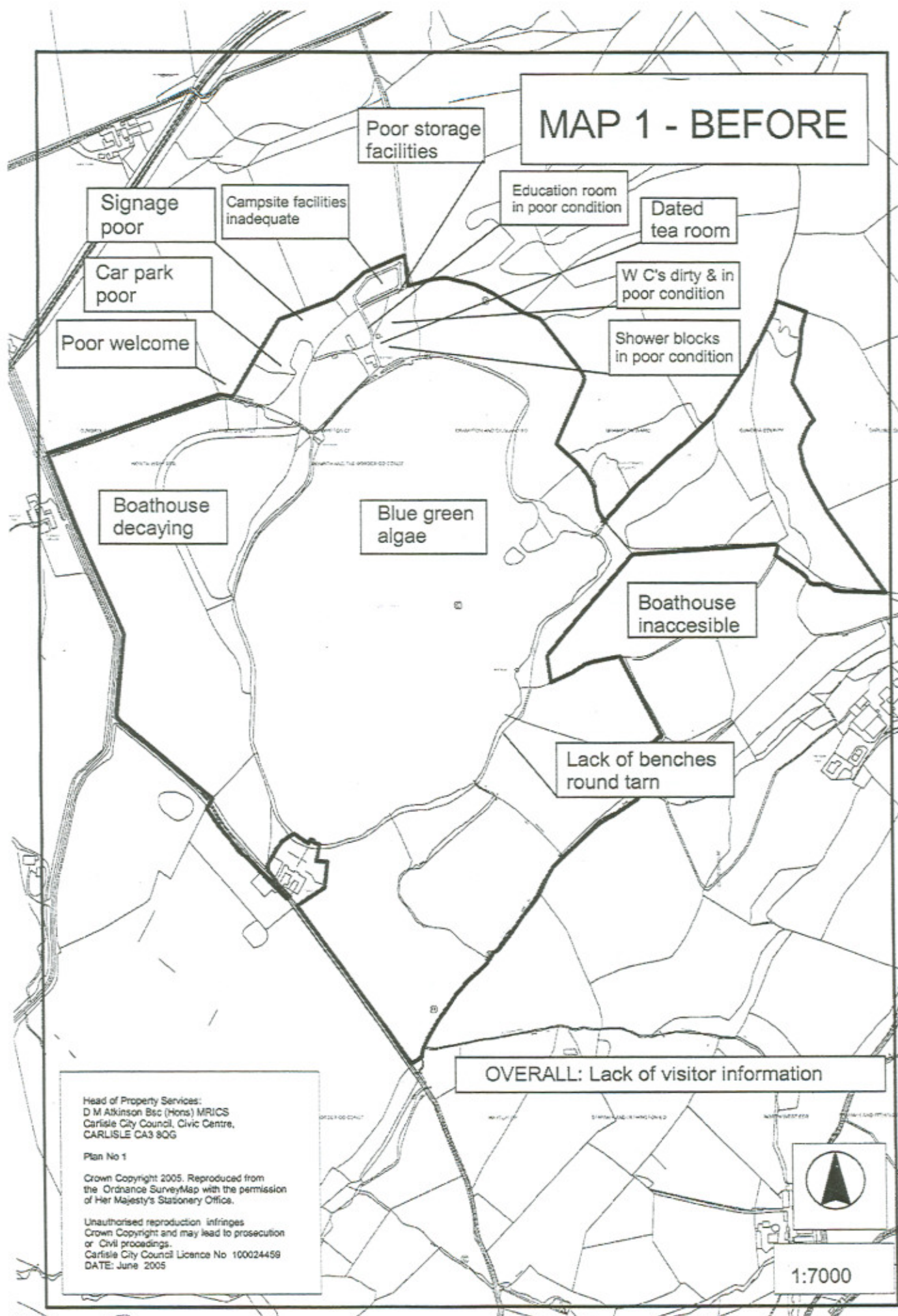
3.43 Talkin Tarn Country Park – Site Supervisor. Responsible for:-

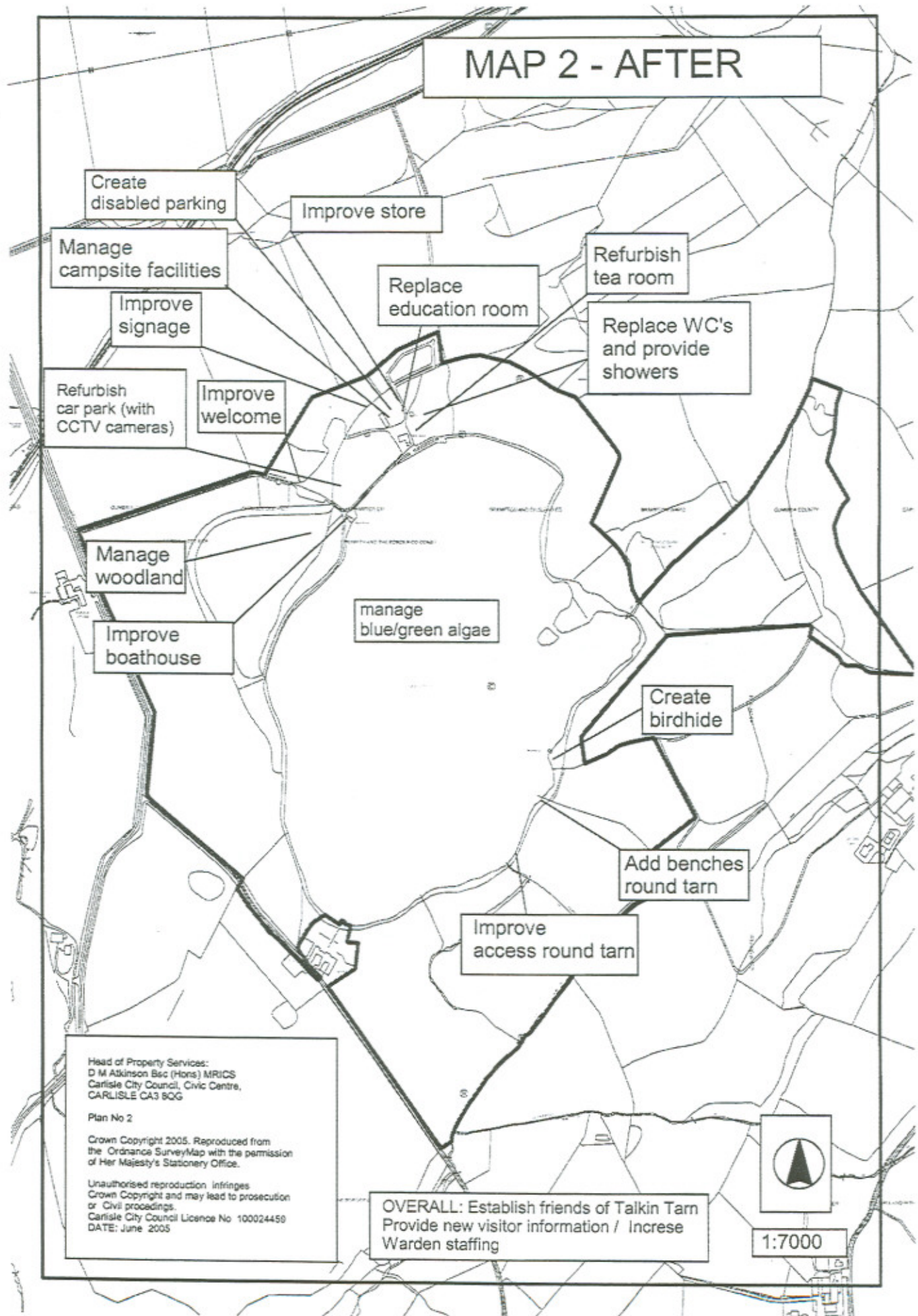
- Site security and visitor safety
- Maintenance of boundaries, draining systems
- Environmental management (litter, waste disposal)
- Path and car-park maintenance
- General site management

The Café

- 3.44 It is proposed that the tea room will be transferred to the City Council as a “going concern” as part of the service.⁹
- 3.45 Being a catering facility, it is vital that it is managed by the Park Manager, on an integrated basis as part of adding value to the Talkin Tarn offer.
- 3.46 There will be investment in the built fabric, particularly to refurbish interiors.
- 3.47 There is potential to build on the goodwill in order to generate a small profit to contribute towards the running of the estate.

⁹ AD Catering Consultant Report September 2004





4. FUNDING

4.1 It is estimated that the overall cost of this scheme is: -

- Capital, £1,018,625 phased over two years;
- Revenue, a net requirement of £70,000 per annum recurring.

4.2 Currently, the only main income from the estate is £4,040 from agricultural lettings per year.

4.3 The analysis of the figures has assumed that the tea room, on the basis of the information provided by the County Council, ¹⁰. currently breaks even.

4.4 The City Council's budget has been set in 2005/06 to include the Talkin Tarn proposal – more particularly being:

Schedule 3 – Recurring Spending Proposals			
Recurring Spending Proposals:	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Talkin Tarn	70,000	70,000	70,000
Schedule 8 – Proposed Capital Programme			
New Spending Proposals:	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Talkin Tarn	1,009,000	474,000	0

4.5 There is a County Council dowry of £40,000 per year for the first 5 years of ownership.

4.6 The building project is extremely simple now that this Business Plan proposes a remedial refurbishment.

4.7 The Council has allocated funding (total £95,000) to provide robust cost estimates to Stage G under the Royal Institute of British Architects Cost Grading Analysis. Before legal transfer is concluded, the costs will be verified on this basis.

4.8 There are more than adequate capital reserves allocated which include a substantial contingency to cover any hidden costs.

¹⁰ Cumbria County Council Café Accounts 2003/04 and 2004/05

- 4.9 There is an adequate revenue budget set but a modest car park charge (subject to a one hour free period) will have to be introduced and the tea room business improved to pay for the running of the estate. The estimated average requirement over 6 years is £65,835. It is prudent to set £70,000 recurring – and that is what the Council has done.
- 4.10 Additionally, it is expected that there are small grants available for minor improvements for infrastructure. These include the ICREW (Improving Coastal and Recreational Waters for All) EU-funded project and Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust.
- 4.11 Finally, through the development of the Friends of Talkin Tarn, there is the opportunity to improve income from schools, sponsorship, events and other promotions.

5. MARKETING

- 5.1 A more accurate count of vehicles has taken place. The estimates suggest 110,000 vehicles per year entering the car park.¹¹ This has been both analysed as a manual count for a whole year and an automatic count as verification.
- 5.2 Previous, figures from the County Council have indicated a count of circa 75,000 vehicles during 1997/98 with an estimated total of around 200,000 people visiting the site per year.
- 5.3 Market research suggests:-
- Up to 75% of visits are made by local residents or other frequent visitors.
 - Overall, the main problems being highlighted by such visitors were the toilets, car park and location signs on site.
 - The remainder are mainly day trippers: approximately 380,000 people live within one hours drive time who may wish to combine a visit to the estate with other attractions.
 - The biggest competition to the attraction is Hadrian's Wall, the Lake District (particularly such a facility as Aira Force) and 'honey pots' in places like the Tyne valley and north Pennines.
 - The target audience are suggested to be:

Market Segment	Audience
Local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local informal countryside sites• Other summer provision for children
Day trippers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Country parks in other areas• Informal countryside sites in other areas• Visitor attractions in general
Tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitor attractions in area
Education groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providers of environmental education• Visitor attractions in general
Adult groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitor attractions in general• Refreshment and meal stops
Special interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other sites with access to open water• Other sites with water sports clubs• Other sites with nature conservation interests
Local groups/organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting spaces and event venues

¹¹ East Cumbria Countryside Project / Capita Analysis 2005

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TARGETS

2005 / 06

- Prepare cost estimates to the equivalent of Stage 'G' analysis (RIBA definition) before legal transfer.
- Legal transfer of the Talkin Tarn estate from the County Council to the City Council (paying any Stamp Duty required).
- Undertake immediate and urgent repairs to the built fabric.
- Consult with local stakeholders about future management arrangements.
- Improve car parking.
- Introduce security measures.
- Improve public access footpaths.
- Improve signage.
- Establish annual health and safety auditing and implement recommendations.
- Recruit and train a Park Manager on a fixed term contract.
- Introduce effective management arrangements through the City Council's People Strategy with staff (especially the tea room), through Investors In People and the Team Improvement Review process.
- Set out provisional arrangements for the 'Friends' of Talkin Tarn.
- Draft out a detailed marketing strategy.
- Seek out grant funding sources.

2006 / 07

- Establish a 'Friends' of Talkin Tarn including links with Cumbria Wildlife Trust.
- Consult widely with stakeholders.
- Recruit and train an Education Ranger and Site Supervisor on fixed term contracts.
- Plan and project manage through Prince II methodology, the main environmental and conservation improvements including:
 - Water ecological works.
 - Tree safety works.

➤ Plan and project manage the main built asset improvements, including:

- New toilets
- Repairs to the Alex Boathouse
- Amalgamation of store houses
- Bird hide at Farlam Boathouse
- Education portacabin
- Refurbish tea room
- Improve the play areas
- Introduce cycle stands
- Refurbish the children's play area
- Introduce a new bio-digester for the waste water system
- Service infrastructure improvements

➤ Implement marketing strategy and target schools and added learning establishments as part of Learning City Policy.

➤ Target sponsorship and local events to achieve an income of £2,000 per annum.

➤ Undertake annual maintenance and conservation management, particularly:

- Follow best practice advice in relation to blue-green algae problem.
- Reducing vandalism where possible.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour by working with Community Police.
- Litter bins to encourage dog walkers to deposit wrapped waste in them.
- Dog bans in the children's play area.

➤ Promoting a healthy lifestyle.

➤ Developing and promoting tourism initiatives.

➤ Developing educational activities.

➤ Promoting the estate on the web in link to Hadrian's Wall.

➤ News leaflets.

➤ Community and school learning events to consolidate 600 visits

➤ Undertake proactive maintenance of buildings in an environmentally conscious manner.

➤ In relation to the tea room:

- Refurbish the first floor tea room
- Review the menu offer, both tea room and takeaway
- Demolish studded wall giving a larger and more functional room
- Create a servery counter and replace coffee machine with an espresso machine
- Create a gift shop area
- Re-furbish ground floor to allow this to be used in winter months as a café and a takeaway enabling upstairs to be hired out for functions
- Communicate with the current staff; they have good ideas to improve the operation and are loyal to the tea room but require inclusive management
- Programme events at Talkin Tarn as an "offer"
- Advertise Talkin Tarn as a catering venue for hire
- Better local external advertising in the car park, smarter well written 'A' boards located at the front of the tea rooms and better signage from the main road
- Visitors to use the tea room with a parking ticket could be used to generate more sales.
- Offer items such as bird food so children can feed them, parents will invariably buy a drink whilst their children feed the birds
- Aim to make a small profit of £2,500.

- Introduce a modest car parking charge for visitors who stay more than an hour of £1 for cars and £5 for coaches, with a discount scheme for the use of the tea rooms.
- Introduce a frequent user scheme for car parking with designated car parking bays.
- Aim to make a net income of £20,000.
- Aim to draw 150,000 visitors (some building works may put folk off in short term).

2007 / 08

- As above with the aim of increasing the profit from the tea room to £5,000 and car parking income to £30,000.
- Aim to increase car visitor numbers to 85,000 vehicles.
- Aim to increase school/adult learner visits to 1000.
- Aim to consolidate visitor numbers at 200,000 per year.
- Commission pieces of local countryside based public art for display.
- Aim to have two yearly Farmers' Markets.
- Buy new locally made hand crafted boats for hire from £20,000 boat reserve.

2008 / 09

- As above with the aim of maintaining the profits from the tea room at £7,500 and car parking at a net revenue stream of £30,000.
- Aim to establish an annual multi-cultural countryside fair.
- Aim to increase car visitor numbers to circa present levels (110,000).
- Aim to increase school/adult learner visits to 1250.
- Aim to improve visitor numbers by 5%.

2009 / 10

- As above with the aim of increasing the profit from the tea room to £10,000 and car parking income remaining at £30,000 and sponsorship of £5,000.
- Aim to increase school/adult learner visits to 1500.
- Aim to improve visitor numbers by 2.5%.

2010 / 11

- As above with the aim of supplementing the County Council dowry of £40,000 when it ends with income from other sources in order to run the estate on the basis outlined in this Business Plan.
- Aim to increase school/adult learner visits to 1750.
- Aim to consolidate visitor numbers at 215,250.

7. ACCOUNTS

TALKIN TARN ESTIMATED / OVERALL POTENTIAL COST SUMMARY

Prices updated May 2005

Prices updated May 2005		Scheme				
	Year 1	Year 2		Total		
	£	£		£		
Capital						
Stamp Duty	20,000			20,000		
New Toilets		105,000		105,000	const.	
Store house / Office		55,000		55,000	const.	
Basic repair Alex Boathouse		25,000		25,000	const.	
Bird Hide Farlam Boathouse		45,000		45,000	const.	
Access alterations	50,000	50,000		100,000	const.	
Urgent repairs (various)	20,000			20,000	const.	
Education Portakabins		120,000		120,000	const.	
Ecological Works: Water	95,000			95,000		
Ecological Works: Trees	15,000			15,000		
Car park improvements	47,500			47,500	const.	
Tea Room refurbishment		55,000		55,000	const.	
Improve Play Areas		22,500		22,500		
Signage		10,000		10,000	const.	
Water pipes		10,000		10,000	const.	
Boat reserve		20,000		20,000		
Local cameras/Vid.Rec./Safe	6,000			6,000	const.	
Cycle stand / Bench seating		10,000		10,000	const.	
Bio System		35,000		35,000	const.	
Contingency Fees	30,000	30,000		60,000	const.	
Fees	25,000	25,000		50,000		
Total before infl est.	308,500	617,500		926,000	check T	
Inflation allowance for year 2 @ 15%		92,625		92,625	0	
				1,018,625		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6 +
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Revenue						
Tea Room Excluded						
Income						
County Dowry	-40,000	-40,000	-40,000	-40,000	-40,000	0
Potential Gross Car Park Fees	0	-20,000	-30,000	-30,000	-40,000	-40,000
Corporate Sponsorship	-250	-1,000	-1,000	-3,000	-5,000	-5,000
Education visits	-1,000	-1,000	-1,500	-1,500	-2,500	-5,000
Estate Letting	-4,040	-4,040	-4,040	-4,040	-4,040	-4,040
tea room	0	-2,500	-5,000	-7,500	-10,000	-10,000
Total Income	-45,290	-68,540	-81,540	-86,040	-101,540	-64,040
Expenditure						
Employees	35,000	55,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	60,000
Repair & Maintenance (buildings)	5,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Car Park Income collection	0	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Car Park Maintenance	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Landscaping upkeep (land)	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Water Quality Systems Maint.	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Tree Management	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Promotion	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Utilities (nb: rates exempt)	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Insurance	250	250	250	250	250	250
Cleaning	10,000	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500
General Supplies & Services	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Health & Safety auditing	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Management & Admin.	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Expenditure	100,750	141,250	151,250	151,250	151,250	146,250
Net Budget Requirement	55,460	72,710	69,710	65,210	49,710	82,210

Note: Revenue costs should be reviewed/revised after year 2

AVERAGE REVENUE REQUIRED

65,835

8. CONCLUSIONS

1. That there is considerable potential to add value to the Country Park, unlocking resources for improvements to the services on offer there, without a significant increase in the numbers of people visiting the site.
2. That there is a unique opportunity to achieve the City Council's key priorities – Learning City and Cleaner, Greener, Safer - by implementing the proposals in this Business Plan, making the site available to all citizens and creating opportunities that are relevant to all.
3. The City Council has undoubted leading edge management expertise in respect to its parks and countryside.
4. There is a more than adequate budget set.
5. That by implementing the proposals, monitoring progress and managing performance against targets, Talkin Tarn Country Park can become a sustainable asset within the Council's property portfolio.
6. This approach is commended to Carlisle City Council.

TALKIN TARN
THE TERMS OF THE TRANSFER PROPOSED

- 1. Tenure:**
Freehold in perpetuity;
- 2. Boundaries:**
All that land shown edged black on the attached plan, but excluding within this, land hatched;
- 3. Acres:**
Talkin Tarn itself : 26.2 hectares (64.25 acres)
Surrounding land : 47.06 hectares (116.298 acres)
For the purposes of clarity, this excludes the hotel area of 1.596 acres in its entirety;
- 4. Public Right of Way:**
A right of way for all members of the public has been created around the Tarn including over land shown cross-hatched;
- 5. Covenants, Restrictions etc:**
Otherwise subject to all matters named in the report made known to the City Council, except that the County Council shall indemnify risks arising out of the blue / green algae for a period of 2 years (subject to agreement of the final amount).
- 6. Existing Tenancies and Licences:**
The conveyance shall be subject to all tenancies and licences being transferred as listed on a schedule made known to the City Council;
- 7. Staffing:**
Tea room and maintenance staff will transfer. The operation of the tea room will also transfer and will need to be managed directly by the City Council. The County Council will indemnify the City on some costs to a limit of £5,000.
- 8. Capital Contribution:**
The County Council shall enter a formal and enforceable agreement to pay the City Council £40,000 pa for 5 years as a contribution to running costs (a total of £200,000);
- 9. Consideration:**
On the basis of the above terms, Talkin Tarn estate shall be conveyed at nil consideration.

Talkin Tarn Country Park BRAMPTON CARTLISLE



NOT TO SCALE

Head of Property Services
City of Carlisle
Carlisle City Council
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