

Agenda Item No. 7(c)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

23 February 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

PEAK RESORT, CHESTERFIELD (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek Cabinet approval for the County Council taking responsibility for the design and construction of road improvements to facilitate the development of the proposed Peak Resort complex in Chesterfield.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Peak Resort is a substantial proposed development within Chesterfield Borough, north of the built-up area of the town and close to the village of Unstone (in North East Derbyshire). The proposed development is a joint venture between a UK development company and the Grand Heritage Hotel Group, based in the USA, and has received prominent press coverage when the partnership was announced by the Prime Minister during a visit to the USA in late 2015.

The site to be developed has been reclaimed from opencast mining site and currently comprises a golf course, areas of woodland and open countryside. The proposed development which now has planning consent, will create:

- Unique dome structures providing water sports, adventure and other leisure facilities.
- A medical spa.
- A broad range of visitor accommodation including woodland lodges, apartments, hotel and hostel units.
- 300 acres of park and woodland incorporating walking and cycling trails.
- A forecast 1,300 new jobs.

In addition, discussions are taking place with two universities with the intention these provide student facilities on the site, related to the core health and leisure offer.

Should the development take place as envisaged, it will clearly become a major visitor destination, a source of employment, a major enabler of the supply chain in the service sector and provide training opportunities. It will add

significantly to the County's accommodation provision and fits with the ambitions expressed in the Derbyshire Cycling Plan launched during January 2016.

The County Council has been actively involved in the project, particularly in relation to maximising the strategic impact of the proposal on Derbyshire's visitor economy and cycling offer. Cycling is seen by the developers as a core activity and it will be important for cyclists (of a range of ages and abilities) to be able to leave and return to the site as easily and safely as possible. A significant amount of work is already in place on potential improvements to strategic cycling networks in the Chesterfield area but at present specific possibilities are being investigated which would improve connections between Peak Resort, the Trans-Pennine Trail (along the Chesterfield Canal) and local, lightly-trafficked roads.

A new roundabout is required to form the access to the site which would supersede part of the existing Sheepbridge junction on the A61, serving two of the slip roads which currently terminate at priority junctions. Footpath and bridleway diversions have been approved within the site and could potentially cover some of the external cycling connections. An application to the Sheffield City Region (SCR) for grant funding appears likely to be confirmed and, in order to draw this down, it will be necessary to demonstrate that procurement of the construction contract meets SCR requirements. In principle, the preference of the development's promoters (the private sector partnership and CBC) would be that rather than going through a bespoke procurement process this should be requested from the County Council using existing Midlands Highway Alliance frameworks. Cabinet approved the use of this framework at its meeting on 14 April 2015 (Minute No. 167/15 refers).

Should the delivery of highway infrastructure be through the preferred process, the SCR funding will be the subject of a formal offer to CBC, which will need to make appropriate arrangements for the procurement of a contractor. Doing so through the County Council would simplify the procedures to be followed over the adoption of the completed works into the public highway. It would also, as with Cabinet's recent approval of the same arrangements for Ashbourne Airfield, assist the Council in the planning of resources for highway services. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet gives its approval in principle for the Council to offer this facility to the developer and to add to the capital programme the highway construction associated with Peak Resort. It must be stressed (and has been in discussions with the developer) that this would not constitute the financial underwriting of the project, which would remain the responsibility of the developer.

(3) Financial Considerations At its meeting of 26 May 2015, Cabinet gave authority for preparatory work to be undertaken (in house or through

professional consultancy services) on Peak Resort (Minute No. 200/15 refers). To date, this activity has been limited, constituting initial assessment of some potential cycle route upgrades around the site. Should Cabinet accept the recommendations of this report, responsibility for meeting design and construction costs would remain with the developer.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The Director of Legal Services would advise on agreements required between the County Council, developer and Chesterfield Borough Council. The Canal will only undertake the works agreed in this report, on the satisfactory completion and signing of necessary agreements.

(5) **Property Considerations** All land and property affected by the proposed construction project falls within the ownership or control of the developer or the County Council.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details - Jim Seymour, extension 38557.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet agrees:

9.1 To the County Council procuring design and/or construction resources for those elements of the Peak Resort complex which would subsequently be adopted into the highway, subject to all design and/or construction costs being met by the developer.

9.2 To the addition of the project to the Council's Capital Programme, at an estimated cost of £1.85 million, to be funded by developers and Chesterfield Borough Council.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment