

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: PROPOSAL BY THE SCOTTISH CANOE ASSOCIATION TO ESTABLISH A WHITEWATER CANOE AND RAFTING COURSE IN STRATHCLYDE COUNTRY PARK
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	
Date: 26 JULY 2000	Ref: MMcM/JT/LP

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will recall at the last Community Services Committee a Development Strategy for Strathclyde Country Park was approved.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Report is to inform members of an approach from representatives of the Scottish Canoe Association identifying Strathclyde Country Park as their preferred location for the possible construction of a Whitewater Canoeing and Rafting Course, and to seek members agreement in principle to further investigation of this proposal.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Department of Community Services along with the Department of Planning & Environment have recently been involved in discussions with representatives of the Scottish Canoe Association regarding the above-noted proposal.
- 2.2 The Association had commissioned a firm of Consulting Engineers to investigate possible sites within the Central Belt of Scotland to establish an artificial Whitewater Canoe Course. Latterly their investigations concentrated on two possible locations, one within South Lanarkshire on the River Clyde downstream of Blantyre, and the other within Strathclyde Country Park, now their stated, preferred option.
- 2.3 A Whitewater Canoe Course was first mooted as part of the original design concept for Strathclyde Country Park, being one of the major watersports facilities proposed at that time. It was proposed to artificially canalise a stretch of the South Calder Water to provide the necessary facility, but no progress was made past the initial concept, and the matter has been held in abeyance since the early 1970's.
- 2.4 It must be noted that this current proposal is very much at the preliminary stages. The Association is still investigating possible sources of funding for the capital and revenue costs of the project. Given the extensive scale and nature of the works required this will be no mean task.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The current concept for the development envisages a horseshoe shaped water course extending from the lochside close to the Finish Tower and enclosing the existing car parking areas to the north of the Watersports Centre, returning along the lower embankment of the Clyde close to the footbridge to Hamilton. The engineering principles would require considerable water pumping capacity although much use is intended to be made of the natural head of water between Strathclyde Loch and the River Clyde to provide the necessary flow volumes.
- 3.2 The proposal also incorporates the use of the course for whitewater rafting, a "thrill-ride" activity which the Association envisages as a significant source of revenue to help offset the running costs of the project in operation. They also envisage a specialist adventure sports retail outlet to be developed on the site again, helping to generate income for the project. Should such revenue support income streams prove viable, further consideration would have to be given to the level of income from the ground rent which may accrue to the Council.
- 3.3 It is proposed that this development would become the centre of interest for whitewater canoeing in Scotland and would in fact encourage significantly improved uptake of the facilities for sprint canoeing already in place on the Loch at Strathclyde Country Park. In effect such a development would make use of the existing changing facilities etc., located at the Watersports Centre and there could be significant joint working with the Scottish Amateur Rowing Association regarding their indoor training facility currently in the early process of construction at the Park.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the Committee agrees in principle to the concept of establishing a Whitewater Canoe Course within Strathclyde Country Park.
- 4.2 That the Committee further notes the contents of this Report for information.

Paul Jones