

WIRRAL COUNCIL

DELEGATED DECISION

SUBJECT:	FORMER TENNIS PAVILION, HARRISON PARK, WALLASEY
WARD AFFECTED:	WALLASEY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES / ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to enter into discussions with a Mr Andrew Smith with a view to agreeing terms for a lease of the former tennis pavilion at Harrison Park, Wallasey for use as a café.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The former tennis pavilion is located between the tennis courts within Harrison Park close to Sandcliffe Road and is shown highlighted on the attached plan. The building has been disused for in excess of 17 years and has remained locked up.
- 2.2 The Council has previously worked with the Friends of Harrison Park on a proposal to improve the tennis courts which would have also included a café facility in the former pavilion. The tennis court element did not develop but the café operator, Andrew Smith, is still very keen to proceed.
- 2.3 The pavilion requires significant work to bring it in to use as a café and will need a significant scheme of renovation together with detailed planning permission. As a potential commercial opportunity, ideally it would be offered on the open market, however, the facility, as it stands is very limited and it has a far better chance of being achieved if we work with someone who has both the skills to refurbish it and the ability to run a café.
- 2.4 Andrew is an architect who has been involved in other successful cafes within local Council parks, including being involved in the asset transfer of Vale House. He is currently working with the Friends of Harrison Park who have confirmed that they are fully supportive of Andrew's vision for a café in Harrison Park. The group feel that this scheme will enable visitors to extend the length of their stay in the park.

- 2.5 Due to his background in construction, Andrew advises that he is competent in providing a specification of works as well as preparing and submitting the documents and plans required for a planning application and is also prepared to procure necessary surveys, including drainage, services, land survey, and structural reports, in order to help reduce the resources and expenditure required from the Council. In summary, Andrew is prepared to gather all of the information required for the Council to make the decision as to whether the Pavilion is suitable for a Cafe.
- 2.6 Once the principle has been agreed and subject to planning permission being obtained, Andrew will act as the principal architect, and project manager, and will appoint a contractor as principal designer with CDM and site safety also being addressed. Andrew will personally oversee the renovation of the pavilion under the supervision of the Council and local planning department.
- 2.7 Andrew has made it clear that once the proposal has been agreed, he would finance the refurbishment of the Pavilion and interior fit out as a Café, including landscaping, picnic benches, and the provision of a public toilet for the park within the building and maintained by the cafe staff.
- 2.8 On the basis that Andrew appears to have the credentials to deliver the scheme and is fully endorsed by the Friends of Harrison Park Members are asked to authorise officers to work with Andrew to develop the former pavilion as a café and to enter suitable terms for a lease.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 There is a risk that the lease or refurbishment works will not complete, which would lead to the continued deterioration of the pavilion building.
- 3.2 Granting a lease to Mr Smith without advertising the opportunity on the open market could result in other potential interested parties being excluded.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 As the Council would wish to retain the freehold of the property, a lease is considered the most appropriate method of ensuring that the property is refurbished.
- 4.2 The Council could invite Andrew to bid for the opportunity alongside other interested parties, however, given the current state of the building the resources required to bring it to the market, dealing directly with one party is considered to have the best chance of delivering the proposal.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Friends of Harrison Park have been consulted and fully support the proposal.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 This proposal is fully supported by the Friends of Harrison Park. The group feel that this scheme will enable visitors to extend the length of their stay in the park.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 Should the property be leased, after an initial rent free period, it will generate an income, and will also remove any future repair and maintenance liabilities.

7.2 There are no IT or staffing implications arising from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The lease will require the preparation of appropriate legal documentation.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications for the Council arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Harrison Park is designated as Urban Greenspace and part of the Coastal Zone in the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The pavilion building is also located next to the rear garden boundary of a dwelling house within the Primarily Residential Area.

11.2 Proposals for café's are normally subject to a town centre sequential test and it would need to be demonstrated the recreational use of the tennis courts would not be prejudiced under the terms of national and local planning policy. National guidance also enables the locational and market requirements for the particular use to be taken into account.

11.3 Any future planning application would be assessed against: UDP Policy GR1 - The Protection of Urban Greenspace & UDP Policy CO2 – Development Within the Un-Developed Coast that make provision for visitor facilities, re-use of existing buildings and small scale tourist facilities that require a coastal location; UDP Policy SH9 – Criteria for Out-of-Centre and Edge of Centre Retail Development & UDP Policy SH10 – Design and Location of Out-of-Centre and Edge of Centre Retail Development under which the benefits and disadvantages of the proposal would need to be considered alongside the detailed supplementary guidance in SPD2 which sets out the Council's criteria for protecting the character of the area and residential amenity.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That approval is granted for Council Officers to enter into discussions with Mr Andrew Smith with a view to agreeing favourable terms for the Council, for a lease of the former tennis pavilion at Harrison Park, Wallasey, subject to the grant of planning permission.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 To enable the building to be brought back in to use.

REPORT AUTHOR: Sarah Duncan
Asset Management
telephone: (0151 666 3889)
email: sarahduncan@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Location plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

No reference material has been used in the preparation of this report.