

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 17 JANUARY 2017

**SUPPLY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES, BALMACHIE ROAD DEVELOPMENT,
CARNOUSTIE**

REPORT BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

Report on tenders received and seeking homologation of the decision and recommendation of acceptance where the lowest acceptable tender exceeds the Chief Officer's delegated authority.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) homologates the decision taken by the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance, and the Convener and Vice Convener of the Communities Committee, to approve the acceptance of the lowest acceptable tender for Archaeological Services in relation to the development of two sports pitches with associated drainage, parking and fencing at Balmachie Road, Carnoustie, from GUARD Archaeology Ltd in the amount of £109,121.
- (ii) approves the estimated total cost of £111,303 inclusive of professional fees.
- (iii) notes the total cost of archaeological services of £286,747 will be fully funded from uncommitted resources on the Carnoustie Pitches projects of £29,478, plus additional funding of £257,269 from the Council's capital contingency.
- (iv) notes the financial implications included in Section 6 of this report.
- (v) agrees that the required post excavation analysis as agreed with ACAS will be carried out on excavated archaeological features in order to satisfy Condition 3 of the Planning Permission reference 15/00117/FULM for the development of two sports pitches.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed
- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Reference is made to Report 26/15 whereby approval was granted to undertake the development of two outdoor grass pitches on land purchased under a section 75 agreement at Newton Farm in Carnoustie. A planning application was submitted and approved subject to conditions, one of which was to carry out a programme of archaeological works ahead of development works.

- 3.2 The Council has made funding available within the 2012-2017 plan totalling £200,000 and a grant aid application to **sportcotland** was successful for a contribution of up to £165,000 or 50% of eligible costs.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 As earlier archaeological finds had been recorded in the wider landscape, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS) who act as archaeological advisers to Angus Council under a Service Level Agreement requested an archaeological trial trenching evaluation to be undertaken prior to the commencement of development works.
- 4.2 During the archaeological evaluation, which comprised of trial trenching of 7% of the total development area the presence of archaeological remains of prehistoric date were identified.
- 4.3 Following these finds ACAS requested a monitored topsoil strip of the site in order to define the full extent of the archaeological features, to be followed by excavation of the identified archaeological features prior to the commencement of construction of the football pitches.
- 4.4 This research took the form of stripping all topsoil within a 10 to 20m buffer zone of archaeological features, which resulted in about 80% of the site to be stripped of topsoil. Following this the most sensitive of features were excavated, catalogued and surveyed.
- 4.5 The archaeological team discovered an estimated total of 650 features, including several domestic dwellings, querns and pottery. The majority of the finds provide evidence of Bronze Age settlement activity (2200 – 800 BC), but there is evidence of earlier human activity in the form of the remains of a Neolithic long house (4000 – 2500 BC). Several of the features are extremely rare but what could not have been predicted was the presence of a hoard comprising a leaf-shaped sword, still in its wood & animal skin scabbard; a socketed spearhead decorated with a band of gold, and contained within an animal pelt or fur skin; a “sunflower” or disc-headed pin, with traces of textile attached to it; a pommel, a mount/chape and an unknown “mystery” item of organic material.
- 4.6 With the finding of the hoard what was already a locally and nationally archaeologically significant site became internationally significant. Due to the fragility of the exposed metalwork, and the unknown extent of material, the hoard was block lifted and micro-excavated off site in laboratory conditions. Throughout the process, our contractors have followed professional protocol and taken advice and guidance from specialists and experts from throughout the UK and Northern Europe to ensure that such a unique find is correctly recorded, analysed and conserved. The material contained within the hoard is of local, national and international significance. The rarity and uniqueness of these items cannot be overstated, and the implications for adding to our understanding of the Late Bronze Age in Scotland, Britain and Europe are significant. Dr Alison Sheridan, curator of Early Prehistory at the National Museum of Scotland, has been consulted on the hoard. She states that “the hoard is unquestionably of national, indeed international significance”.
- 4.7 As important as the items themselves is the condition in which they survive. The hoard has been preserved extremely well, with unprecedented survival of organic materials in what is effectively a dry, well-drained location (these types of organics would normally only survive in wet/damp conditions). There are no parallels in Britain for such a find in these conditions. While a similar pair of swords and spearhead were found in 1963 at Pyotdykes, less than 15 miles from the Carnoustie site, they were found in isolation (unlike Carnoustie, where the hoard appears to be associated with contemporary Bronze Age settlement) and there is no record of the same level of associated organic materials having been recovered. The hoard presents an opportunity to learn a great deal about the Late Bronze Age in Scotland, and in particular having settlement activity associated with a hoard opens up avenues of investigation rarely, if ever, available to archaeologists in Scotland, Britain or Europe. It offers the chance to find out more about the people living in the Angus area in the Bronze Age, and in particular to establish if the occupants of the site at Carnoustie were of particular importance in local, or wider, Bronze Age society.

5. TENDER FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

- 5.1 To fulfil condition 3 of the planning approval, excavation works to all features are required to be undertaken to establish and record the full extent of the archaeology. The scope of the works had increased substantially and to comply with Angus Council Financial Regulations it became necessary to seek competitive tenders for the appointment of a consultant.
- 5.2 After the earlier press coverage of the find of the Bronze Age hoard, which raised public awareness of the archaeological research it became essential to protect the sensitive nature of the finds and the overall site. The archaeological advisors ACAS advised against leaving this site unattended until committee approval for the tender could be sought.
- 5.3 Following this advice tender documents for the supply of archaeological services were issued using the open tendering procedure through the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website portal. The tenders were lodged electronically on the PCS portal on Friday 2 November 2016.
- 5.4 Tenderers were evaluated on a price/quality basis to ascertain the most economically advantageous tender. The overall weighting for evaluation of the tenders was on the basis of a price/quality split between price and financial criteria at 70% and quality criteria at 30%.
- 5.5 The tenders received, and after checking, were as follows

Contractor	Tender Amount	Amount after Checking
GUARD Archaeology Ltd	£109,995.00	£109,121.16
Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	£116,758.28	£116,758.28
Headland Archaeology Ltd	£136,649.80	£136,649.80
CFA Archaeology Ltd	£167,012.00	£167,012.00

The results of the price/quality assessment were as follows:

Contractor	Price Score	Quality Score	Overall Score	Ranking
GUARD Archaeology Ltd	70	30	100	1
Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd	66	28	94	2
Headland Archaeology Ltd	56	29	85	3
CFA Archaeology Ltd	46	21	67	4

- 5.6 The total costs for the lowest tender including professional fees are £111,303. An acceptance was issued to GUARD Archaeology Ltd, who proceeded with the excavation works on 14 November 2016 with the site having been vacated for only one week. The project will allow for various types of community participation such as providing one week's work experience for a student from Carnoustie High School, school visits from Forfar Academy and Carnoustie High School and guided tours and illustrated talks to the public at the end of the excavation works.
- 5.7 Due to the extreme sensitivity and fragile nature of the Bronze Age sword and spearhead, immediate excavation and investigation was required, including the conservation of organic material.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An earlier tender had been issued for the development of grass pitches, improved drainage, fencing and car parking at the Newton Farm site. The current funding available up to £365,000 will cover the estimated costs of the construction works including the costs for the original archaeological evaluation and initial topsoil strip of £29,478 as shown in the following breakdown.

6.2 The current breakdown of costs for archaeological research is as follows:

Type of Archaeological Works	Cost	Procurement Method	Reference Number	Funding
Archaeological Evaluation 5%	£2,325	PCS Quick Quote	AC/16/064/CPP	Carnoustie Pitches Development (Shanwell Road) – 2015/2020 Financial Plan
Additional Archaeological Evaluation 2%	£3,025	PCS Quick Quote	AC/16/064/CPP	Carnoustie Pitches Development (Shanwell Road) – 2015/2020 Financial Plan
Monitored Topsoil Strip & Evaluation	£24,128	Communities Financial Exemption	COM246	Carnoustie Pitches Development (Shanwell Road) – 2015/2020 Financial Plan
Total of works under existing funding	£29,478			
Monitored Topsoil Strip, additional costs due to extra findings	£13,566	Communities Financial Exemption	COM246	Capital contingency
Safety Fencing around site until end October	£696	Communities Financial Exemption	COM246	Capital contingency
Security over weekend after hoard find	£794	Communities Financial Exemption	COM246	Capital contingency
Sword Examination	£11,100	Communities Financial Exemption	COM246	Capital contingency
Initial Excavation of significant finds	£79,975	Corporate Exemption	EX/CSC/03/16-17	Capital contingency
Excavation of remaining features	£111,303	Competitive Open Tender	AC16/094/CTP	Capital contingency
Post-Excavation Analyses & Conservation of Bronze Age Hoard	£39,835	Procurement method currently under discussion with Corporate Procurement Team	To be confirmed (COM-0254??)	Capital contingency
Total Other Costs	£257,269			
Total Costs Archaeological Works	£286,747			

6.3 To save the organic materials found on the sword and spearhead from further deterioration they will need to undergo immediate analysis by expert consultants and subsequent specialist conservation. Preservation work is likely to include micro-excavation and further analysis such as scanning and sampling to determine the materials present before consolidation of the materials can be carried out to conserve them. The costs for the analysis and conservation by selected series of specialist consultants is £39,835. This cost is included in the total costs at paragraph 6.2 above.

- 6.4 The issue of the archaeological works associated with the Carnoustie Pitches capital project was raised with the Policy & Budget Strategy Group at their meeting on 4 November. The PBSG agreed that resources up to the value of £300,000 would be allocated from the corporate capital contingency towards the required additional works.

7. FUTURE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY

- 7.1 The planning condition on the development of the sports pitches will only be released once the archaeological investigation has been completed and all recording and recovery of archaeological resources is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. After the excavation works have been completed the consultant will produce a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) identifying which post-excavation analysis will need to be carried out. This report is expected by the end of April 2017.
- 7.2 ACAS have indicated that it will be permissible to start the construction work of the two sports pitches provided that Angus Council provides a written statement agreeing to undertake the post-excavation analysis as per the PERD's recommendations. This would allow construction to start in March 2017 with a completion in June 2017. If the recommended assurance that the post excavation analysis will be carried out as per the report is not given by Angus Council, then development works cannot start on site as it would be in breach with planning law.
- 7.3 For the required analysis and conservation consultancy another open tender will be issued following the receipt of the PERD. The costs for this will be significant, in similar developments they averaged between 75 and 100% of the total costs of excavations. This tender will require a future report to committee which will also require to deal with the funding implications.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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