From: Foi Enquiries
To:
Subject: EIR-16-0980 - Loirston Loch Business Case
Date: 30 August 2016 15:41:19
Attachments: Further Information - Right to Review & Appeal.pdf
Aberdeen Arena business case FINALUPDATE_Redacted.pdf

Dear

Thank you for your information request of 5 August 2016. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has completed the necessary search for the information requested.

Please provide the full joint AFC/ACC Business Case developed for Loirston Loch Stadium site. My query is in relation to the join business case developed by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Football Club for the Loirston Loch application (Planning application 101299). This was developed and submitted to councillors and funded with £180,000 of ACC funding.
Please see attached as requested.

Please note that third party names and personal details, as well as the names of ACC Officers who are below Head of Service level have been redacted (blacked out) from the attached Report. This is because ACC considers that this information is excepted from disclosure. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Regulation 13 of the EIRs, ACC hereby give notice that we are refusing your request under the terms of Regulation 11(2) in conjunction with 11(3)(a)(i) – Personal Information - of the EIRs.

In making this decision ACC considered the following points:

ACC is of the opinion that Regulation 11(2) applies to the information specified above as the information in question is personal information relating to living individuals, and the applicant is not the data subject.

ACC is of the opinion that Regulation 11(3)(a)(i) applies, as ACC considers that disclosure of this information would be a breach of the first Data Protection Principle (that personal information must be processed fairly and lawfully). Third parties named within the attached document and ACC Officers below Head of Service level would not expect ACC to release this information about them into the public domain under the EIRs (or the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

ACC is unable to provide you with information on **costs and figures associated with this business case** as it is excepted from disclosure. In order to comply with its obligations under the terms of Regulation 13 of the EIRs, ACC hereby gives notice that we are refusing your request under the terms of Regulation 10(5)(e) – Confidentiality of Commercial Information - of the EIRs.

In making this decision ACC considered the following points:

ACC considers that commercial interests exist in relation to the costs and figures associated with the attached business case because it would allow identification of elements of the current project which is currently still ongoing. Disclosure of this information into the public domain under the FOISA would prejudice the commercial interests of both the contractor and ACC.

Disclosure of this information is likely to weaken the contractor's business position in a

competitive environment by revealing sensitive information which tenderers may find useful. It is important that ACC maintains good working relationships with external companies to enable it to obtain value for money and so releasing commercially sensitive information could potentially damage ACC's reputation with such third parties, dissuading the third parties from engaging with ACC.

ACC recognises that there is a public interest in being open and transparent about its spending of public money. However, the costs associated with this business case could not be said to be ACC costs but rather those of a third party. On this basis, it would not be appropriate for ACC to release this information.

However, ACC is of the view that in this case, the public interest lies in withholding the information as disclosure would prejudice ACC's commercial relationships. There is a strong public interest in allowing normal market forces to operate in a competitive environment and engage in a fair and transparent process. On this basis, ACC is of the view that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest is best met by applying Regulation 10(5)(e).

We hope this helps with your request.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Webster
Information Compliance Officer

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HANDLING OF YOUR REQUEST

As the information which you requested is environmental information, as defined under Regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs), ACC considered that it was exempt from release through FOISA, and must therefore give you notice that we are refusing your request under Section 39(2) of FOISA (Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002). However, you have a separate right to access the information which you have requested under Regulation 5 of the EIRs, under which ACC has handled your request. Please refer to the attached PDF for more information about your rights under the EIRs.

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ABERDEEN COMMUNITY ARENA
FULL BUSINESS CASE

"A stadium, more that any other building type in history, has the ability to shape a town or city. A stadium is able to put a community on the map, establishing an identity and providing a focal point in the landscape.

Stadia are the most 'viewed' buildings in history and have the power to change people's lives: they represent a nation's pride and aspirations. They can be massively expensive to build, but they can also generate huge amounts of money. The power and fiscal weight of sport is increasing as an industry around the world, and I believe the 21st Century will establish sport as the world's first truly global culture. It will become the most important building any community can own, and if it is used wisely, it will be the most useful urban planning tool a city can possess. In that last 150 years, since sport was codified and professionalised, there has been a dramatic shift to urbanisation, from the country to the city, and the meteoric rise in the popularity of sport has been the consequence…."

Rob Sheard, *The Stadium.* Architecture for the New Global Culture.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Gardiner & Theobald team were commisioned to undertake the preparation of the Full Business Case in September 2008 building upon the Outline Business Case completed in December 2007. The brief for the study was to consider in depth the sites at King's Links and Loirston Loch and their ability to accommodate the new 22,000 seat Community Arena.

2. Studies have shown that it is economically unviable to redevelop the existing Pittodrie Stadium. In addition, the club invests substantial monies every year on repair and maintenance of an outdated Stadium.

3. The focus of the study changed late last year as financial modelling and market advice rendered the commercial development (hotel/offices) to be economically unviable at this juncture. ACC and AFC's instructions were to focus upon a best value, deliverable solution for the stand alone stadium, incorporating community facilities.

4. The Environmental Impact Assessement has been concluded and Faber Maunsell have identified that subject to mitigation measures, there are no unsurmoutable issues on either site.

5. The Traffic Impact Study has also been completed. The experts SIAS have concluded that Loirston could be sustainable based upon a similar transporation model that being utilised at Reading Football Club. In addition the timing of delivery of the new stadium, should Loirston be selected, would coincide with the proposed WPR and would, along with an integrated transport policy for matchdays, offer a good location.

6. Extensive benchmarking of stadia costs coupled with risk analysis carried out on both sites has identified capital costs as follows:-

   Loirston [redacted]
   King's Links [redacted] (1)

   (1) (figure excludes third party relocation costs)

7. Site ownership and land assembly discussions have been undertaken during the study. QC opinion has been sought on the Common Good issue at King's Links and risks prevail there. In addition the existing leaseholders at King's Links could prove costly to relocate.

8. The economic benefit of Aberdeen Football Club to the North East is in excess of £6m per year. A new Stadium will significantly enhance this – the socio-economic benefits of landmark stadia have been proven throughout the world and the qualitative impact to Aberdeen would be dramatic.

9. With both site options AFC have retained space for Community facilities howver at Loirston, Cove Rangers would support a joint development providing extensive, integrated Community facilities.

10. Meaningful progress has been made with prospective funding partners – to date [redacted] of a potential [redacted] capital spend hs been identified. Commitment to a deliverable site could allow the Club to bridge this funding gap.

In summary, the study team recommend the selection of the Loirston Site as the preferred location for a sustainable and deliverable Community Stadium.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

The Council's Policy and Strategy Committee agreed on 19th April 2006 to develop proposals without commitment for a community stadium. The report presented to the Committee highlighted that: -

"the Stadium presents an opportunity to create a community facility of the highest quality, with the vision being to develop a facility which is much more than simply a football stadium, but acts as an educational training, social, recreational, employment and community hub seven days a week for the benefit of the North East of Scotland".

The Council meeting on 27th June 2007 considered a report by the Head of Planning and Infrastructure seeking approval to fund an options appraisal and fully costed Business Case. The work required was estimated to take approximately 6 months and was to include: -

- Identifying user needs
- Options appraisal
- Prepare a Business Case
- Approval Gateway 1

The Outline Business Case was completed in December 2007. The Business Case considered 4 sites as potential locations for the stadium: -

- King's Links
- Bridge of Don
- Calder Park
- Loirston

Following an options appraisal King's Links and Loirston were selected as preferred sites with the OBC recommending that Loirston be considered as the most appropriate location.

1.0 INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

1.1 The OBC was presented to the Council at their meeting on 19th December 2008 during which it was agreed that both Loirston and King's Links should be appraised in detail during the full business case stage.

The Gardiner & Theobald led study team were appointed in August 2008 and since that time have been working closely with Aberdeen Football Club and the council to develop detailed proposals for both sites.

Separate Environmental and Traffic Impact Assessments have been carried out and their finings are summarised within this report. The full reports are included in Appendices B and C.

1.2 Existing Stadium

The existing Pittodrie Stadium is land locked with the exception of the East end bounded by the Richard Donald Stand. The Local Plan Inquiry Reporter commented that the existing Pittodrie Stadium "***is patently an uncomfortably close neighbour to adjacent housing and residential streets***". Its site is obviously constrained and it is credible that it would not provide enough space for a stadium meeting modern standards and of adequate spectator capacity, at least without impinging drastically on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Fig.1 Existing Pittodrie Stadium

The pitch width and run off areas currently do not meet UEFA standards (at present there is a maximum pitch dimension of 105 x 66m as opposed to the requirement to have 105 x 68m). In addition a track area of 5m is required, Pittodrie has 1½m. The pitch fails to comply with International Rugby Board (IRB) specifications in terms of width and track area. Pittodrie can therefore only host low-key internationals. These issues could be accommodated with redevelopment of the Main and south stands to a smaller footprint within the confines of the existing boundaries, however the impact on the day-to-day running of the Club would be severe and the solution would be an extreme compromise..

1.0 INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

1.2 Existing Stadium (cont'd)

The Main stand, Merkland Road stand and South stand are all in very poor condition and will require to be completely redeveloped over the next 3-5 years. If these stands were to be redeveloped, there would be a substantial reduction in the capacity of the stadium due to new standards imposed in their design. This capacity would be further reduced due to the fact that the pitch width and run off areas also require to be increased. Not only would the spectator capacity of the stadium be reduced, the Corporate facilities and accommodation would be substantially reduced, thus reducing the Club's capacity to generate revenue and ultimately would be unfeasible.

As there is no alternative stadium for Aberdeen Football Club for match days, it would mean redeveloping the stadium over a number of years, or playing matches at a remote location. Dundee and Inverness would be the most likely options, 60 and 100 miles from Aberdeen respectively. It would also mean that no European matches could be played within the City during this period of redevelopment. Any European matches would have to be played in Central Scotland.

Redevelopment of the existing stadium is estimated to cost in the region of £30m with the Club having to endure a lengthy period of major disruption. The capacity of any full redeveloped Pittodrie would be around 12,000 making it unsuitable to hold any major events. The stadium would be economically unviable for the Club given the capital required to develop the site and offer no benefit whatsoever to the wider community. There is increasing conflict with the neighbourhood on match days as the area surrounding Pittodrie continues to be redeveloped.

Fig. 2 Pittodrie – Merkland Road

1.0 INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

1.3 The Brief

The original brief for the project was developed to achieve the Project Vision which is:-

"The development of a Community Stadium to create an important piece of civic infrastructure which will act as:-

- **A state of the art sports arena with Aberdeen Football Club as the lead tenant**
- **A community resource for public, private and voluntary sector users**
- **An economic development opportunity**

And

- **A catalyst for regeneration".**

KC Stadium, Hull

Ricoh Arena, Coventry

Liberty Stadium. Swansea

1.0 INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

The Brief (cont'd)

The Strategic Brief included: -

- Capacity 22,000 (expandable to 30,000)
- Gateway to the City of Aberdeen
- UEFA standard pitch and floodlighting for TV
- 30 boxes
- Corporate provision on one side of the Arena to include dining, box and lounge facilities
- For football and rugby (internationals)
- Under pitch heating
- Club office space
- Hotel (70 bed [3/4 star] up to 150) in or adjacent to the Arena
- The preference is for one building encompassing all desired facilities
- The design shall focus the fans on the game and generate 'atmosphere'
- Community options, health and fitness provision (including dance studio/class room provision/mini lecture theatre/ community rooms/exhibition and entertainment space)
- AFC Football Academy
- Community facility provision could be different based on location

During the course of the study it became apparent that the commercial elements including stand-alone offices and hotel would not prove to be viable in the current climate. The decision was taken to focus upon a deliverable stadium facility incorporating community uses and the costs identified within this report have been developed on this basis.

The study team comprised of senior members of a range of consultancy firms with experience of major stadia projects across the United Kingdom.

2.0 APPROACH

The study team comprised of senior members of a range of consultancy firms with experience of major stadia projects across the United Kingdom.

Role	Consultant
Project & Cost Managers	Gardiner & Theobald
Architects	The Miller Partnership
Business Planning	PMP Consultants
Financial Advisors	Quayle Munro
Civil & Structural Engineers	Fairhurst
Services Engineers	Wallace Whittle

Fig.3 Project Team

2.1 The Process

At the outset of the study the team convened a project workshop which identified and agreed: -

- The Project Vision
- Key Consultees and the Process
- Timescales for Delivery
- Key Evaluation Criteria for Assessment of Loirston Loch and King's Links
- Options for Complementary Development

The subsequent stages of the study encompassed:

- Data Collection and Collation
  - Site visits
  - Exemplar developments for reference
  - One to one meetings with key stakeholders
- Analysis and Review
  - Development of Sketch Options
  - Initial Options Appraisal Matrix
  - Check on Site Ownership/Legal Boundaries
  - 1st Pass Costing
- Technical Workshops
  - Development and Refinement of Client Brief
  - Review and Challenging of Options Appraisals
  - Guidance on Consultation Process

2.0 APPROACH (cont'd)

The Process (cont'd)

- Reporting
  - Weekly Core Team meetings
  - Monthly Reporting to Steering Group
  - Draft Study Report by 5th December 2008
  - Final Report
- Consulting
  - ACC planning, transportation, environment
  - AFC, SFA, Sport Scotland, UEFA guidelines
  - Scottish Government
  - Market Testing of complementary users

Outputs in relation to the economic, regeneration and financial elements of the study were focused upon including:-

- A demographic analysis/market assessment to inform the proposed facility mix and business plan
- A consultation/soft marketing testing exercise which engaged key local and national stakeholders to inform the facility mix, business plan and financial appraisal
- Development of ten-year business plan for each stadium option
- An economic impact assessment, taking into account the implications of each development option

The completion of these tasks, added to our team's extensive experience of business planning and feasibility studies for Stadia in the UK, informed the development of the following elements of the overall business case:

- Development of the strategic context/case for the stadium
- Identification of project options, including contributions to the development of enabling development facility mix options
- Identification of procurement options
- Development of operating business plans
- Identifying key commercial issues
- Recommendations for the preferred project option based on full financial appraisal and recommendations for enabling/supporting development
- Identification of project risks

2.0 APPROACH (CONT'D)

The Process (cont'd)

The market assessment and consultation/soft market testing was used to identify the right mix of facilities to be provided within and around the stadium development, and inform the business plan as to the level of demand and realisable income streams.

The market assessment included an analysis of supply and demand for potential community and commercial uses in the stadium development.

We identified a list of potential facilities for inclusion in the stadium development and then assessed the local (or sub-regional) level of supply and demand for these facilities.

2.0 APPROACH (cont'd)

2.2 A range of stadium options were considered as follows: -

1. Base 22,000 Seat
2. Base 22,000 seat incorporating Academy and Cove Rangers
3. 30,000 seat - Rugby and Football Internationals
4. Stadi Arena Option

The Stadi Arena concept was developed on the basis that the new venue could be complementary to AECC attracting new business to the North East. The additional capital cost together with the technical challenges and their impact upon the match day spectator, rendered the concept unviable and it has been dropped as an option.

The Cove Rangers facilities could only work at Loirston. The benefits to Aberdeen would include more extensive community sports facilities, partnership working between Cove Rangers and AFC and the economic benefits of a 2nd team in senior football.

Preliminary discussions have been held with the Scottish Rugby Union on the feasibility of attracting international rugby matches to the North East, particularly in light of a potential future bid for the Rugby World Cup. These discussions have been fruitful and the will exists within the SRU to explore this option further – the Capacity would require to be 30,000.

2.3 The extent of potential enabling development was carefully considered and included: -

- Hotel
- Commercial Offices
- Leisure & Fitness
- Community/Education
- Retail

Following advice from the property agents CBRE and given the current economic climate it was elected to proceed with a base stadium model. The capital costs of both the hotel and offices outweighed any commercial benefit to be derived from their inclusion at this stage.

2.0 APPROACH (cont'd)

2.4 Consultation and Market Testing

In the course of this phase of work with AFC and ACC, the G&T team has engaged in consultation with key potential stakeholders to determine their primary requirements and opinions – both commercial and community – of the future the Community Arena and its facility mix.

This consultation (with Council Officers and other key local stakeholders) and market testing (with potential tenants/users of the Community Arena complex) has been used alongside the team's experience to inform a view of the feasibility of the project and to feed into the business plan prepared for the project.

Those consulted directly have specifically included:

- [redacted] (Corporate Director for Strategic Leadership, ACC)
- [redacted] (Senior (Strategic Programmes) ACC)
- [redacted] (Regeneration Team, ACC)
- [redacted] (Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport Team, ACC)
- [redacted] (Transport Department, ACC)
- [redacted] (Finance Director, AECC)
- [redacted] and [redacted] (Aberdeen Convention Bureau)
- [redacted] (Active Schools Aberdeen)
- [redacted] (Public Health Lead, NHS Grampian)
- [redacted] (Managing Director, AFC)
- [redacted] (Sodexho)
- [redacted] (Chairman, Cove Rangers)
- sportscotland
- Setanta Sports
- Goals Soccer Centres
- Assorted private sector health & fitness operators
- Assorted music promoters and venue operators.

3.0 PLANNING

3.1 King's Links

The identification of the site as Opportunity 51 in the Adopted Local Plan provides for a Community Arena in this location and based on the findings of the North Beach Planning Study which received significant public support. Part of the site is also located in an area covered by mixes use policy. However, the over-riding policy relating to urban green space covers a significant proportion of this site and on this basis, any proposal for a new Community Arena in this location would likely constitute a departure fro the Development Plan. The judgment required from Aberdeen City Council is the degree to which it is a departure.

The site has been identified as potentially Common Good land. The Council would be obliged to refer any application to the Scottish Ministers. .

Other significant issues / risks include the massing of such a large-scale development and how this fits within the existing urban landscape and beachfront area. Traffic impact may be significant although this would only be on match days. Environmental issues and noise considerations would require full investigation and mitigation measures proposed should they be required.

A Community Arena also encompasses other revenue generating and community uses, which together provides a challenge to accommodate them all on the site. Such a constrained site may therefore lead to compromising good quality urban design and the proposal becoming less acceptable in planning and design terms.

3.2 Summary of Risks

Part of the site is identified as Opportunity 51 in the Adopted Local Plan, which provides for a Community Arena in this location. Part of the site is also covered by a mixed-use policy area. However, the over-riding policy relating to urban green space covers a significant proportion of the site and on this basis, the new Community Arena in this location may constitute a departure form the Development Plan.

The site is potentially Common Good land and furthermore the Council has an interest in the land any application shall be required to be referred to the Scottish Ministers. Experience has shown that this type of risk can add at least one year to the project timescale as any Common Good challenge through the Courts would require to take place once planning consent has been granted – this would be a significant financial risk.

3.0 PLANNING (cont'd)

Potential traffic impact issues relating to such a large scale development will require to be investigated. In addition, potential problems could be encountered in accommodating such a large scale development within the existing urban and beachfront landscape.

The constrained site may therefore lead to compromising good quality urban design with the result that the proposal becomes less acceptable in planning and design terms.

3.3 Loirston Loch

The Loirston Loch site is identified as a potential location for a Community Arena in the Draft Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Structure Plan, however, it is located in the Green Belt in the current Development Plan. Development of the Arena in this location would therefore require to be notified to the Scottish Ministers due to its Green Belt location and because the Council has a significant interest in the land.

An important risk to appreciate is that the current Development Plan will likely remain in force for the next 2-3 years and therefore a planning application for a Community Arena, say end of 2009 / early 2010 would be determined under the current Development Plan and therefore would be referred to the Scottish Ministers. It would be for the Scottish Ministers to assess the information relating to the application and make a decision on whether to "call-in" the application and hold a Public Local Inquiry. Should this be the case, it may increase risk in terms of achieving planning consent and could increase the timescales for determination. In this context, mitigation of this risk is very important and on that basis a comprehensive pre-application consultation process including all stakeholders with an interest in the proposal should be undertaken and any application should be debated in depth at local authority level. Public support for the proposals together with a proven economic and social benefit will be a significant positive factor in favour of the proposals when reviewed by the Scottish Ministers.

Critical to the case against call-in by the Scottish Ministers is that there has been a comprehensive consultation exercise and the proposal has attracted a degree of public support. It is expected that some element of the football club support and local residents will oppose the proposals. However, if it can be demonstrated through a comprehensive public consultation report that these views were taken into account and as far as possible, changes made to the proposals to mitigate them then this would help accommodate the risk.

Due to the existence of Natural Heritage designations at Loirston Loch, there is the risk that Scottish Natural Heritage may object to the application. Any impact on Natural Heritage designations would require to be mitigated sufficiently for Scottish Natural Heritage not to maintain an objection to the planning application. Should an objection be submitted and maintained, it would increase the risk of call-in by the Scottish Ministers should planning permission be granted by Aberdeen City Council.

3.0 PLANNING (CONT'D)

3.4 Summary of Risks

1. The proposals for the Community Arena in this location could be referred to Scottish Ministers following the granting of planning permission by Aberdeen City Council**.** This is due to its Green Belt location and the Council has an interest in the land.

2. Potential risk that Scottish Ministers could "call-in" the application and hold a Public Inquiry – this is perhaps less of a risk following recent changes in the planning approach.

3. Risk of "call-in" by the Scottish Ministers could be mitigated by comprehensive / targeted public consultation. This should be appropriately reported through the planning application process.

4. Risk of objection from Scottish Natural Heritage in relation to the Natural Heritage designations at Loirston Loch. This would require early discussions and appropriate mitigation measures where achievable to alleviate this risk.

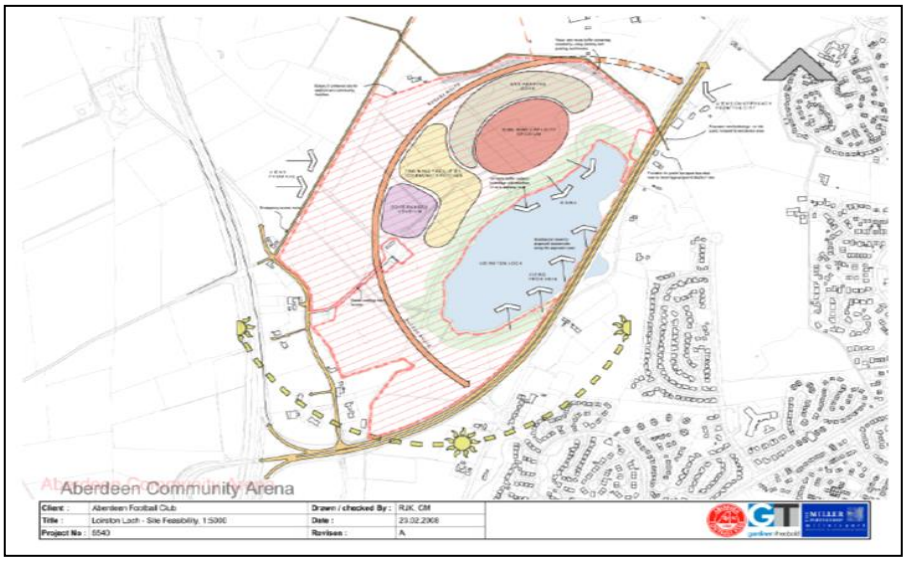

Figure 4 – Site Analysis Example (Loirston)

4.0 TRANSPORTATION

SIAS Limited (SIAS) were commissioned by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and Aberdeen Football Club (AFC) working in partnership to examine the transport feasibility of developing the Community Arena t both locations.

The experience of access to other stadiums built recently in the UK has been explored to gather examples that correlate to the two proposed sites in Aberdeen.

An update of the access characteristics of the King's Links and Loirston areas was undertaken for the Community Arena proposals.

Trip attraction for the new stadium on a day to day basis was investigated. The people attracted to the community uses of the site will need provision for sustainable access and any impact of the development on the transport network taken account of.

Trip attraction to and from the new Community Arena for major events was investigated. The people attracted to the major events uses of the site will need provision for sustainable access and any impact of the development on the transport network.

The review updated information with regard to volumes of road traffic at key points in the road network, to establish existing impact and review potential development impact.

Issues of feasibility have been identified and indications of revenue and capital costs associated with transport aspects of each of the potential community stadium sites developed. A potential revenue stream to reduce liability and risk associated with the support of public transport has also been identified.

A more detailed Transport Assessment and Travel Plan based on this feasibility study and previous studies shall be required at the next stage.

Conclusion

In conclusion the King's Links site presents access issues due to its constrained location and would require some assistance to support public transport access to major events but it is in the most sustainable and accessible location. Loirston presents a logistical challenge for sustainable access but there is a working example of a stadium at an edge of town location in the UK that has developed measures to meet this challenge and these could be replicated in Aberdeen.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

5.1 Kings Links

In terms of environmental constraints, King's Links is considered to be of relatively low sensitivity. Baseline studies of the sites have indicated that there are few sensitive features or receptors present. No major ecological or archaeological constraints or features are resent which would influence the masterplanning of the site.

With respect to impacts on air quality and notices, given the main source of these effects would be traffic associated with the events at the Arena, the proximity of the site to the existing Pittodrie Stadium is such that effects are in a sense 'like for like' with the current situation. The potential additional uses at the Arena may mean that events area more frequent and consequently increased traffic volumes also more frequent but this is considered to be negligible overall.

The issues considered to be of most significance are the existing land use of the site and the potential impacts resulting from drainage and increased surface runoff. The proximity of the site to the North Sea means the site could in the future be at risk of flooding however, based on current predictions the extent of flooding stops at the Esplanade.

Mitigation requirements relating to construction of the Arena at King's Links would in the main be in keeping with that required for any major construction project and would included adherence to SEPA Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs) and other best practice guidance. Further investigations into existing archeological resources would be required and evaluation trenches would need to be excavated.

The size of the King's Links site means that the scope for incorporating mitigation such as SUDS into the masterplan and site design is greatly reduced. Going forward, one element of mitigation that would require consideration is the loss of the Golf Centre. It recommended that if this option is selected consideration should be given to providing an alterative site for this facility to offset its loss.

5.2 Loirston Loch

The Loirston Loch site is considered to be a locally important ecological and recreational area. The ecology of the site and its recreational uses are closely linked, primarily through the Aberdeen City Council Ranger Services station. The site supports a range of wildlife including waterfowl, wintering geese and potentially otters.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT (cont'd)

Loirston Loch (cont'd)

As with King's Links, mitigation required to construct the Arena at Loirston Loch would be generic. It would include adherence to best practice guidance and use of sensitive construction techniques. With regard to the design, whilst no constraints on the site have been identified as 'showstoppers' various mitigation measures are recommended to be incorporated into the masterplan in order to sympathetically develop the site. The proximity of the development to the Loch should be carefully considered, as it is an intrinsic part of ecological and recreational value of the site. In order to retain some of the value of the site it is recommended that a buffer of at least 50m is applied to the development with the main Arena being located outwith this area. In developing a masterplan consideration will also need to be given to the presence of the Ranger Service.

Two potential approaches exist, incorporating the Service into the development by designing the masterplan to include them and maintain some of the ecological and recreational value of the site or; relocating the Ranger Service to an appropriate alternative site. The former has been adopted in the current masterplan.

The size of the Loirston site is such that there is scope for a holistic approach to mitigation incorporating ecological and landscape planting of native and riparian species, development of SUDS and use of existing landscape features such as consumption dykes as boundary features.

It should be noted that with Loirston Loch due to the potential to affect the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Natrua 2000 site, there will be a requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. Under the 'Habitats Directive' any plan or project should be subject to appropriate assessment where there is a potential impact on any Natura 2000 site. A small drain on the site drains to the River Dee, the qualifying features of which are, otters, freshwater pearl mussels an Atlantic salmon. It would need to be demonstrated to the satisfaction of SNH that the Arena can be constructed and operated at Loirston Loch without adversely affecting the River Dee SAC.

5.3 Comparative Summary

The environmental appraisal has not sought to identify a preferred option as to which site should be selected. The environmental constrains and consequently sensitivities at each site are quite different, however, form an environmental perspective both sites are considered suitable locations for the development. Mitigation can be incorporated into the sites masterplans to avoid, reduce or offset potential adverse effects. It should be noted that construction activities at both sites would require similar mitigation and such differences are subtle, however, in respect of potential long term effects the sites are very different and at Loirston Loch a greater level of mitigation would be required. The most significant difference in the potential effects and mitigation relate to the long term or permanent effects at each site.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT (cont'd)

Comparative Summary (cont'd)

The appraisal has identified that Loirston Loch is more environmentally constrained than King's Links, particularly with regard to the ecological value of the site and the recreational functions that this ecological resource supports, i.e. walking, bird watching, fishing and environmental implementation of appropriate mitigation through the design, to ensure that a landmark development can be constructed that is sympathetic to the existing site. The increased size of the site relative to King's Links affords greater scope for opportunities to develop mitigation including the integration of existing land use functions, ecological mitigation, landscaping, the use of SUDS and the retention of existing features such as dykes.

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Whilst King's Links is considered less sensitive, the potential does exist for significant adverse environmental effects in particular during the construction period and in the long term increased surface runoff. The site is more constrained in terms of size and scope for mitigation, such as landscaping and the use of SUDS, is consideration reduced.

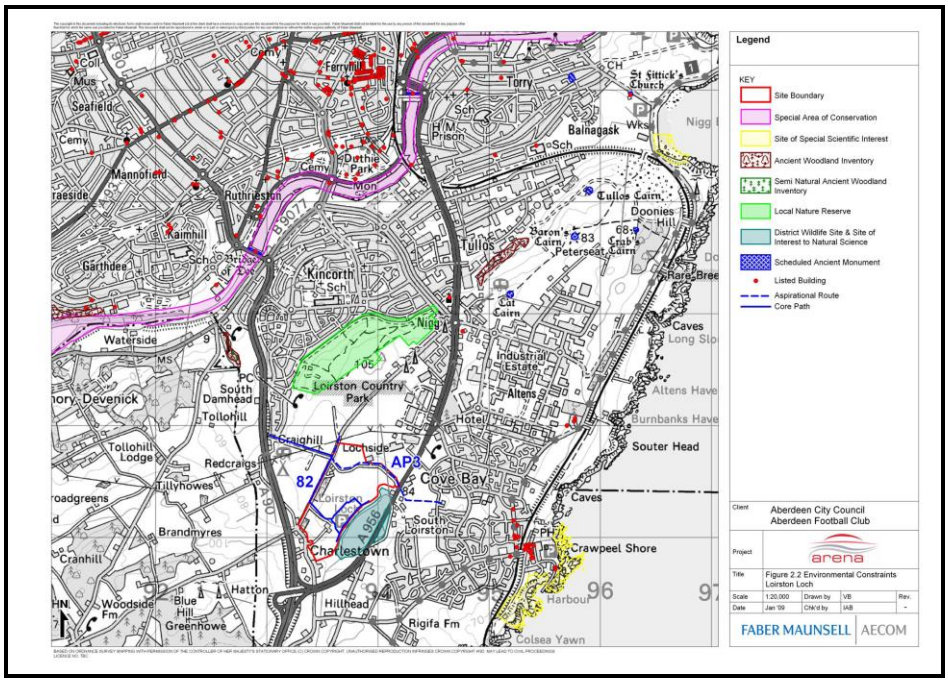

Fig 5 Environmental constraints – Loirston Loch

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA

6.1 Cost Summary

The design of the new Community Arena has sought to incorporate the most economic cost solutions in terms of roof design, numbers of tiers, seating rake, etc whilst providing an iconic solution.

The generic stadium design has been costed at an average of [redacted] per seat with an extra over allowance made for fitting out club offices, retail outlet and the corporate hospitality facilities. The extra over costs for foundations and ground remediation at the King's Links site has been established as [redacted] –given the presence of running sand, potential unexploded armaments and contamination.

The outturn capital costs for each site is as summarised below:-

King's Links site

		£
Stadium	Main Stand	[redacted]
	West Stand	[redacted]
	North/South Stands	[redacted]
Fitting Out and FF&E		[redacted]
Foundations and ground remedial works		[redacted]
Car Park		[redacted]
Services costs		[redacted]
Sub-Total		[redacted]
Professional Fees/Surveys etc		[redacted]
TOTAL		[redacted]

Fig 6 Capital Costs – King's Links

Loirston Loch site

Stadium	Main Stand	[redacted]
	West Stand	[redacted]
	North/South Stands	[redacted]
Fitting Out and FF&E		[redacted]
Ground remedial works		[redacted]
Car Park		[redacted]
Services costs		[redacted]
		[redacted]
Professional Fees/Surveys etc		[redacted]
TOTAL		[redacted]

Fig 7 Capital Costs – Loirston Loch

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA (cont'd)

6.2 Benchmarking

In arriving at the above construction costs we have benchmarked some 15-stadium projects carried out over the last ten years the output from which is summarised below:-

Stadium	Year	Number of Seats	£ / Seat
St Mirren	2009	8,000	[redacted]
Park-Y-Scarlets	2008	15,400	[redacted]
Colchester United	2008	10,000	[redacted]
MK Dons	2007	22,000	[redacted]
Doncaster Rovers	2007	15,231	[redacted]
RICOH Arena, Coventry FC	2005	32,000	[redacted]
The Brit Oval, Surrey County CC	2005	14,370	[redacted]
Swansea City	2005	20,500	[redacted]
KC Stadium, Hull City FC	2002	25,000	[redacted]
The Walker Stadium, Leicester City FC	2002	32,500	[redacted]
St Mary's Stadium, Southampton FC	2001	32,689	[redacted]
Pride Park, Derby County FC	1998	33,000	[redacted]
Britannia Stadium, Stoke City	1997	28,393	[redacted]
Riverside Stadium, Middlesboro FC	1995	34,500	[redacted]
Trent Stand, Nottingham Forest FC	1995	7,500	[redacted]

Fig. 8 Benchmarking

6.3 Key Characteristics of Stadiums

Grandstands and stadiums are a truly iconic building type. The scale and highly visible engineering of many stands makes them landmarks in their own right – a trend reinforced by the quality of venues such as the new Wembley Stadium and the Emirates Stadium in London.

However, stadiums and grandstand buildings are deceptively complex and create a number of challenges for the design team. The main challenges associated with the stadium as a building type include:-

- The inward focus of the building, a characteristic which is emphasised by perimeter security measure as well as the design of the stand. This can be partly addressed by incorporating public uses such as retail or leisure/hospitality.
- Massing of stands and the size of structural elements, which makes it difficult to reconcile any development with it surroundings. Furthermore, their size means that the viability of developments can be very sensitive to the cost of key visual elements, mainly the roof and structure, which encourages the use of economic materials.
- The size of key elements, tiers, concourses, stairs, ramps and roofs can all be large and, as a result, inflexible. For example, where there is a discontinuity in design – open corners in a football stadium or the switch from a double to a single tier beneath a continuous roof, then it is difficult to achieve an economic visually satisfying and durable design solution.

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA (cont'd)

Key Characteristics (cont'd)

The project team has been concerned with satisfying the needs of three main interest groups. Supporters are motivated by the quality of the match day experience and, to a lesser extent, by the range of facilities provided, comfort, safety and crowd control issues.

The prime concern of the players will be the quality of the pitch, predictable playing conditions and atmosphere, together with back-of house facilities.

The final stakeholder is AFC and ACC, driven by the need to ensure economic sustainability to fund the progression of the football team and the involvement of the local community including:-

- Maximising capacity
- Maximising event days
- Generating premium income through club seats and boxes
- Optimising non-gate sports income related to hospitality, concessions, ground sponsorship, adverting and parking
- Diversifying operations to provide a 365 days a year income from commercial activities
- Providing sustainable community facilities

In most instances, the needs of the three groups are compatible.

Areas where conflicting requirements may need to be resolved include:-

- Achievement of optimum viewing distances for different sports in a multi-use stadium. This is not a significant problem in the UK as the two prime users – rugby and football – use similarly sized pitches – should discussions with the SRU progress successfully then this will require further development.

- Achievement of comfortable sightlines and seating rakes. The requirement to maximise seating capacity in a confined site may result in requirements for steeply raked multi-tier stands. By contrast, where budget, rather than site area, is constrained, the pitch of stands may be reduced to minimise costs of structure and vertical circulation, together with overall visual impact. In this respect the Loirston site could produce a more economical solution.

Provision of good quality playing conditions. Steeply raked bowl stadiums create a great atmosphere but at pitch level, uneven natural light, rainfall and ventilation can play havoc with pitch quality. These problems have been particularly noticeable in high-sided stadiums or schemer with retractable roofs such as Cardiff. Design features to remedy these problems include "perforating" the bowl to encourage natural ventilation and mechanical pitch ventilation. The design at the new Community Stadium will ensure that the pitch condition is prioritised.

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA (cont'd)

Stadiums need to be highly functional buildings, providing safe and satisfactory viewing conditions and facilities for large crowds using minimum resources. Cost and value drivers affecting stadium design are dealt with below and we have set out the key practical design criteria for the new Community stadium.

6.4 Sightlines and Viewing Distances

Sightlines and viewing distances are determined by the sport, the size and layout of the stadium and the orientation of stands relative to the pitch. Distance from the action, the ability to see over the heads of spectators and the absence of obstructed views are key drivers.

The optimum viewing distance for football taking into account the height of stands, is 90m diameter from the centre circle. The ability to see over the heads of spectators is determined by the "C" value which measures the height difference between lines of sight to various parts of the playing area. A "C" value of 90mm is the good practice benchmark for acceptable viewing, with higher values of up to 150mm requiring steeply raked tiers.

In practice, complex geometries using dished tiers with higher "C" values at the rear are specified, achieving the optimum balance between sightlines, tier rakes and viewing distances.

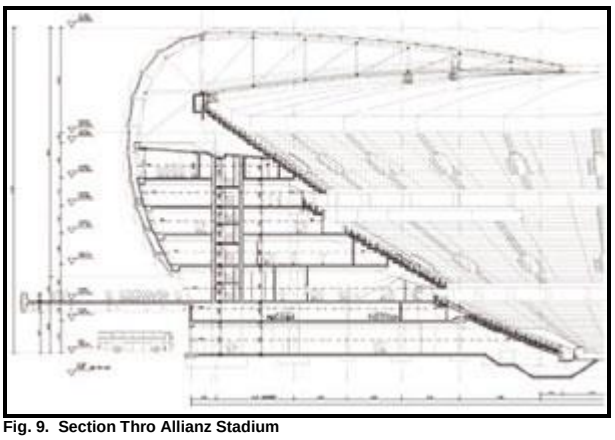

Fig. 9. Section Thro Allianz Stadium

6.5 Layout and Circulation

The design principles for planning of circulation include:

- Clear routes to get people to their seats
- Providing concourse space and exit routes to allow for safe evacuation in panic conditions
- Subdivision of stand, concourse, concessions and facility areas to break crowds down into manageable numbers (particularly during Old Firm games). This subdivision provides the module for planning such features as exits, gangways and WCs.

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA (cont'd)

6.6 Generating venue value – cost and value drivers in stadium design

Reconciling the needs of different stakeholders, different sports and the need to either exploit or minimise the visual impact of a stadium all have a potential impact upon the cost and revenue streams associated with the scheme and the quality of the spectator experience. In preparing the business case for the new stadium, a wide range of cost and value drivers have been considered.

Capacity

Seat capacity is driven by the business case and the ambition of the club and will determine the following key areas of expenditure:-

- The number of tiers
- The type of roof and the extent of shelter provided
- The total size of building in terms of footprint and floor area
- The extent of support facilities and concession areas required

AFC have determined through research and consultation that the stadium capacity should be optimally 22,000 with the potential to expand to 30,000.

Gross Floor Area

Gross floor area is closely related to capacity and also directly drives cost. Schemes with a high area per seat will generally be more expensive. Where extra area delivers value through hospitality, retail or club facilities, the additional capital cost can be tested in a business case. However, if the space does not generate revenue (such as concourse) or if it cannot be used (such as below tiers) the spatial arrangement needs to be carefully tested. The generic stadium model for both sites has sought to optimise the area in efficient design.

Shape and arrangements of stands

Arrangements range from continuous bow arrangements, through stands with infill corners, to conventional straight stands. Bowl designs are only feasible on complete redevelopments and typically incur a cost premium of up to 5% associated with structural complexity, curved/facetted components, reduced space efficient and an increased footprint.

Advantages of the bowl arrangement include:-

- Improved sightlines
- Improved atmosphere associated with the enclosed bowl
- Improved aesthetics based on a single dominant element (for example the roof or external facade)

Straight stands are cheaper to construct due to simpler structures, repetitive detailing and more efficient space planning. Adopting a plan based on separate straight stands also enables capacity to be added incrementally.

The main disadvantages of straight stands relate to the piecemeal nature of the overall stadium, together with unsatisfactory options for "closing" corners. "Atmosphere" can also leak from grounds that do not have a continuous perimeter roof. The bowl concept has been adopted for the new stadium.

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA (cont'd)

Roof

Clear span structures are required to provide unobstructed views and weather protection to all seats. As the roof is the dominant element, design statements are often made with either the roof or its structure. The primary structure options available to the project team, in order of cost and complexity, are:-

- Goal post / arched trusses
- Cantilevers
- Tension structures

Solutions based on goal post trusses are only suitable for straight stands. Cantilevers and tension structures are suitable for all stand arrangements. Cost drivers affecting the overall cost of the roof include:-

- Spans, determined primarily by the depth of the stand
- The overall roof area, determined by factors such as stand height and depth
- Dimensional restrictions on cantilevers at corners
- Requirements for architectural detailing – which may result in a sub-optimal structural solution
- Wind loads

Fig. 10 Emirates Roof Structure during Construction

6.0 CAPITAL COSTS AND KEY DESIGN CRITERIA (cont'd)

Spectator Comfort

The primary determinants of spectator comfort relate to space standards on the tier, provision of facilities and ease of navigation. Quality of seats may also affect spectator satisfaction. Better quality accommodation may attract larger gates, justifying investment associated with spectator comfort driven by:-

- Higher costs for increased footprint, gross floor areas, tier and roof area to provide equivalent capacity
- More extensive fit-out to provide more facilities such as WCs
- Requirements for dedicated access facilities for boxes and club seats
- Design of circulation and signage to facilitate safe movement of crowds

All Year Operation

Addition of facilities to increase event days and extend the range of uses of a streams which need to be offset against commercial risk together with increased costs in the following areas:-

- Gross internal floor area – additional accommodation for services/concessions that may extend beyond the boundaries of the stadium
- Additional changing, club administration facilities and concessions associated with ground sharing
- Premium fit-out to executive boxes to enable year round usage as meeting suites

Concession

Space planning and services provision for catering, retail and other concessions can result in over-provision or abortive works unless early input is received from consultants/franchises. AFC intend to utilize the expertise of Sodexho in this regard.

Venue Sustainability and long-terms use

With stadiums projects now being used to anchor economic development and out-of-town development the link between sporting facilities and the long-term social and economic sustainability of the investment are key issues. With community stadia, the long-term objectives are firstly, to ensure that the facility is used as intensively as possible, and secondly, to optimise the use of facilities for both community and commercial use.

Where a range of community based facilities are provided as part of the stadium development as in the KC Stadium in Hull, it is vital to ensure that infrastructure is in place to promote and provide access to the facilities upon completion of the development.

This important aspect has been carefully considered by AFC in the development of the new stadium plans.

7.0 FINANCIAL MODELLING

7.1 Background and results of modelling

Quayle Munro prepared a financial model of the proposed Aberdeen Arena development which took as its basis the Business Plan produced by PMP. The model was constructed for the Loirston site. The purpose of the financial model is to determine the maximum amount of debt the forecast cash flows can support.

The initial model was run using the Business Plan "Stadco Business Plan (Aberdeen) Option 1 (v2)". A revised model using inputs provided by Gardiner and Theobald whereby the Football Club pay a rent of [redacted] per annum and cover all expenditure was also run.

The following table shows the maximum debt able to be supported by the cash flows under each scenario:

Model	Total Capital Expenditure (£m)	Maximum Debt (£m)	Capital Injection Required (£m)
Loirston stadium plus ancillary development	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Loirston stadium only	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Fig. 11 Maximum Debt to Cashflow

7.2 Assumptions

The financial model has been prepared using cost inputs taken from the Business Plans produced by PMP. These inputs cover a ten year period and the financial model assumed that they continue at a value equal to that in year ten for the remaining 15 years of the financial model forecast.

The main assumptions made in producing the base model are:

- Forecasting is performed over a 25 year period.
- The inputs to the financial model are real and indexation is applied at [redacted] in the year to September 2009, [redacted] in the year to September 2010, [redacted] in the year to September 2011 and [redacted] per annum thereafter.
- The debt is repaid over 25 years at an assumed interest rate of [redacted] (assuming a long term swap rate of [redacted] and margin including credit spread of [redacted]).
- The profile of debt repayments assumes a capital repayment holiday of one year, reduced capital repayments of [redacted] per annum for the following five years with an annuity profile thereafter.
- Corporation tax is assumed to be paid at [redacted] and paid in the period the charge is incurred.
- VAT is assumed to be recoverable on all costs and no time lag on reclaiming VAT has been assumed.
- Capital expenditure is capitalised and depreciated on a straight line basis over 60 years and 15 years for building and fixtures & fittings respectively.
- Capital allowances are assumed to be [redacted]

7.0 FINANCIAL MODELLING (cont'd)

7.2 Assumptions (cont'd)

Further detailed assumptions are shown in the assumptions tab of the financial model.

7.3 Sensitivities

The financial models are sensitive to changes in assumptions and inputs. Quayle Munro performed an analysis to determine the effect of a number of changes on the debt that can be supported. The analysis has been performed on the full model (including ancillary development).

Length of debt term	Interest Rate	Capital allowances claim (% of capex)	Maximum senior debt (£m)	Capital Injection Required (£m)
25 years	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
20 years	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
25 years	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
25 years	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
25 years	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Fig. 12 Sensitivities

The above table shows that under the assumption of 25 year debt at [redacted] and assuming capital allowances of [redacted], the total capital injection required is [redacted]. However, a more prudent assumption on the lending term of 20 years would increase these figures to [redacted] and [redacted] respectively.

The table also shows the sensitivity in the amount of debt that can be supported when the interest rate is changed. The assumption of [redacted] is based upon 15 – 25 year swap rates of approximately [redacted] and a margin of [redacted]. These are both prudent assumptions, given recent movements in longer term interest rates. As demonstrated above, if a lower interest rate assumption were used, the income could support more debt and thus reduce the capital injection required.

7.4 Outcome

In the current economic climate ACC and the Club were keen to focus upon a deliverable, affordable solution, which did not rely upon significant debt and the sensitivities of the commercial market to attract hotel operators or office tenants. The design of the stadium is flexible and should the opportunities arise in the future these uses could be reincorporated. In the meantime financial modeling assuming income from the Club by way of rental together with investment from Club Partners by way of naming rights and other sponsorship opportunities was carried out with a base stadium capital cost of [redacted] at Loirston and [redacted] at King's Links. The funding profile generated from this approach is summarised in section 10.1.

8.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT

8.1 Quantitative impacts

The socio/economic impact of AFC was summarised in a 2006 report commissioned by the Club. This projected that AFC brings an economic benefit to the area of £6 million per year. This equates to 350 full time equivalent jobs. This figure excludes the participation of the Club in any European competitions as a base assumption.

The development of the Community Arena could potentially help to support an increase in this base level of economic impact due to its ability to attract additional new visiting fans to AFC games and secure new international events for the city. It would also have the potential to support the development aspirations of AFC and, in so doing, increase the Club's opportunities to compete for European places, which in turn would generate additional economic benefit.

In addition to the important quantitative economic impact of the Arena, the potential social impact of the development is as significant, if not more so, in the long term. On top of the base impact of AFC in the community (uptake of sports, educational benefits etc), the Arena is also projected to have the potential to generate additional qualitative benefits, which are explored in turn below.

8.2 Qualitative effects

This section of the report provides a brief analysis of some of the further important impacts that are not captured within a standard direct expenditure driven EIA. These include:

- ability to attract and retain residents
- quality of life impact
- attracting businesses to the city
- stimulation of further development
- development of additional capacity and skills
- media impact and city profile
- return visitor stays.

Each of these impacts is explained, and briefly explored, in the remainder of this section.

Ability to attract and retain residents

The ability to attract new, and retain existing, residents will play an important role in achieving a number of ACC's key objectives.

8.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT (cont'd)

Qualitative Effects (cont'd)

A key component of sustaining a vibrant, skilled and ambitious population is providing the cultural and leisure infrastructure to support a population with high expectations for their working and social lives. As such, AFC (through ACA) will add to the development of Aberdeen's sporting profile and programme of events, and is likely to add to the wider regeneration and renaissance of the city which is important in developing and sustaining high value and skilled activities.

As Aberdeen has an established university population, the ability to retain young, educated people after completing their degrees as they find the city an attractive place in which to live is also potentially key to the region's competitiveness. Whilst AFC and a new Arena is far from the only driver of making a city attractive to a high value workforce, delivering a quality professional sport spectator opportunity does contribute to developing a critical mass of features which can develop Aberdeen's future competitiveness in attracting and retaining residents.

Quality of life impact

Residents should benefit from access to an increased range, and potentially quality, of sporting events with the new Community Arena. AFC will have additional opportunities to increase its competitiveness which may in turn increase the number of European fixtures.

The new Community Arena may also form part of a future European Championships bid (as part of a joint bid now, given UEFA's expansion of the tournament from 16 to 24 teams) which would bring high profile events and exciting opportunities to the city. The Arena would also deliver opportunities to host competitive rugby internationals, which Pittodrie does not presently allow.

There are also has aspirations to attract concerts, conferences, exhibitions and other events (complementing AECC).

As such, major sporting venues add to the quality of life in a region in a manner similar to other large-scale attractions. Professional sport and events provide an important entertainment option for local residents.

These experiences can be particularly important in influencing young people as exposure to different types of culture can identify to them new opportunities for engaging in activities and potentially following specific career paths. There are numerous studies that identify the links between engaging young people in sporting and cultural activities and improving their wider behavioural and educational performance. Again, whilst the Arena cannot provide this impetus alone it can contribute to increasing aspirations and providing encouragement for young people to get involved in sports and cultural activities.

AFC generates, and ACA will generate, an emotional impact that further contributes to the overall quality of life in the city. Sports teams and venues are often part of the cultural fabric of the community, adding to civic pride and community spirit, particularly when they make efforts to engage with their local and regional communities. As the community focus expands, so does the ability to engender this spirit.

8.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT (cont'd)

Qualitative Effects (cont'd)

their local and regional communities. As the community focus expands, so does the ability to engender this spirit.

Attracting businesses to the city

Surveys of business executives regarding their location decisions often highlight the importance of quality of life issues in locating headquarters and regional bases. The purchase of seat licenses and rentals of executive suites by local companies at other stadia across the UK is an indicator of the importance businesses place on accessing sporting facilities and using these to reward/ entertain staff, associates and clients.

Aberdeen is already a significant hub for oil/energy business in particular, but the development of additional amenities and an improved stadium to support AFC's aspirations could serve to further increase the city's appeal to companies considering (re)locating their offices in Aberdeen.

Development of additional capacity and skills

Delivering the Community Arena also has the potential to assist in the development of increased business expertise, improved company operating standards and skills/education in Aberdeen.

This impact relates to the increased business expertise and improved company operating standards within companies supplying goods and services to the new venue – particularly given AFC's stated intention to use local suppliers wherever possible and economic to do so.

Enhanced networking and new business opportunities precipitated by some categories of events to be hosted by the Arena, such as exhibitions and conferences, will bring senior professionals from a variety of industries to the local area and expose them to new business opportunities in Aberdeen. This presence will aid the identification of business opportunities and facilitate greater networking for Aberdeen's companies.

Stimulation of further development

It is expected that the development will act as a driver of wider environmental and regenerative improvements for the city, with the potential ability to bring forward further developments at Loirston and act as a hub for the planned population growth to the south of Aberdeen.

Delivering a landmark project at a key city gateway site has the potential to stimulate a large number of related opportunities.

8.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT (cont'd)

Qualitative Effects (cont'd)

Media impact and city profile

In addition to the new visitors that the development will attract (additional visiting fans for AFC games, new international events the city will now be able to host) there is also the potential that the Arena could cause an increase in the number of future visitors to Aberdeen.

This could occur both through repeat/subsequent visits on the basis of experiencing Aberdeen while attending an event (covered separately below), or through media coverage of an event which generates interest in the city and potentially subsequent business or tourist visits.

Given the scale of events to be hosted at the Arena and the addition of new high profile events to the calendar, regional and national (and potentially international) media such as newspapers, radio, television and the internet are likely to take an interest and in so doing provide free coverage for Aberdeen. This is in addition to AFC's impact as the tenant club.

It is not possible to measure the translation of media coverage into a projection of actual new visitor expenditure. However, it would be possible, upon the Arena's's first year of operation, to calculate the cost that the Council would have to incur to get a similar amount of media coverage based on standard advertising rates.

Staging successful events can also contribute to the positive image, reputation and perception of a destination.

Return visitor stays

The previous economic impact research commissioned by AFC does not include any expenditure which may be generated by away supporters. In addition to this direct spend however, there is also the potential that people who visit Aberdeen briefly as part of a visit to a new Communit Arena may also return to the city as part of a trip which has a non-Arena-related focus i.e. through a short or weekend break. Aberdeen has many strengths as a city and if the Arena can help stimulate awareness and first time visits through hosting AFC matches and additional national and international events then there is potential to capitalise on this appeal and secure repeat visits.

Fig. 13 – Aberdeen Tourists

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL

9.1 Loirston

Loirston Loch at Cove is at the gateway to Aberdeen. Situated at the south western fringe of the site is Lochinch Countryside Interpretation Centre, from which the Aberdeen City Council Ranger Service operates. It is the base for all members of the Council's Ranger Service. Within a local context the site is of environmental and nature conservation interest, and accordingly the Interpretation Centre operates as an environmental education resource. It is available for visiting groups to use as a base, an indoor facility for educational visits as well for hosting community group meetings. Within the central section of the site there are a number of fields used for grazing farm animals from the nearby Doonies Farm at Nigg. Depending on the time of year these fields may also be used to grow crops for animal feed.

Fig.14 – View of Loirston

The existing site also supports a number of informal recreational activities including walking, fishing and bird watching.

A number of recreational features are located adjacent to, and accessed from the existing path including a children's play area, small piers used for recreational fishing and a number of bird hides from which bird watchers can observe a range of species of waterflow and geese.

There are a number of residential properties located along the south western boundary of the site. The rear of the majority of these properties will have views overlooking the sections of the site. As well as the residential properties there is also a commercial development comprising a courier delivery service depot located at the junction of Wellington Road (A956).

The permanent effects likely to result from the development of Loirston are dependent on the final design. The current use of the site as an informal recreational and amenity resource as well as educational facility could be enhanced by the sensitive masterplanning of the site.

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL (cont'd)

Loirston (cont'd)

In the long term, through sensitive development the Arena project will seek to maintain and integrate the existing land uses by maintaining the ecological interests on the loch edge and integrating the Ranger Service.

There is scope for some beneficial effects to result from the development, particularly should it be integrated with some of the existing land uses, whilst providing additional uses in terms of community facilities and alternative recreational uses.

A SWAT analysis has been carried out by the team on both sites and th Loirston Loch analysis is included overpage.

The primary advantages of the Loirston site are: -

- The emerging masterplan for the wider area places the stadium at its heart as a catalyst for economic development.
- This Gateway site would provide an opportunity to design an iconic stadium.
- Provides space for community facilities and accommodates Cove Rangers.

Disadvantages are: -

- Could present planning challenges.
- Careful consideration is required in respect of environmental impact.

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL (CONT'D)

LOIRSTON LOCH – SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS		
Item	Detail	Rating
1	Scale of site – flexibility of site layout for Community Arena development	5
2	Aberdeen Gateway opportunity – would improve entrance to City	5
3	Capacity to include community facilities for the South City	5
4	Good location to provide conference / meeting facility for the South City	4
5	Utilise existing trees and shrubs to form visual / noise barriers, visually anchor building within site setting and integrate car park design	4
6	Car parking capacities an be met and increased, if required	4
7	Spectacular views out across the Loch and towards the North Sea, and into site from approaches and surrounding areas	4
8	Links with the local football team, Cove Rangers	4
9	Public safety and crowd control easier to manage - potential to segregate home and away fans at all stages	4
10	Close proximity to regional and national road network	4
11	Dramatic setting for iconic building with direct visual connection to the loch	4
12	Proximity to existing community facilities would increase business for the community	3
13	Environmental and regeneration scheme for the South City	3
14	Links to local business and industrial land	3
15	Good links with footpath and cycle path connections	3

WEAKNESSES		
Item	Detail	Rating
1	Impact on the sites natural environment – mitigation required	4
2	Transport services from the city centre	3
3	Greater than 400 metres from an existing railway network	3
4	Proximity to services provision – utilities – cost factor	3
5	Drainage issues – careful SUDS required	3
6	Construction restriction zone around the loch	2
7	Buffer zones required to alleviate noise pollution, road network noise	2

OPPORTUNITIES		
Item	Detail	Rating
1	Iconic gateway opportunity to Aberdeen City south	5
2	Site scale retains the opportunity to expand	4
3	The development potential to interact with the existing community, particularly with provision of sports and leisure facilities	4
4	Potential to link with Cove Rangers	4
5	Renewable energy opportunities	4
6	Opportunity for Park and Ride scheme	3
7	Promotion of loch as a more accessible leisure facility	2
8	Potential to provide catalyst for a Crossrail station at Cove	2

THREATS		
Short Term		
Item	Detail	Rating
1	Statutory Approval process requires careful management	4
2	Scottish National Heritage implications	3
3	Retention of the vegetation – potential damage during construction and beyond	2
4	Potential for pollution of waterways during construction	2
Long Term		
Item	Detail	Rating
1	Floodplain development / Risk of loch flooding	3
2	Potential for pollution of waterways long term	2

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL (CONT'D)

9.2 King's Links

The King's Links site at the beachfront is predominantly recreational use. The northern part of the site is currently a golf centre comprising a golf store and a driving range. The driving range contains a number of booths and is flood-lit meaning it can be used in the evenings. Whilst primarily providing a recreational function, the golf centre also operates as a commercial enterprise selling a range of golf equipment and clothing as well as offering a golf club repair service. The golf centre is owned by Craig Group Leisure and it provides employment opportunities.

To the northern end of the site boundary is King's Links an 18-hole golf course, operated by ACC. The course extends northwards running parallel to the beachfront.

In order to offset the loss of existing land uses opportunities to relocate the golf centre or provide a cricket pitch elsewhere will be explored and compensatory mitigation provided to offset the loss. This is linked to the issue of Common Good land (which is explored elsewhere in this report) and so further consideration of the issues of land ownership may be required to address potential location.

Fig. 15 View of King's Links

Advantages of locating the new stadium on the King's Links site are: -

- Established destination for support
- Identified in Local Plan as an opportunity site for new stadium.
- Potential to act as a catalyst for community regeneration.

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL (CONT'D)

King's Links (cont'd)

Disadvantages are: -

- Constrained site – cannot accommodate Football Club's requirements.
- Little or no Community Use Opportunities
- Greater risk in terms of ground conditions
- Common Good question remains over land
- Existing tenants will require compensation potentially making it unaffordable

The SWOT Analysis for King's Links is included over page.

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL (CONT'D)

KING'S LINKS

Note : Importance rating 1 - 5, where 1 is minor, 5 is major

STRENGTHS		
Item	**Detail**	**Rating**
1	Established supporter travel procedures are retained in the area with site well served by public transport	5
2	Central location – walking access to City Centre	4
3	Site topography, level site	4
4	Established use within the surrounding area	4
5	Views out across to the north sea	4
6	Established pedestrian walkway routes	3
7	Proximity to existing community facilities	3
WEAKNESSES		
Item	**Detail**	**Rating**
1	Common Good account doubt – legal process and uncertainty over final decision	5
2	Site scale with limitations on future expansion due to surrounding development, road network and mound to south west causes design constraints	5
3	Relocation / buy out of existing tenants on long term leases – financial and time	5
4	Restrictive options for the stadium location on the site with potential restricted building height, and limited car park opportunities	4
5	Loss of public open space and sports/recreation facility	4
6	Difficult ground conditions	5
7	Road networking, only one viable main point of access to the site	3
8	Very exposed to prevailing cold easterly winds and sea air – impact on materials and cost	3
9	Imposing structure on existing esplanade built environment with the development intruding significantly into the surrounding landscape	3
10	Lack of opportunity for creating home and away spectator access points	3
11	Greater than 400 metres from existing railway network	3
12	Will create obstructed views in the vicinity	2
13	Rights of way may be affected	2
OPPORTUNITIES		
Item	**Detail**	**RATING**
1	Benefit to city trade	4
2	Renewable energy opportunities – North Sea	4
3	Generate links with the other sports facilities in the area	3
4	Link to regeneration of the existing esplanade facilities	3
THREATS		
Short Term		
Item	**Detail**	**RATING**
1	Common good account, legal process and uncertainty of consent	5
2	Relocation / buy out of existing tenants	5
3	Findings from specialist consultants	3
4	Public safety management issue in City Centre	3
Long Term		
Item	**Detail**	**Rating**
1	Long term damage to the construction/materials from sea air	4
2	Terrorism security risk from sea approach	3
3	Rising ground water	3
4	Sea corrosion, potential flooding threat to low lying site	3
5	Stadium impact on the value of the residential redevelopment of the existing Pittodrie site	2

9.0 SITE APPRAISAL (CONT'D)

9.3 Catchment Review

The site analysis has also included a review of the immediate residential catchments of of Kings' Links and Loirston. The demographic profiles of the 10-minute drive time catchments of the two sites are summarised below. This review has helped to inform projections of demand for community facilities.

The Kings' Links site has a slightly larger immediate catchment (c.100,000 compared to c.75,000). However, it is important to note that, as the more central site, there is likely to be greater competition from existing and future facilities for the ACA – be that health & fitness or other community provision.

Both catchments exhibit broadly comparable compositions in terms of gender and age. Both catchments contain more than the national index of all age groups 16-39. This is particularly significant in the 20-29 age range in both catchments.

Kings Links site

	Results from area	Results as % of area	Results as % of GB	From GB % Index (ave. =100)	From GB % Index difference
Total Population	**99,912**	100	100	100	0
0 - 4	4,297	4.3	5.7	75	-25
5 - 9	4,079	4.1	6.2	66	-34
10 - 15	4,870	4.9	7.8	63	-37
16 - 19	6,124	6.1	4.9	124	24
20 - 29	24,396	24.4	12.6	194	94
30 - 39	16,148	16.2	15.6	104	4
40 - 49	11,861	11.9	13.8	86	-14
50 - 59	10,303	10.3	12.6	82	-18
60 +	17,834	17.8	20.9	85	-15

Loirston site

	Results from area	Results as % of area	Results as % of GB	From GB % Index (ave. =100)	From GB % Index difference
Total Population	**74,715**	100	100	100	0
0 - 4	3,346	4.5	5.7	78	-22
5 - 9	3,424	4.6	6.2	74	-26
10 - 15	4,178	5.6	7.8	72	-28
16 - 19	3,899	5.2	4.9	106	6
20 - 29	15,437	20.7	12.6	164	64
30 - 39	13,165	17.6	15.6	113	13
40 - 49	10,033	13.4	13.8	98	-2
50 - 59	7,656	10.2	12.6	81	-19
60 +	13,577	18.2	20.9	87	-13

10.0 STADIUM DESIGN

10.1 Introduction

Aberdeen FC currently reside at Pittodrie Stadium in the city, and the desire is to move to a new state of the art stadium in an agreed location on a Greenfield site.

The capacity of the existing Pittodrie stadium is 22,000, and the brief is to build a new stadium to match this capacity, with the potential to integrate community facilities.

The approach was to create an iconic structure in a landmark location, which would make both the club and the city proud.

Several locations were looked at as potential sites for the development, with this being narrowed down to two sites, which were investigated in more detail – King's Links near to Pittodrie and Loirston Loch, on the south approaches to the city.

Successful stadia across the world reflect not only the needs and aspirations of the professional sports teams they are home to but also those of the communities and cities in which they are built. Stadia are now seen throughout the world as one of the essential civic buildings forming one of the pillars of culture for the modern city and its communities, They have in effect become the new cathedrals of the 21st century serving our popular culture and environment.

The civic buildings that now define the 21st century are the airport and the stadium, both modern contemporary symbols and definers in how the city is viewed in the eyes of the local, national and international community.

The new Community Stadium represents Aberdeen's opportunity to embrace this vision and its community's aspirations and desires to develop a truly great modern international-class stadium that can set Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland clearly on the national and global sports radar.

Fig 16 Classic John Hewitt

10.0 STADIUM DESIGN (CONT'D)

10.2 Site Assessments

Kings Links

This site is located between the existing Pittodrie stadium and the beach esplanade and although very flat, it is much the smaller of the two preferred sites. This has the effect of restricting the options in terms of flexibility of layout in terms of future expansion, car and bus parking, access and egress points and it also negates the potential for community training and 5-a-side pitches.

In terms of the stadium footprint itself, the site is adequate in size and easily accessible from the west side. There is currently a pedestrian access route to the beach under the beach esplanade which splits the site in two, and in order to realistically position the stadium footprint, this pedestrian access will need to be rerouted to suit the proposed layout. The low level of the site relative to the coastal road would help to reduce the scale of the stadium from that aspect.

Due to the site's very close proximity to the sea, serious consideration would need to be given to materials in terms of the effects of sea spray and high winds, together with the corrosive nature of the exposed environment.

Fig. 17

10.0 STADIUM DESIGN (CONT'D)

Site Assessments (cont'd)

Loirston Loch

This site is located adjacent to the main city access route, the A956 and lies in the area for the gateway development from the south. The large size of this site affords all sorts of possibilities in terms of layout and development, not least the potential for providing community pitch facilities for the local community.

The size of the site also has the capacity to provide space for a facility for Cove Rangers, linked to the community pitches, with zoning of facilities to suit requirements of the various users.

The existing mature landscape of the site and the loch itself presents the opportunity to help integrate the development and enhance loch side interaction in terms of walkways and park areas. Dramatic views both into and out of the site are real positives with regard to this site for development.

Fig. 18

10. STADIUM DESIGN (CONT'D)

Site Assessments (cont'd)

The stadium location on this site has options but it lends itself to being in the sight line of the loch when viewed from the approach A956 route, and would thus be a centrepiece iconic image as part of this gateway development. The retention of existing natural features and integration of the existing landscape will soften the effect and help anchor the stadium on the site.

Generic Stadium Model – Evolution of Design

In developing the generic model, the aim was to satisfy a series of criteria, and it was these criteria which were fundamental in the evolution of the stadium model.

- To create an iconic structure with a rising roof profile which sweeps around the stadium up to a cantilevered focal point giving the stadium its individuality and recognition.
- To create a fully enclosed community stadium by the continuation of the external envelope enclosing the quadrant areas between stands for potential future use and to act as plant and service zones.
- To provide a comfortable environment for the spectators by protecting them from the elements and in particular, the cold easterlies.
- To enhance the experience and focus the atmosphere towards the pitch.
- To create a direct visual link to the playing area by the provision of dual aspect views for the main hospitality spaces and platforms from all sectors of the stadium.
- To integrate the community and various other user groups by the provision of potential future development in the north east quadrant.
- To position all the concourses at ground level for ease of access / egress both in terms of spectators and servicing.

Optional Stadium Model – 30,000 capacity – Rugby & Football Internationals

One of the options being investigated is the potential for developing a 30,000 capacity stadium to accommodate rugby as well as football. The intention would be to use the facility for international rugby matches. The desire was the stadium could be adapted from 22,000 capacity.

To achieve this, it would require building a 30,000 capacity stadium from the outset, with the smaller 22,000 capacity stadium for football being created within the larger footprint.

This would allow a very quick changeover of use as required.

10. STADIUM DESIGN (CONT'D)

Site Assessments (cont'd)

Although the difference is 8,000 extra capacity, this could easily be achieved by:

- the provision of two extra bays in the east and West stands to accommodate the longer rugby pitch
- the seating out of the full SE and SW quadrants
- the addition of 8 additional rows to the rear of the North, South and West stands

The addition of the extra bays for rugby lessens the requirement for additional rows to the rear of the stands and allows the retention of a single row of vomitories located roughly at mid point in the deck, which can be utilised for both the larger and smaller capacity stadium, thus offering maximum flexibility with minimal physical change. There is also potential to vary the capacity between the 22,000 and 30,000 figure if required.

11.0 PROJECT DELIVERY

11.1 Funding

The capital cost of the development is [redacted] million. So far circa [redacted] million of potential funding has been identified in terms of a capital and revenue contribution and naming rights direct from Aberdeen Football Club as well. We firmly believe that it is possible to bridge the remaining gap between now and any planning application as the development is promoted as a major regional as well as national asset in the coming months.

Preliminary discussions have taken place with a number of sources interested in commercial sponsorship, investment from a national perspective and economic regeneration.

The current recession also presents opportunities to secure construction costs at extremely competitive prices and investment in the new stadium through 2010 would provide a stimulus to the constriction market in Scotland. Glasgow has gained this through the Commonwealth games investment and the Community Stadium will provide a similar impact upon the North East.

Funding Partners have indicated that whilst the site selection remains at large commitment is difficult – presenting a deliverable scheme on the agreed site will allow the football club to be pro-active in securing the funding balance.

11.2 Site Assembly

Both sites present challenges to permit development. Of greatest concern is the Common Good question, which remains at King's Links. Queens Counsel advice has been sought and his conclusion was that in all likelihood the site cannot be classified as Common Good, however the fact remains that any development of the scale intended for the new stadium would attract significant public interest and be the subject of a Common Good challenge.

The King's Links site is also the subject of commercial leases with a prospective difficulty being the tenant of the golf driving range – Craig Group. Significant time and finance would have to be set aside to secure vacant possession of this site.

At Loirston, the stadium plans have been amended to safeguard the Ranger Station and Environmental Consultants input has mitigated any impact upon the loch and local footpaths. Discussions have taken place with private landowners and progress has been made. The Club believes that agreement can be secured to fully assemble the land.

11.0 PROJECT DELIVERY (CONT'D)

11.3 Procurement

It is clear that the impact of the economy slipping into recession has and will continue to see a significant impact on the level of demand for construction work with a reduction in tender activity.

Over the last 24 months arguably peaking in the second quarter 2008, tender prices have continued to increase commensurate with the basics of supply and demand coupled with the ability of contractors to "pick and choose" major projects. This has driven margins up towards [redacted] for main contractors on some projects, on top of increased margins for major subcontractors within the supply chain and led in some instances, to a review of procurement routes to deliver better value to clients through single stage in lieu of Two Stage Design & Build.

Following a levelling of such margins since the 3rd quarter 2008 there has been a general reduction in overheads and profit, which has culminated in pricing levels falling. Full order books for the final stages of 2008 and, for some contractor's, healthy order books into the early part of 2009 have ensured that heavy tender discounting has not yet materialized in all sectors. However as we move further into 2009 and beyond and contractors seek to replace projects we envisage discounting to tenders to become more prevalent as contractors "buy" turnover to fill order books, Table 1 demonstrates recent Approved Cost Plans against that of Actual Tender Returns.

Tender		Approved Cost Plan		Actual Tender Cost		% Under Budget
A		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
B		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
C		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
D		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
E		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
F		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
G		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
H		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
I		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
J		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
K		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
L		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
M		[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]
				Average		[redacted]

Fig. 19 – Tendering Market

11.0 PROJECT DELIVERY (CONT'D)

The range of tender discounts being suggested in some quarters may hit [redacted] or more, we would however suggest that inflation and a contingency allowance for possible contractor claims be taken into account at this time, the possibility of tender prices being so heavily discounted so as to procure turnover which could give rise to more aggressive claims tactics by contractors, Table 2 below demonstrates the combined impact of the three main elements on the overall reduction in tender prices.

Table 2

Year	Projected Inflation Percentage	Projected Tender Discount	1Q09 TPI (February update)	4Q08 TPI Published
2008	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2009	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2010	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2011	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2012	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2013	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2014	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
2015	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Fig. 20 – Table 2

What is clearly highlighted above in Table 2 is that in order to capture the maximum benefit of any discounts in tendering the works should be procured during 2009 and 2010, which is the time period we are currently referring to as the "bottom of the market".

It is important to note that should the market recover more quickly than anticipated or the timing of projects procurement slip this could have a significant impact on the costs of a project. As such it is important to monitor any and all changes in the market that can be anticipated whilst updating the future costs projections accordingly.

The rapid decline in tender pricing and indeed inflation could see a rapid rise or correction, so "calling" the "bottom of the market" and more importantly taking advantage of that trough is going to be a crucial factor in projects moving forward at the right time.

Based on the above and the proposed timescales there are potentially significant benefits to AFC in tendering the project utilising a single stage Design & Construct Contract in early 2010.

11.0 PROJECT DELIVERY (CONT'D)

11.4 Programme

Should the preferred site be approved by the Project Board and Aberdeen City Council and a decision to proceed made in May 2009, it would be possible to deliver a completed stadium in the summer of 2011.

Key milestones are as follows: -

- Approve Site April 2009
- Complete Stage D Design October 2009
- Planning Application November 2009
- Tender Project February 2010
- Start on Site June 2010
- Complete Stadium August 2011

The timetable for a development at King's Links would be extended by at least 1 year due to the Common Good issue and existing tenants.

Aberdeen Football Club have agreed fees with the design team to take the scheme to planning application stage with work commencing in May, subject to approval of the site selection.

A detailed programme for delivery is included overpage.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS & WAY FORWARD

Significant progress has been made on the Community Arena development over the last 6 months.

An iconic stadium design, of world-class standards has been developed and detailed analysis carried out on both sites.

The Loriston Loch site has emerged as the most deliverable option on the basis of: -

- Capital Costs
- Enabling Opportunities
- Timescales
- Risk Mitigation
- Economic Impact
- Community Use

Summary Comparison Table	KINGS LINKS	LOIRSTON
Capacity	22,000	22,000
Construction Complete	2013	2012
Total Construction Costs	[redacted]	[redacted]
Iconic Development for North East	✓	✓✓✓
Catalyst for Economic Development	✓✓	✓✓✓
Environmental Impact	✓✓	✓
Transport/Connectivity	✓✓	✓✓
Ability to attract Enabling Development	X	✓✓✓
Community Use	✓	✓✓✓
Ownership Issues	✓	✓✓

✓✓✓= Excellent; ✓✓ = Good; ✓ = Low X=Poor

In depth discussions have taken place with Cove Rangers who support AFC's proposals for Loirston and the incorporation of their facilities will further enhance the community use of the Loirston site.

The Project Team have made a clear recommendation that the Loirston site should be approved as the preferred option. Should this approval be forthcoming the football club will commit funds to develop the scheme to planning application stage including a detailed Environmental Impact Study.

The City Council's formal commitment to the site will allow the Club to finalise agreements on land assembly and secure funding partners.