

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**COBTREE MANOR ESTATE COMMITTEE**  
**3 OCTOBER 2014**  
**REPORT OF THE COBTREE OFFICER**

**Report prepared by Joanna Joyce**

**1. Cobtree Estate Progress Report**

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the work being undertaken across the Cobtree Estate as set out in the attached progress report.

1.1.2 To consider the potential re-let of Garden Cottage.

1.2 Recommendation of the Cobtree Officer

It is recommended that the Committee:

1.2.1 Note the contents of the report attached at **Appendix A**.

1.2.2 Authorise the Head of Legal Services to re-let Garden Cottage on a long term tenancy at market rent (and on such other terms as may be agreed by the Cobtree Officer), once the existing tenant gives notice.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Committee previously resolved to receive a progress report on the work across the estate at each meeting. Attached at **Appendix A** is the report for the most recent period.

1.3.2 The tenant of Garden Cottage has expressed a desire to seek alternative sheltered accommodation and is waiting for a suitable place to become available. It is recommended that as with 4 Stream Cottages the cottage is re-let on a long term let at the appropriate market rate. It is important that the re-letting occurs as quickly as possible to ensure a continuity of income from the property. Currently the rent is £5682.88 per annum, it is thought that when re-let it could achieve at least £9000 per annum.

#### 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The alternative course of action is to reject the request for the endorsement of ongoing works across the estate; however the Committee have previously resolved to have an update at each meeting.
- 1.4.2 The Committee could choose to wait to make a decision on the re-letting of the property once it is vacant. This is not recommended as income would be lost in the period between it becoming vacant and the next meeting.
- 1.4.3 The Committee could choose to sell the property. This is not recommended as although there would be a short term capital gain, the revenue from the tenancy would be lost. Ongoing revenue for operations is tight due to increased use from higher visitor numbers and maintenance costs for the play area, following the success of the Cobtree Manor Park project. As such it would not be in the best interest of the charity to reduce the annual income generated through letting the property.

#### 1.5 Impact on Charity Objectives

- 1.5.1 The work of the Estate and the master plan directly supports the achievement of the charity's object. The governing object is stated as:

"To hold Cobtree Manor and Cobtree Manor Estate for the benefit of the inhabitants of Maidstone and other members of the general public in one or other or all of the following ways:

- i) By maintaining the Cobtree Manor Estate as an open space as defined by the Open Spaces Act 1906 and if the lessees think fit providing thereat facilities for organised games and other sports".
- ii) With the consent of ...[the Cobtree Charity Trust Limited and the Kent County Council]... in such other way for the benefit of the inhabitants of Maidstone and other members of the general public as the Council shall from time to time think appropriate."

#### 1.6 Risk Management

- 1.6.1 There are no additional risks arising from this report.

#### 1.7 Other Implications

- 1.7.1

1. Financial	X
2. Staffing	
3. Legal	
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	
8. Procurement	
9. Asset Management	

1.7.2 There are potential financial implications if Garden cottage is not re-let quickly once it becomes vacant. Any additional rental income from letting the property at market rates will be used for the benefit of Cobtree Manor Park.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes  No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?  
 .....

This is a Key Decision because: .....

.....

Wards/Parishes affected: .....

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## **Appendix A** Cobtree Estate Progress Update

### 1.8.2 Background Documents

Cobtree Manor Estate Master Plan