



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 18 January 2007

Title: TALKIN TARN BUSINESS PLAN

Report of: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report reference: CS 06/07

Summary:

A Business Plan for Talkin Tarn was approved in 2005 to support the acquisition of the facility. This report appends the Business Plan for 2007/8 and 2008/9 which builds on the original after approx. 8 months of operational experience and after completion of the capital improvement works. Report CS 69/06 was considered by Executive at its meeting on 18 December 2006. A copy of the Decision Notice is appended.

Recommendations:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee considers the Business Plan and passes its comments for the Executive to consider at its meeting on 22 January 2007.

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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: CS 69/06



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Date of Meeting: 18th December 2006

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: TALKIN TARN BUSINESS PLAN 2006-08

Report of: Director of Community Services

Report reference: CS 69/06

Summary:

This report sets out a plan for the development of public services at Talkin Tarn Country Park from 2006-08. It offers options for the setting of car-park charges to be introduced early in 2007.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:-

1. The draft Business Plan including the proposed car parking charges be noted and referred to the Community O/S Committee meeting on 18 January 2007 for comment.
2. The Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to fix and vary charges at Talkin Tarn within the Business Plan, with the exception of car parking charges which will be reviewed annually as part of the corporate process.

Contact Officer: Phil Gray

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2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 The report includes a business plan for the operation of Talkin Tarn Country Park, 2006-08. While the plan is based on best estimates of costs and income, it should be emphasised that the City Council has only had ownership of the Country Park since April 2006. Managers have not had the experience of a full year's trading figures, visitor numbers or any similar statistics on which to base these projections.
- 1.2 In addition, the first 8 months of operations has been heavily disrupted by the programme of improvements undertaken by the City Council and it is difficult to say with certainty if the figures from summer 2006 are representative.
- 1.3 While the unusual circumstances of 2006 make accurate projections difficult, the evidence so far is encouraging in the sense that the tea-room is on course to achieve its break-even target despite the interruptions caused by building works. Staff have adopted a flexible approach and have taken the opportunity, during enforced closures, to attend training courses and carry out other essential tasks. This sense of commitment from all the team has been a significant positive factor.
- 1.4 The appointment of a new member of staff as manager in June 2006 has also helped in overcoming some of the problems caused by building work. Fiona Shipp was quickly able to identify and implement a number of initiatives and changes necessary to keep Talkin Tarn operating at a high level during this period.
- 1.5 The introduction of new customer charges is never an easy subject, and the car parking issue was always likely to cause some dissatisfaction among Talkin Tarn visitors. While many people are quietly accepting of the idea, especially when it is explained to them, others have seen fit to organise petitions or write to the local press to express their objections. The report contains options for car parking charges (Appendix 2), with the preferred option included in the body of the text.
- 1.6 A key element in gaining public acceptance of car park charges will be demonstrating that the funds raised are used to improve the facilities of Talkin Tarn Country Park and not absorbed into general City Council revenues. To make this transparent for visitors, information on the amounts raised from car park charges, and the use to which those funds have been put will be made available. A 'totaliser board' at the tea-room will be a highly visible, easily understood method of conveying this information.

- 1.7 At this stage it is impossible to predict the impact of car park charges on overall visitor numbers and income. We will be making every effort to ensure that frequent visitors are not penalised disproportionately, and the Talkin Tarn team will be looking at ways of linking the car park charges with other benefits (for example, by giving a free car park pass to everyone who pays to join the 'Friends' group).
- 1.8 Most visitor attractions and countryside sites now charge for car parking, and for National Trust and Forestry Commission sites these charges can be significant sources of income. The proposals for Talkin Tarn are modest in comparison.

2. CONSULTATIONS

- 2.1 Consultation to Date: Employees
- 2.2 Consultation proposed: Community O/S Committee

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- 3.1 The draft Business Plan including the proposed car parking charges be noted and referred to the Community O/S Committee meeting on 18 January 2007 for comment.
- 3.2 The Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to fix and vary charges at Talkin Tarn within the Business Plan, with the exception of car parking charges which will be reviewed annually as part of the corporate process.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This Business Plan provides an update from that approved by Council, based on completion of the improvement works and 8 months operational experience.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – Existing resources
- Financial – The Business Plan is retained within the Council's approved base Revenue budget. The expected deficit of (£5,300) from the Tea Room's operations in 2006/07 is to be funded by an equivalent underspend expected on Site Management.
- Legal – The Council's Off Street Car Parking Order currently does not include Talkin Tarn within its remit. Any proposals to charge for car parking at the Tarn

will therefore require an amendment to the Order to bring the Tarn within its provisions and will necessitate the Council complying with the requirements for advertising etc before any charging provisions will come into force.

- Corporate – The Business Plan builds on the original plan and reflects current Council policies and priorities.
- Risk Management – As with any Business Plan of this nature the key issue is achievement of income forecasts and control of costs. Regular monthly budget monitoring will be in place.
- Equality Issues – The improvement works recently completed have strengthened the equality of access at the facility and there are ongoing minor maintenance improvements during 2007/8 to further improve access.
- Environmental – The recently completed improvement works incorporate a range of varied sustainable energy sources. The Business Plan clearly sets out the strategy of environment sustainability and education to under-pin this approach.
- Crime and Disorder – Design and site management arrangements recognise these issues to try and reduce this risk. Measures include the provision of CCTV cameras which will be monitored as part of the existing arrangements.
- Impact on Customers – The physical improvements recently completed are a major boost to the Talkin Tarn facility which has suffered from under-investment for a number of years. These together with better management and ongoing minor improvements will be beneficial to existing and new customers. There may, however, be a short-term reaction to the introduction of car parking charges and any longer term impacts would need to be monitored.

Talkin Tarn Business Plan 2006-08

Talkin Tarn Country Park was transferred into the ownership of Carlisle City Council in April 2006. Following the transfer, a programme of capital improvements was instigated costing £1 million. This has caused some disruption to on the smooth operation of the site during the summer of 2006, but the works were completed and the facilities officially handed over on 18th November.

The City Council now has the task of operating Talkin Tarn Country Park for the enjoyment of the whole community, using its resources effectively and looking to generate sufficient income to cover the costs of maintaining the facilities to a high standard.

This Business Plan sets out the programme for achieving these objectives.

Vision for Talkin Tarn Country Park

Talkin Tarn Country Park will be a showpiece for Carlisle City Council's strategic objective of making Carlisle a 'cleaner, greener and safer city', with opportunities for all residents and visitors to enjoy the natural beauty, wildlife and landscape of the area in a safe and welcoming environment. Visitors will be encouraged to take part in healthy, outdoor sports and activities and learn more about the history, culture and traditions of this part of rural Cumbria in line with our ambitions to develop Carlisle as a 'learning city'.

1. Employee related

The staff at Talkin Tarn Country Park are a new team of experienced and committed individuals. As part of the Green Spaces Team within Community Services, they are backed up by a directorate that includes people with a range of skills that can support the front-line staff at the Country Park.

With the transfer of Talkin Tarn from Cumbria County Council to Carlisle City Council in April 2006, staff have had to adapt to new working practices and procedures. At the same time the site was undergoing a large scale programme of rebuilding, and the transition was disrupted.

The objectives for staff development in the 2006-08 work programme will include:

- To have all team members aware of their responsibilities in achieving our goal of continuous service improvement
- Ensuring staff are fully aware of their role and function in the team, and are enabled to fully embrace corporate employee training & development and internal communications policies.
- Making sure that we have enough staff resources available at all times to provide the level of service our visitors demand, and meet our own targets for efficient operations

The staff structure is included in Appendix 1 at the back of this report.

2. Buildings & Facilities management

Buildings and facilities management includes the tasks of repair and maintenance, cleaning and health & safety checks. The work is divided between on-site staff and specialist colleagues from Community Services directorate. Some very specific jobs, e.g. maintaining fire extinguishers, are done by specialist contractors.

The objectives of buildings and facilities management for 2006-08 are:

- To provide a safe working environment for our staff
- To provide a safe, clean and welcoming environment for our visitors
- To put in place systems and procedures enabling us to respond promptly to damage, vandalism, and any incidents of anti-social behaviour
- To protect the investment made by Carlisle City Council in the fixed assets of Talkin Tarn Country Park

3. Community Involvement

Talkin Tarn Country Park is in the stewardship of Carlisle City Council on behalf of everybody in the district and beyond. The Tarn is a well known and much loved community asset, and as such the community will rightly demand to be involved in its management.

Some people will want to get their hands dirty and assist in practical tasks. Others will prefer to assist with fund raising, or helping to promote the site. It is our intention to enable everyone who wants to get involved to do so, as the Tarn will be the clear beneficiary of this community effort.

The objectives for community involvement in the business plan for 2006-08 are:

- To encourage the widest possible participation in the stewardship of Talkin Tarn Country Park

4. Park Management

This section of the plan deals with the physical management of the natural resources of Talkin Tarn Country Park, including the water body, the woodland, wetland and grassland around it, and the outdoor amenities for visitors. Talkin Tarn is a natural lake and is subject to the same biological factors as any other water body. In addition it is used for a number of water sports and therefore has additional pressures. The Tarn sits in a natural drainage basin, and run-off from nearby farmland, golf course and pastures drains into it, bringing fertiliser and other residues. The drains from the public toilets and the Boat House Tea Room also discharge into the Tarn, after passing through a sophisticated water treatment plant on-site.

The woodland at Talkin Tarn is a mixture of recent plantations and older, semi-natural habitat. It contains a number of significant species, including red squirrels, that need careful management actions in order to conserve a viable habitat. Woodland management also needs to consider the safety of visitors as a priority. Any dying or diseased trees close to public areas will be identified and dealt with in the annual work programme. Trees overhanging the car parks and our neighbouring farm fields will be treated similarly.

Paths around the Country Park are surfaced in natural stone, and we do not propose to change this. However, some stretches are narrow, some are interrupted by tree roots and some have loose surfaces unsuitable for buggies, pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Information for visitors is limited, and interpretation of the features of interest within the park is not readily available. If we are to encourage a wider audience and make the Country Park a full day destination, we need to improve this arrangement. Carefully placed information points, and the content of that information, can also help us to attract visitors to the main points of interest and away from any sensitive areas.

The objectives for park management at Talkin Tarn are:

- To ensure that all our visitors can enjoy their countryside experience at Talkin Tarn in safety
- To conserve and enhance the wildlife species and natural habitats found within the site boundaries
- To provide information for visitors, schools and community groups to raise their awareness of the site, its history, wildlife and sporting traditions.

5. Boat House Tea Room

The Boat House Tea Room is a popular attraction within the Country Park. Many customers repeat their visits so that a regular clientele has been established. We wish to continue to provide these customers with a high standard of service, and at the same time encourage new visitors to sample the refreshments and ambience on offer at the Tea Room.

Newly installed access facilities include a platform lift and re-engineered ramp. We are confident these provide the opportunity for visitors of all abilities to gain entry to the Tea Room, and staff will be monitoring the uptake and usage of these facilities and reporting any further improvements needed.

The objectives for management of the Boat House Tea Room in 2006-08 are:

- To provide the highest possible standards of customer service and satisfaction for our visitors
- To constantly improve the range and quality of services we offer
- To ensure that our services are available to the whole community

6. Community Groups – Water sports

Talkin Tarn Amateur Rowing Club and Brampton Sailing Club have been established at Talkin Tarn for many years. It is the City Council's wish to see these clubs continue to thrive and the staff at Talkin Tarn will be working with the clubs to make sure this is the case.

The Rowing Club have ambitions to extend their boat store and introduce a training room facility. We will be assisting them with this proposal as much as possible.

The facilities are now ready for greater use by activity centres, schools and other community organisations who organise water sports training sessions, and we will be making these groups aware of the facilities on offer at Talkin Tarn Country Park.

The hire boats are operated by a franchisee under licence to Carlisle City Council. The arrangement allows for boats to be available for hire by visitors at all reasonable times, and it is the intention to continue this arrangement. In order to make this service available to a wider community we will be purchasing a specially adapted boat suitable for wheelchair users, which will be hired out in the same way as the regular boats.

One of the factors affecting uptake of water sports activity in recent years has been the occasional emergence of blue-green algae, potentially harmful if ingested in sufficient quantity. Recent redevelopment work has included an aeration system to try and control algal blooms. Site staff will continue to monitor the water quality and take appropriate actions in the event of renewed outbreaks.

The objectives for water sports clubs based at the Tarn are:

- To encourage the existing clubs based at the Tarn to develop and expand the activities they offer
- To ensure that all sections of the community have the opportunity to take part in water sports activities at Talkin Tarn
- To promote safe and careful use of the water body by water sports enthusiasts

7. Income generation

Talkin Tarn Country Park receives about 200,000 visits per year. It is used by organised sports clubs, community groups, schools and the residents of Carlisle and our visitors, simply looking for some peace and tranquillity. It is not intended that this business plan will seek to change that situation. We do, however, have the ambition to spread usage more evenly throughout the year.

However, the realities of local government finance mean that the Country Park should not be a financial burden on the council taxpayers of Carlisle. As managers of the Country Park, therefore, we must maximise our effectiveness

in running the site by making sure that we both keep costs strictly under control and also seek to generate income from consumers of our services.

Many visitors already contribute in some way; club members pay for the use of our facilities, farming tenants pay for grazing rights and customers at the Tea Room pay for their refreshments. We believe that one way to increase our revenue would be to widen the burden of costs among our visitors, and one way to do this is through a car parking charge.

While car parking charges are a contentious issue, it is our belief that this is a legitimate and fair method of generating income, providing it is sensibly applied. We intend to pursue a policy of charging for car parking, as is the case with most country parks, national parks and National, Trust properties. However, in recognition of the difficulties this may present, we are looking at ways of minimising the impact on frequent visitors.

In order to gain maximum value for money from income streams, it will be important to secure external funds in the form of grants and sponsorship for Talkin Tarn. The management team will be making this a priority effort, and will investigate all potential sources of external income to support the Country Park, and minimise the level of charges at the 'point of use'.

The objectives for income generation in the business plan for 2006-08 are:

- To generate sufficient income so that Talkin Tarn Country Park operates as a cost-neutral element in the City Council's budget
- To spread the income generating activities as widely as possible so that the contribution made by each individual visitor, as a proportion of the overall figure, is minimised.
- To provide excellent value for money for all our paying customers.

8. Income streams, 2006-08

Income from a number of sources is included in the base budget for Talkin Tarn Country Park. The following paragraphs detail the major income streams and an indication of the value of the contributions (fees and charges for services will be decided by the Director of Community Services with the exception of car parking charges).

Talkin Tarn Country Park will operate as a discrete business unit within Community Services directorate. This has the advantage of allowing managers to accurately gauge the costs of operating the Country Park and report this back to Members and council taxpayers. Income derived from the Country Park will be used to improve services and facilities. The annual accounts will show the balance of income and expenditure in the same way as a small business presents a trading account.

8.1 County Council dowry

Fixed at £40,000 per year for 5 years, paid in annual instalments. The payment for 2006-07 has been made.

8.2 Car parking charges

Under review currently awaiting confirmation of levels of charge. We have included some outline projections based on £5,000 income for 2006-07, £26,000 for 2007-08.

Car parking will be managed by on-site staff, assisted by colleagues from the Community Services directorate. Enforcement will be carried out by the City Council's parking wardens as an addition to their normal rounds. Cash collection and banking will be done by specialist security contractors.

The suggested charging level based on predicted levels of use and overall management of the site is as follows:

Cars	Up to 1 hour	-	Free (we estimate 30% of users would fit this category)
	1 - 2 Hours =		£1.00
	2 - 4 Hours =		£2.00
	Over 4 Hours =		£3.50
Mini Buses	Up to 3 hours =		£4.00
& Coaches	Over 4 hours =		£5.00

Car Annual Permit = £50.00

8.3 Fishing

Angling is permitted at the Tarn although it is not currently stocked for coarse fishing. A day permit costs £2 for an adult and £1 for under 16's.

Projected income	2006-07	£300	(150 adult tickets, 3 per week)
	2007-08	£300	

8.4 Boating Permits

These can be purchased by groups wishing to regularly use the Tarn for a cost of £300/year payable on 1st April each year. This entitles them to visit as often as they require and use the changing room/shower facilities. They can also use the site safety boat on production of relevant RYA power boat and safety boat certificates

Day tickets for private boat launching can be purchased from the tearoom at a cost of £4.95/day. Any small group of individuals wishing to make a block booking of 2 or more visits will immediately be entitled to a 20% discount.

Projected income	2006-07	£700
	2007-08	£1,000

8.5 Guided Walks/Cycle Rides, Events

A range of walks/rides will be provided throughout the year of varying distances. These will be ranger led and a charge of £2.50/person. Some walks will also include a buffet style lunch at the tearoom at £6/person. Others

will aim to start or finish by the tearoom thus encouraging people to use the facility.

During the first week of each month join the ranger for a short and easy stroll around the Tarn. This can be linked to the Council's existing 'Healthy Walking' initiative.

There will be 4 larger events held each year at the Tarn to encourage use of the site. These will be spread through the spring, summer & autumn. Income from these events will be made via increased takings from car parking and use of tearoom. On some events a 10% commission will be levied on stall holders.

Dotted throughout the year will be a series of smaller scale events, aimed at a variety of participants, such as bird box building, crafts and orienteering. A small charge (ie £1) may be made depending on the nature of the event.

Evening talks will be arranged, covering any aspect of natural history, environment, travel. A charge made for this at £2/person, friend of members enter free.

Projected income	2006-07	£200
	2007-08	£200

8.6 Rowing boat franchise

Franchise agreement for operation of rowing boat hire business at Talkin Tarn.

Projected income	2006-07	£1,300
	2007-08	£1,300

8.7 Education/Training Programmes

Design a series of programmes aimed at Primary Schools to meet requirements for National Curriculum, in particular, mini-beasts and habitats, adaptation and using senses to explore natural world. Also including a transition activity for Year 7's in September each year.

These programmes would be either self-led or Ranger led. If ranger-led there would be a charge of £1.50/child. This would include the use of the Education Cabin for the day. Self-led groups could hire out the Education Cabin at a cost of £20/half day. Due to nature of Activities 2 rangers would be required to lead each group of up to 40 children.

Adult education sessions will be offered as a programme of monthly events. A full days training based in the Education Cabin with time spent out on site carrying out field work. The cost will be £15/ person with a max of 25 people on each course. The price will cover staff time to lead the course and also includes morning coffee and a buffet lunch prepared by the tea room. Each

course will be wildlife related for example: Birds for Beginners; Fungi Forays; Animal Tracking.

Projected income	2006-07	£0
	2007-08	£500

8.8 Estate letting

Grazing rights, leases for watersports clubs, land management grants etc.

Projected income	2006-07	£4,000
	2007-08	£4,000

8.9 Hire Of Education Cabin

The Cabin will be available to hire for activities such as meetings, training courses, children's parties, with priority given to environmentally related groups. The cost will be £20/half day session or evening.

Projected income	2006-07	£100	(5 hirings)
	2007-08	£500	(25 hirings)

8.10 Friends Of Talkin Tarn Country Park

People will be invited to join this group for a fee of £50/year. For their money they will receive an annual car parking permit, a quarterly newsletter and priority booking for events. Also free entry to evening lectures. A 'Friends of Talkin Tarn' group would also have the potential to source significant grant funding for the site.

No income projection is included as we anticipate that income from memberships will be balanced by running costs.

8.11 Corporate or Private Sponsorship

Memorial benches can currently be bought for a period of 10 years at a cost of £500. There are other opportunities particularly in the first few years for other sponsorship for example sponsoring the provision of the Education Cabin, or boathouses. These could potentially be named after a sponsor. Other things could include provision of funding for education equipment, a bird feeding area, education pack or information panel.

No income projection is included as we have no indication as yet of any likely sources of sponsorship.

9. Tea Room Orientated Income

9.1 Gift Shop/Goodie Bags

The gift shop will be expanded to operate downstairs in the tearoom building. The Gift shop will prepare goodie bags on request for groups using the site. Groups can request the type of items and value of each bag. This will be

specifically targeted at School groups. The Kiosk will be offered to craft suppliers to sell their goods. It can be hired on a booking system and 10% given to the site from any takings that day.

Projected income	2006-07	£2,400
	2007-08	£4,000

9.2 Food, drinks & confectionery

The tearoom will continue to offer its popular Christmas meals throughout Dec. (lunchtime & evening) Currently at a cost of £17.95/person. Specific marketing will promote use of the tearoom particularly over the winter months with special deals for OAP's targeting groups such as old people's homes. A cost of £6/person. Through specific marketing the tearoom will offer services to cater for weddings and christenings. The Tarn is particularly photogenic and should be attractive for these occasions.

Projected income	2006-07	£72,500
	2007-08	£84,500

9.3 Event catering

Buffet lunches will be offered to any group who wishes and can be had in the tearoom or as part of a package when hiring out the Education Cabin. A cost of £6.50/person. Packed lunches will be promoted to schools and groups using the site and they can be booked in advance at a cost of £1.95/person or £2.95/person depending on the lunch required.

Projected income	2006-07	£100	
	2007-08	£1,500	(based on 2 events/month)

9.4 Marketing

Generally increase marketing of tearoom through publications and targeted marketing. For example to coach operators, tours, tourist information centres and B & B's.

10. Proposals for future development

The following list of items is presented as initial thoughts for improving our customer services. The implementation of these projects will be entirely conditional on funding being available.

10.1 Tea Room – Upstairs area

Summary Of Proposal

Changing serving system to self ordering & paying at counter with staff bringing food and drink to table. This will make food serving much more efficient and potentially reduce staffing requirements. A food display counter will increase sales of cakes as people will actually be able to see them and be tempted by them. Smells from coffee machine will drift around tearoom, which also should enhance sales. This will also modernise the look of the tearoom.

Costs

Estimated cost £15,000 to include new coffee machine (£1,500) & display unit (£2,000)

10.2 Take Away Area & Gift Shop, Downstairs

Summary Of Proposal

Create an office and stock cupboard for gift shop manager and a volunteer rest area and develop gift shop.

Costs

Estimated Cost for building works £15,000 to include installation of heating system

Fitting out of office & volunteer area £500

Display units & lighting £1,500

10.3 Alex Boat House

Summary Of Proposal

Turn Boathouse into environmental interpretation base for the site. With displays and information on the site its history and its wildlife.

Description Of Work

Design of interpretation and printing/production of displays. To involve local people and local research into production of displays. Displays should be static but removable if we need to use this area for other activities.

Costs

Initially £5,000 with £1,000 each following year to keep updated and allow for damage.

11. Externally funded projects – proposed

11.1 Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust (CWMET) is considering a proposal for Landfill Tax funding for environmental improvement works at Talkin Tarn. If successful, the bid (value £50,000 approx.) will cover the costs of the following works:

- **Frontage Revetment Work**

Replace existing frontage due to severe erosion and safety issues for boat launching and improve it visually as well as structurally. Use Gabions for main structure with timber surface.

- **Reed Planting**

Plant areas (which will then spread naturally) of common reed in 3rd sandy bay in line with recommendations from water quality reports for prevention of blue/green algae. This will also enhance ecological value of site and increase nesting areas for birds.

- **Boat Storage Area**

Completely rethink the provision of boat storage area, and open up to non-club members with annual storage fee and adequate record keeping of boat ownership.

Reconstruct the area in line with this, with marked hard surfaced bays.

11.2 Further sources of external grant aid will be sought to enhance the resources committed by the City Council. Examples of the type of grants that may be applicable to Talkin Tarn include:

- **National Lottery 'Parks for People'** – large-scale grant programme for designated parks with heritage interest
- **Northern Rock Foundation** – large grants for strategic-scale projects
- **EU Leader+ Programme** – grants for community-led projects
- **Cumbria Community Foundation** – smaller grants for projects within Cumbria
- **Cumbria County Council LA21** – grants for projects that contribute to 'sustainability'
- **Friends of the Lake District** – small grants for environmental projects
- **North Pennines AONB* Sustainability Fund** – small grants for projects that contribute to AONB objectives

* Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

12. Review and performance management

12.1 Talkin Tarn Country Park has been in the ownership of Carlisle City Council for only 8 months, and so it is not possible to present a complete picture of the performance of the business. Until we have completed a full year's cycle we will still be working with incomplete information. Changes such as the introduction of car-parking charges will also have impacts that can not be gauged at this time.

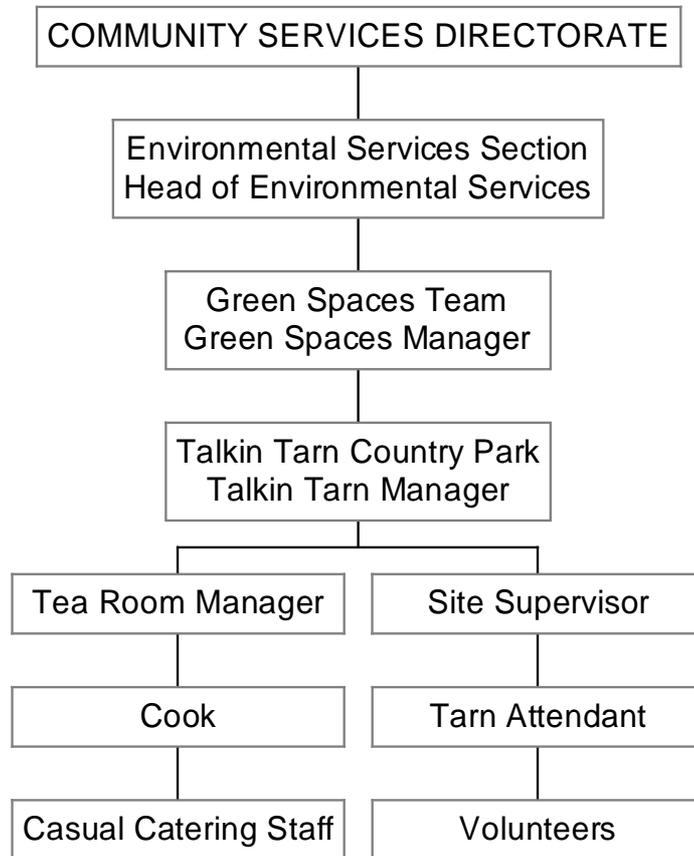
12.2 The business plan outcomes will be subject to continuous review by Green Spaces team managers. Operational adjustments will be made in the light of actual outcomes. Formal reviews with senior management will take place each half-year to ensure that financial targets are met.

12.3 Financial performance targets will be reported regularly and an annual report will include this information together with actual outputs identified from this business plan.

12.4 Performance indicators for 2007-08 will include:

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measured by</i>	<i>Target</i>
Visitor numbers	Car park count	200,000
Visitor satisfaction	Sample surveys	95% approval
Tea room financial outcome	Profit/Loss account	Break-even
Financial input from outside bodies	External grants secured	£50,000
Community support for Talkin Tarn	Friends Group established	50 members by year end
Development of local water sports clubs	Sports Lottery funding for rowers' facility	Rowing Club bid submitted

Appendix 1



Appendix 1

Talkin Tarn Country Park, Budget projections 2006 - 2008

Site Management

Expenditure	2006/7	2007/8
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Employee Related

Basic Pay	£45,000	£62,000
Employers NI	£4,800	£5,500
Employers Pension	£5,800	£9,500
Overtime	£3,000	£500
Additional Pay	£1,500	£2,000
Employers Liability Insurance	£900	£900
Employee Expenses	£100	£100

Transport Related

Mileage Claims	£300	£400
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Premises Related

Premises Repair	£4,000	£5,000
Tree Management	£2,000	£2,000
Electricity	£5,000	£5,500
Water	£2,500	£2,500

Boathouse Tearoom

Expenditure	2006/7	2007/8
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Basic Pay	£19,000	£24,800
Employers NI	£2,500	£2,600
Employers Pension	£2,100	£2,200
Overtime	£9,000	£9,300
Additional Pay	£800	£800

Transport Related

Mileage Expenses	£200	£200
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Premises Related

Premises Maintenance	£1,000	£1,000
Gas	£1,200	£1,300
Electric-Small user	£2,500	£2,800
Metered water	£1,200	£1,300

Cleaning Contract	£3,000	£7,000
Cleaning Materials	£600	£700
Fire Insurance	£2,700	£2,800
Boat Insurance	£700	£700
Car Park Maintenance	£2,000	£2,700
Car Park Income Collection	£2,000	£8,000
Alarm Systems	£200	£500
CCTV Monitoring	£1,000	£2,000

Supplies & Services

Equipment & Materials	£14,000	£15,000
Maintenance Contracts	£5,000	£8,000
Light Plant & Tools	£500	£900
Uniforms & PPE	£500	£500
Stationery & Office Materials	£1,000	£800
Health & Safety	£500	£500
Telephones & Fax	£300	£300
Promotion	£1,000	£4,000
Interpretation	£1,000	£4,000
Fuel	£300	£400
Volunteers	£500	£500
Waste Management	£500	£500
IT	£9,000	£1,000

Total Expenditure £121,200 £156,700

Cleaning Contract	£3,500	£3,500
Cleaning Materials	£200	£200
Fire Insurance	£1,000	£1,000
Tearoom Insurance	£1,000	£1,000
Building Security (Cumbrian systems)	£500	£500
Tearoom Licensing	£600	£600

Supplies and Services

Equipment and Materials	£2,000	£2,000
Equipment Maintenance	£1,000	£1,000
Catering Provisions	£23,000	£25,000
Uniforms and Protective Clothing	£1,000	£300
Stationery and Office Materials	£300	£300
General Expenses	£600	£600
Telephones and Fax	£400	£400
Advertising	£1,000	£1,500
Gifts for resale vatable	£3,000	£5,000
Gifts for resale non vatable	£200	£200
Waste Management	£400	£400
Bank Charges	£1,100	£200

Total Expenditure £80,300 £90,000

Income

Contribution from County Council	(£40,000)	(£40,000)
Car Parking	(£5,000)	(£26,000)
Events	(£200)	(£200)
Boats	(£700)	(£1,000)
Fishing	(£300)	(£300)
Misc. Outdoors	(£0)	(£0)
Rowing Boat Franchise	(£1,300)	(£1,300)
Education/Training	(£0)	(£500)
Estate Letting	(£4,000)	(£4,000)
Education Cabin Hire	(£100)	(£500)

Total Income Projection (£51,600) (£73,800)

Balance	£69,600	£82,900
Base budget contribution	£74,900	£82,900
Variance to budget	(£5,300)	£0

Income

Food, Drinks & Confectionery	(£72,500)	(£84,500)
Gift Sales	(£2,400)	(£4,000)
Event catering	(£100)	(£1,500)

<i>2005/6 for comparison purposes</i>
<i>Gift sales</i>
<i>(£3,701)</i>
<i>Food, drinks & confectionery</i>
<i>(£78,089)</i>
<i>(£81,790)</i>

Total Income Projection (£75,000) (£90,000)

£5,300	0
£0	£0
£5,300	£0

NB. The budgets above do not include internal recharges as these central costs are accounted for below the 'bottom line'.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2006

EX.299/06 TALKIN TARN BUSINESS PLAN (Key Decision)

Portfolio Environment and Infrastructure

Subject Matter

The Director of Community Services submitted Report CS.69/06 setting out a Plan for the development of public services at Talkin Tarn Country Park from 2006-08, including options for the setting of car park charges to be introduced early in 2007.

The Director commented on the first 8 months of operation at Talkin Tarn, since the City Council took over ownership in April 2006. He highlighted the improvements which had been made during that time and their impact on the operations and services at the Tarn during that time.

The Director then outlined the proposed business Plan for Talkin Tarn for 2006-08. He advised that the generation of car parking was an aspect of this Business Plan. He commented that a key element in gaining public acceptance of car park charges would be in demonstrating that the funds raised are used to improve the facilities of Talkin Tarn Country Park. It was not possible to predict the impact of car park charges on overall visitor numbers and income, but every effort would be made to ensure that frequent visitors were not penalised disproportionately. The Talkin Tarn team would be looking at ways of linking car park charges with other benefits.

The Director then highlighted other aspects of the Business Plan, including buildings and facilities management, community involvement, park management, income streams, tea room income, proposals for future development and review and performance management.

The Environment and Infrastructure portfolio holder commented that this would be the first full year of operation of the Tarn by the City Council. In relation to car parking charges, the Executive were minded to see a longer free parking period than the 1 hour set out in the report and also believed that the annual parking permit charges being proposed should be reduced slightly. He hoped that Overview and Scrutiny would take these suggestions on board when considering the Business Plan.

Summary of Options Rejected

None

DECISION

1. That the draft Business Plan including the proposed car parking charges, be noted and referred to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 January 2007 for comment, taking into consideration the comments of the Portfolio holder outlined above regarding car parking charges.

2. That the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder, be authorised to fix and vary charges at Talkin Tarn within the Business Plan, with the exception of car parking charges which will be reviewed annually as part of the corporate process.

Reasons for Decision

The Business Plan provides an update from that approved by Council, based on completion of the improvement works and 8 months operational experience.