

**Report of Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

**Subject: Design & Cost Report for the Improvement and Development of visitor services at The Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World in Roundhay Park**

**Capital Scheme Number: 16504 000 000**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Roundhay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: Tropical World Report App 2 31102012 has been marked as confidential under Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (3)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. In 2012 Leeds City Council received confirmation that the Ziff family would like to extend their long standing patronage of Tropical World with another generous donation towards enhancing the visitor attraction facilities.
2. Conceptual design drawings have been prepared outlining the following improvements:
  - The relocation of the existing crocodiles to a new walk over enclosure.
  - Refurbishment of the existing aquarium area with the addition of a new walk through aquarium.
  - Major renovation of the nocturnal enclosure.
  - A redesigned and refreshed visitor entrance linking the café into Tropical World, and a new children's zone.
  - New educational and interpretation information.
  - New toilet block.

3. These have been subject to a consultation exercise and the proposals have been positively received.
4. An initial sum of £600k was injected into capital scheme 16504 000 000 by Executive Board in February 2012. Enhanced design feasibility work has identified that the total project cost estimate should be increased to £720k. This increase can be supported through prudential borrowing. The successful completion of this project will realise a refurbishment and refreshment of this much valued attraction which should in turn secure its continued legacy as a key visitor attraction for future generations.

### **Recommendations**

5. Executive Board is requested to approve the following improvements at Tropical World:
  - Development of a new entrance space and bespoke education / children's zone.
  - Provision of the new crocodile enclosure.
  - Construction of café extension.
  - Development of the new aquarium.
  - Enhancement of the nocturnal zone.
  - New interpretation and educational information.
  - New toilet and baby changing facilities.
6. Executive Board is requested to note the positive feedback received from the consultation process and the endorsement it provides for the proposals included within this report.
7. Executive Board is requested to note the increase in the provisional cost estimate for this scheme and agree the injection of a further £120k into capital scheme 16504 000 000.
8. Executive board is requested to support proposals to split the capital project into two distinct phases in order to facilitate the commencement of capital improvements in the 2012/13 financial year. Consequentially, Executive Board is requested to provide authority to spend £60k against capital scheme 16504 000 000 in the 2012/13 financial year.
9. Executive Board is requested to agree that a subsequent Design and Cost Report be brought to Executive Board upon completion of the detailed design work associated with phase 2 of this scheme for further comment and approval.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Executive Board on the progress that has been made with the development of plans to enhance and improve the Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World in Roundhay Park. This will include a review of conceptual design proposals, a summary of the consultation outcomes, the identification of priority work elements, the aspiration to split the delivery of the scheme into two phases and a programme for implementation of proposals included in phase one of this scheme.
- 1.2 In addition to the above the report requests that further money be injected into the capital programme, with this being funded through prudential borrowing, and also that Executive Board grants authority to spend for work elements included in phase one of this scheme. Included within the recommendations of the report, is a proposal to bring a further design and cost report to Executive Board upon completion of the design process for work elements included in phase two of this scheme.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World has been open to the public since 1984, and originally functioned as an indoor botanical garden. The site is made up of several interlocking buildings including Coronation House, which was the original show house for the estate, and the Tropical House. Since the sites inception, a number of additional annexes have been added before arriving at the present layout in the late 1980's. In recognition of the Ziff family for many years being patrons of the park and generous benefactors, the site was renamed the Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World in 2009.
- 2.2 This attraction is a highly regarded visitor destination for the benefit of the residents of Leeds and surrounding areas. Tropical World is now established as one of the top 10 most popular visitor attractions in Yorkshire<sup>1</sup>. With in excess of 300,000 visits each year, the site compares in popularity with local attractions such as the Royal Armouries, regional attractions including the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and key national trust sites such as Fountains Abbey. The large number of visitors to Tropical World, coupled with an estimated 8 million annual visits to Roundhay Park, is a clear demonstration of the value placed on Roundhay Park and its facilities. Given the above, the service is committed to improving the visitor attraction and maintaining a high level of service provision for members of the public in order to ensure that the residents of Leeds continue to visit and enjoy Tropical World.
- 2.3 Although some minor refurbishment work has been undertaken, the site has not benefited from any significant investment since it opened. Recent customer feedback, coupled with numerous ongoing maintenance issues, has highlighted the need to refresh the presentation of Tropical World in order to meet the expectations of existing and prospective customers.
- 2.4 Annexed to Tropical World is Explorer's Café, which has recently been refurbished with investment to internal fixtures and fittings, but the relatively small size is increasingly proving to be a barrier to enhancing visitor satisfaction. Consequently,

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Visitor Attractions Trends in England 2010, Annual Report, Visit England

the existing facility is operating at close to capacity and, particularly at peak periods, the modest size is restricting the potential for use by visitors to Tropical World.

- 2.5 In order to enhance visitor satisfaction, significant capital investment is needed to refresh the attraction and remain competitive. In 2012 Leeds City Council received confirmation that the Ziff family would like to extend their long standing patronage of Tropical World with another generous donation towards enhancing visitor facilities. The Ziff family donation will be used to improve the attraction elements of Tropical World and is to be complemented by further capital improvements to the ancillary visitor facilities. Therefore, a business plan has been developed that supports a case for prudential borrowing in order to increase the capital funding available to ensure the appeal and legacy of the attraction for future generations.

### **3 Main issues**

#### **3.1 Design Proposals and Full Scheme Description**

- 3.1.1 A series of conceptual design proposals across the whole of the visitor attraction have been developed to fulfil the following aspirations:

- Improve and enhance the visitor experience at Tropical World by reinvigorating the displays, educational information and interpretation.
- Provide improved facilities for customers including new toilets; a bespoke children's zone and educational space; an increased café area linked to tropical world, along with an extended entrance and retail space.

- 3.1.2 These aspirations are to be achieved through the implementation of the following proposals:

- The relocation of the existing crocodiles to a new larger walk over enclosure.
- Refurbishment of the existing aquarium area with the addition of a new walk through aquarium.
- Major renovation of the nocturnal enclosure.
- A redesigned and refreshed visitor entrance, including an extension of the café into Tropical World, and a new children's zone.
- New educational and interpretation information.
- New toilet block with baby changing facilities.

- 3.1.3 Overhauling the entrance to the site was considered a priority, because at peak times during school holidays members of the public are frequently forced to queue outside. The added benefits of undertaking this work are that it will provide a direct link between Explorer's Café and Tropical World, facilitate the development of a bespoke children's zone to be used for educational visits and booked parties, as well as achieving an expansion of the internal seating capacity and current retail provision.

- 3.1.4 The preparation of initial design concepts, along with a preliminary cost plan, was completed in January 2012. In appendix 1 of this report are conceptual drawings depicting the design of a new visitor entrance and the integration of Explorer's Café into the attraction, along with the proposed improvements to the crocodile enclosure, aquarium and nocturnal zone.
- 3.1.5 From inception of the scheme and throughout the design process, due consideration has been given to keeping Tropical World open for visitors during the construction and implementation of the project. It is proposed to deliver the key elements of this scheme in 2 distinct phases:

Phase 1-

- Development of a new entrance space and bespoke education / children's zone.
- Provision of the new crocodile enclosure.

Phase 2

- Construction of café extension.
- Construction of new toilet facilities.
- Development of the new aquarium.
- Enhancement of the nocturnal zone.

3.1.6 Phase 1 of the project will be undertaken by Parks and Countryside. The crocodile enclosure is a very popular aspect of the visitor attraction and it is important from both an animal welfare and visitor attraction perspective that these animals are provided with a suitable enclosure to allow them to grow to their full size of approximately 9 feet long. The work proposed will give visitors the perception that they are in much closer proximity to the animals than they appear and will become a key selling point for Tropical World. Significant changes are also proposed for the entrance to Tropical World to ensure that visitors no longer have to queue outside and to allow for better provision to be made for educational visits and children's parties/activities.

**3.1.7 Phase 1 Programme**

Design Period:	May 2012 to July 2012
Design Freeze:	August 2012
Consultation:	September 2012
Start on site:	January 2013
Completion:	March 2013

3.1.8 It is proposed that those work elements included in phase 2 of this project will be subject to a further Design and Cost Report to be submitted to Executive Board upon completion of detailed design proposals by Norfolk Property Services. It is anticipated that works will commence in winter 2013 and be completed by Easter 2014.

**4 Corporate Considerations**

## 4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Parks and Countryside service regularly encourages user feedback. Visitor feedback websites provide an excellent source to gauge visitor opinion. An evaluation of feedback provided by visitors who utilise these websites demonstrate that the attraction is highly valued by the public. Prior to submission of this report, 82% of people reviewing the attraction provided a positive review, rating the attraction as either 'excellent' or 'very good'. In contrast, the website also serves as a useful source of constructive critical review with some visitors highlighting the need for refreshment of displays and the attraction in general.
- 4.1.2 In order to gain a broad range of views on the existing facilities at Tropical World, and gauge opinion on the concept design proposals, the service sought to engage directly with visitors and undertook a consultation exercise. This included web based consultation via Talking Point, and two separate consultation events, one within Tropical World and the other in the Roundhay Park visitor centre. The outcome of this process has been the collation of valuable feedback in both qualitative and quantitative form. The salient points from that consultation are highlighted below:
- 84% of people surveyed felt the range of visitor facilities that are available are 'good' or 'very good'.
  - 66% rate the facilities and or services that are provided for children and their parents positively and 31% regarded them as 'fair'.
  - 67% of people surveyed felt that they could identify areas for improvement that would encourage them to use Tropical World more often, or stay for longer.
  - 98 % of people surveyed said that they support the proposals for improvement.
  - The main areas identified through consultation for improvement were as follows:
    - On site toilet facilities.
    - Improved attractions.
    - Improved children's facilities.
    - Enhanced café facilities.
- 4.1.3 Tropical World is a family orientated visitor attraction and therefore children and young people were encouraged to participate in the survey process. In terms of respondents, 11% were aged 16 or under and they emphasised the need for improvement to attractions in particular an exciting range of animals and areas for children's activities.
- 4.1.4 In addition to the above, a presentation and consultation event was also carried out with the Friends of Roundhay Park, who are a key stakeholder for the park. Following that presentation, the Friends of Roundhay have positively endorsed the proposals for Tropical World.

4.1.5 Further to the above, the Executive Member for Environmental Services and the Roundhay Ward Members have been briefed on this project and are in support of the proposals to refurbish and enhance Tropical World.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 A full EDCI Impact assessment has been undertaken for the facilities and infrastructure at Roundhay Park, including Tropical World, and this is included in appendix 3 of this report. This assessment identified that Tropical World is DDA compliant but there are built environment barriers that require addressing. These include the provision of accessible entrance and exit doors along with accessible toilet facilities. The improvements to Tropical World that are proposed as part of this capital project will address these identified equality issues.

4.2.2 An Equality Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening has been completed for work associated with the capital project and this is included in appendix 4 of this report.

## **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 This project complies with various Council policies and strategies relevant to improving the city and overall level of service provision. The main documents are referred to below;

4.3.2 The Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 sets out a revised vision for the city with the specific objective for Leeds to be the best city in the UK by 2030. In establishing this vision one of the top priorities to emerge from consultation was for the city to be a cleaner greener city. Aspects of this priority can be found in all of the areas in which the vision is intended to make a difference, although specific reference can be made to the commitment within the vision for Leeds to be the best city to live with good green spaces where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life. Developing this capital project will unquestionably enhance one of the cities major park attractions to the benefit of all residents and those immediate communities who utilise Roundhay Park as a community green space.

4.3.3 Leeds 2015, the City Priority Plan 2011-2015, sets out the vision to be the best city in the UK, and identifies 5 key action plans which will help the city progress towards achieving this objective. Developing a capital project of this nature will contribute towards attaining development across all of the key headline indicators contained within this document.

4.3.4 More specifically, the development of this capital project has the potential to make a tangible contribution to 4 year priorities to get more people involved in the city's cultural opportunities, by increasing the proportion of adults and children who regularly participate in cultural activities. The development of this popular visitor attraction will make significant contributions to the cultural offer within the city, whilst improving green and open spaces by making them more accessible to aid the health and well being of all citizens and visitors to Leeds. Finally, this report contributes to Leeds as the best city for children and young people in particular that Leeds will be a child-friendly city where the voices, needs and priorities of children

and young people are heard and inform the way we make decisions and take action.

#### 4.4 Resources and value for money

##### 4.4.1 Full scheme estimate

4.4.2 In February 2012, Executive Board approved the injection of £600k into the capital programme within scheme number 16504 000 000 for costs associated with this project. Inclusive within this injection was a substantial external contribution. The remaining capital money was to be funded from prudential borrowing.

4.4.3 Following the development of proposals beyond the initial conceptual designs, the total scheme cost estimate for this project has increased to £720k. However, the increase can be met through prudential borrowing.

4.4.4 Included within the appendices of this report is a funding breakdown for the capital project with further details on the financial contributions to this scheme. Appendix 2 of this report has been marked as confidential under Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (3) on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) which if disclosed to the public would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of that person or of the Council.

##### 4.4.5 Capital Funding and Cash Flow.

4.4.6 A capital funding and cash flow is included within the confidential appendices of this report.

**Parent Scheme Number :** 16504 000 000

**Title :** Tropical World Improvements

#### Revenue Effects

The following table illustrates the alterations which will be necessary to the department's revenue budget:

REVENUE EFFECTS	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 and SUBSEQUENT YEARS £000'S
EMPLOYEES		
PREMISES COSTS		
SUPPLIES & SERVICES		
EXTERNAL INCOME GENERATED	0.0	59.0

The alterations illustrated in this table will be incorporated into the department's Revenue Budget by means of increased retail and café sales.

#### 4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In



4.5.1 Appendix 2 has been marked as confidential under Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (3) on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) which if disclosed to the public would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of that person or of the Council. Planning consent will be required for the café extension and new toilet block. This report is eligible for call in.

#### 4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 An officer from Parks and Countryside will undertake the role of Project Manager on this scheme. A risk register has been developed and will be maintained throughout the project.

### 5 Conclusions

5.1 The information held within this report, coupled with the testimonies of the many families and individuals who have visited the Arnold and Marjorie Ziff Tropical World is ample demonstration of the sites popularity and value with Leeds residents. From the consultation conducted, 98 % of people surveyed said that they support the proposals for improvement.

5.2 The proposal is to deliver the key elements of this scheme in 2 distinct phases as follows:

#### Phase 1-

- Development of a new entrance space and bespoke education / children's zone.
- Provision of the new crocodile enclosure.

#### Phase 2

- Construction of café extension.
- Construction of new toilet facilities.
- Development of the new aquarium.
- Enhancement of the nocturnal zone.

5.3 The provision of a significant sum of external funding, coupled with a sound business case on which to support prudential borrowing, provides a unique opportunity to implement the above proposals. The successful completion of this project will realise a refurbishment and refreshment of this much valued attraction which should in turn, secure its continued legacy as a key visitor attraction for future generations.

### 6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is requested to approve the following improvements at Tropical World:

- Development of a new entrance space and bespoke education / children's zone.
- Provision of the new crocodile enclosure.

- Construction of café extension.
- Development of the new aquarium.
- Enhancement of the nocturnal zone.
- New interpretation and educational information.
- New toilet and baby changing facilities.

6.2 Executive Board is requested to note the positive feedback received from the consultation process and the endorsement it provides for the proposals included within this report.

6.3 Executive Board is requested to note the increase in the provisional cost estimate for this scheme and agree the injection of a further £120k into capital scheme 16504 000 000.

6.4 Executive board is requested to support proposals to split the capital project into two distinct phases in order to facilitate the commencement of capital improvements in the 2012/13 financial year. Consequentially, Executive Board is requested to provide authority to spend £60k against capital scheme 16504 000 000 in the 2012/13 financial year.

6.5 Executive Board is requested to agree that a subsequent Design and Cost Report be brought to Executive Board upon completion of the detailed design work associated with phase 2 of this scheme for further comment and approval.

## **7 Background documents<sup>2</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>2</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available for download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.