

# COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 26 October 2022  
Time: 5.00 p.m.  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Burton, Cooper, Parfitt-Reid and S Webb

*The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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<b><u>AGENDA</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Election of Chairman	
3. Election of Vice-Chairman	
4. Urgent Items	
5. Notification of Visiting Members	
6. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
7. Disclosures of Lobbying	
8. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
9. Minutes (Part I) of the meeting held on 14 April 2022	1 - 4
10. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
11. Any Questions on Notice from Local Residents	
12. Any Questions on Notice from Members	
13. Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position Report	5 - 13
14. Cobtree Estate Update	14 - 19
15. Cobtree Café Letting	20 - 28
16. Cobtree Staff Welfare Facilities	29 - 36

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**Issued on Tuesday 18 October 2022**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

## PART II

**To move that the public be excluded for the item set out in Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test.**

	<b>Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description</b>	
17. Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 14 April 2022	3 – Financial/Business Affairs	37

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5.00 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5.00 p.m. on Monday 24 October 2022). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk).

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## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES (PART I) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2022

**Present:** Councillor Garten (Chairman) and  
Councillors Cox, Hinder, Kimmance and Springett

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Perry.

78. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Hinder was substituting for Councillor Perry.

79. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

80. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

81. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

82. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

83. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2022

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

85. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

86. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

87. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

88. COBTREE ESTATE UPDATE

The Leisure Manager introduced his report providing an update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the meeting of the Committee in January 2022. It was noted that:

Cobtree Manor Park

- Latest car park usage data showed more than £110,000 net income for the financial year 2021/22, which was a positive variance of £5,000 against the revised budget.

Golf Course

- There had been good course usage despite mixed conditions due to some extreme weather. During the period January to mid-March 2022, there had been a similar number of rounds (4,451) as in the same whole quarter in 2019 (4,591). The golf course improvement works were ongoing.

Kent Life

- Planning Solutions had introduced a new pricing structure with a standard entry fee for everyone. A new online ticketing system had been implemented.
- Severe weather conditions in February 2022 had impacted on half-term customer numbers and, for a time, it had been necessary to close the lower car park due to flooding.
- The Environment Agency was still using part of the car park as their works were over-running. There had been discussions between the operator and the contractors about compensation for their extended use of the area, and an outcome was awaited.
- Leaks in the artefact store had been resolved by roof maintenance and some remedial works had been undertaken to reduce cellar flooding. Further investigations were planned, and an insurance claim was being investigated.

Cobtree Café

- The operator had been required to carry out and had completed some emergency plumbing works in the toilets. The operator was also

required to resolve some maintenance issues there too, and these would be completed this month. The Council had completed some minor drainage improvements at the toilet entrance thresholds.

- The operator had reported a Quarter 3 performance 34% better than the same period in 2019, but, during the pandemic in 2020, business was 26% better than this year.

During the discussion, Members thanked the Officers for a very positive report.

**RESOLVED:** That the update on activities at the Cobtree Manor Estate since the meeting of the Committee in January 2022 be noted.

#### 89. QUEEN'S JUBILEE PROJECT

The Leisure Manager introduced his report setting out details of a proposal to install an interactive sundial at Cobtree Manor Park to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It was noted that:

- The proposal had been developed in discussion with Members and Officers. The sundial would be made from a series of stones sunk into the ground following a set pattern and decorated with a rose bed. People would be able to use their own shadows to tell the time. It was anticipated that the installation would attract new visitors to the Cobtree Manor Park.
- Some of the operational surplus generated during the 2021/22 financial year could be used to meet the cost of the installation.

Wishing to discuss the funding required to deliver the project in private so as not to prejudice the Council's position in the procurement process, the Committee:

**RESOLVED:** That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified, having applied the Public Interest Test:

#### **Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description**

Queen's Jubilee Project – Funding      3 – Financial /Business Affairs

Having discussed this matter in private, the Committee agreed that the funding identified in the Minutes (Part II) be allocated for the installation of an interactive sundial at the Cobtree Manor Park to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Committee then agreed that the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the connection between Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake, the former owner of the Cobtree Manor Estate and founder of the Cobtree Charity Trust, and the Carriage

Museum (the Tyrwhitt-Drake Museum of Carriages) which contains vehicles on loan from the Royal Household, and it was agreed to ask the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to consider opening the Carriage Museum over the Queen's Platinum Jubilee bank holiday weekend and publicising the special opening arrangements. It was also agreed to ask the Member of the Executive responsible for the Carriage Museum under the new governance arrangements going forward to review the opening hours of the Museum to ensure that it is accessible to the public.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That delegated authority be given to the Leisure Manager and the Mote Park and Cobtree Manor Park Manager to complete the installation of an interactive sundial to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
2. That the funding identified in the Minutes (Part II) be allocated for the completion of this project.
3. That the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee be asked to consider opening the Carriage Museum over the Queen's Platinum Jubilee bank holiday weekend and publicising the special opening arrangements.
4. That the Member of the Executive responsible for the Carriage Museum under the new governance arrangements going forward be asked to review the opening hours of the Museum to ensure that it is accessible to the public.

90. DURATION OF MEETING

2.00 p.m. to 2.40 p.m.

<b>Cobtree Manor Estate Committee</b>	<b>26 October 2022</b>
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## Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement – Mark Green
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Boxley

### Executive Summary

The report summarises the current financial position of the Estate covering the activities at the golf course, Kent Life, the Manor Park and the residential properties.

The report also includes an updated cashflow projection for the Estate.

### Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the current financial position and any other relevant matters that may impact the financial position of the Trust.

### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the current financial position be noted.
2. That the cashflow projection be noted.

### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Committee	26 October 2022

# Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The operation of the Estate directly supports the objects of the Trust as set out when the Council became the Corporate Trustee	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The operation of the Estate supports the Council's strategic objective to ensure there are good leisure and cultural attractions in the Borough.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Risk Management</b>	There is a potential reputational risk if the facilities are operated poorly. This is addressed in the annual risk management report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	There is a financial risk to the Trust if the operations cost more than predicted or fail to generate sufficient income to cover the costs of running the estate.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Under the Council's Constitution the Committee as Corporate Trustee is responsible for all matters relating to the Charity with the exception of daily management.</p> <p>Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. This update report assists in meeting those requirements</p> <p>There are no further implications arising from this report.</p>	Contracts and Commissioning Team Leader, Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address.	Policy and Information Manager



<b>Equalities</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Equalities and Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no additional implications arising from this report.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Biodiversity &amp; Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. A pending decarbonisation study recommendations aims to support areas of the Cobtree Manor Estate to reduce costs from energy consumption, insulate, find low carbon heating solutions, and seek renewable energy options which will save costs in the longer term.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This is a regular update report on the financial position of the Estate, which enables the Committee to see how the various areas of activity are performing. Covid-19 presented a significant risk to the finances and operations of the estate, emphasising the need for robust management and monitoring of the budget.

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## 3. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

- 3.1 The table below summarises the financial position of the Estate as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. It also includes the provisional outturn for 2021/22. **Appendix 1** provides a more detailed breakdown of the figures.

### 3.1.1 Overall Summary Position:

Provisional Outturn 2021/22		Budget for Year 2022/23	Profiled Budget as at 31st August 2022	Actuals as at 31st August 2022	Variance: Underspend (-) Overspend (+)
	<b>Golf Course</b>				
£56,175	Expenditure	£48,860	£20,358	£25,530	£5,172
-£168,826	Income	-£139,350	-£34,878	-£21,736	£13,142
-£112,651	Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	-£90,490	-£14,519	£3,794	£18,313
	<b>Manor Park</b>				
£297,583	Expenditure	£259,260	£83,658	£79,400	-£4,258
-£220,909	Income	-£189,080	-£64,029	-£62,430	£1,599
£76,674	Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	£70,180	£19,629	£16,970	-£2,659
	<b>Kent Life</b>				
£20,354	Expenditure	£29,890	£12,454	£10,321	-£2,133
-£73,600	Income	-£70,730	-£35,365	-£35,365	£0
-£53,246	Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	-£40,840	-£22,911	-£25,044	-£2,133
	<b>Residential Properties</b>				
£13,750	Expenditure	£16,180	£6,742	£1,007	-£5,735
-£19,971	Income	-£30,000	-£12,500	-£13,849	-£1,349
-£6,221	Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)	-£13,820	-£5,758	-£12,842	-£7,084
-£95,444	<b>Operational Total</b>	-£74,970	-£23,559	-£17,122	£6,437
-£42,237	Investment Income	-£40,000	-£10,000	-£13,595	-£3,595
£69,645	Car Park Repayment	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
-£68,036	<b>Total for the Year</b>	-£45,320	-£33,559	-£30,717	£2,842
	Net Expenditure (+)/Income (-)				

3.2 The current position shows a small overspend of £2,842 for the year to date. There are no significant issues to report, but the following points should be noted:

- Mytime will be invoiced for £80,000 for rental payments due, with an initial £21,736 for performance based on trading in the early part of the financial year. Given the positive trading position so far this year it is hoped that another significant performance-based sum can be realised.
- The spend of £6,610 against golf course professional services is for advice from consultants in respect of the clubhouse.

## 4. CASHFLOW PROJECTION

- 4.1 Attached at **Appendix 2** is an updated cashflow projection for the activities of the Estate covering the next 10 years.
- 4.2 The projection is based on currently approved budgets, with the future years being increased by 5% for inflation where applicable. For the golf course contract, a figure of £100,000 p.a. has been used as this is the sum needed to ensure a break-even position for the activities of the estate on an annual basis.
- 4.3 One of the main challenges going forward is funding future capital expenditure, the most significant one being the replacement of the existing play area, which is likely to cost in excess of £350,000. Works will also be needed to the Llama House and the concrete hardstanding outside the café

building.

- 4.4 At this stage there are no costings included in the projection for these works as funding will need to be identified. The new storage container can be funded from the existing bank balance. Officers will investigate what sources of funding may be available and report back to a future meeting with options for the Committee to consider.
  - 4.5 The projection assumes that car parking charges will stay as they are at present, but Members could choose to increase them in the future as a means of raising additional income to fund capital works within the Manor Park.
  - 4.6 There are a number of risks that need to be considered with the figures in the projection:
    - Inflation rises above the projected 5% and the economic situation continues to worsen.
    - Suitable funding cannot be identified for the major capital works that are needed, particularly the play area, which is the main attraction for visitors to the park.
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## **5. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Section 3 - for noting only.
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## **6. PREFERRED OPTIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Section 3 - for noting only.
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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 Officers will continue to monitor the financial position and take appropriate action where necessary.
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1: Financial Position
- Appendix 2: Cashflow Projection

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9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Provisional Outturn 2021/22		Approved Budget 2022/23	Profiled Budget as at 31st August 2022	Actual as at 31st August 2022	Variance at end of August 2022
	<b>Cobtree Manor Estate</b>				
	<b>GOLF COURSE</b>				
£5,371	Repairs & Maintenance	£5,210	£2,171	£682	£1,489
£2,200	Premises Insurance	£2,570	£1,071	£1,071	£0
£632	Professional Services	£0	£0	£6,610	£6,610
£2,452	General Expenses - VAT	£2,550	£1,063	£1,063	£1
<b>£10,655</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£10,330</b>	<b>£4,304</b>	<b>£9,426</b>	<b>£5,122</b>
<b>-£168,826</b>	Contract Income	<b>-£139,110</b>	<b>-£34,778</b>	<b>-£21,736</b>	<b>-£13,042</b>
£0	Rent Income	-£240	-£100	£0	£100
<b>-£168,826</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£139,350</b>	<b>-£34,878</b>	<b>-£21,736</b>	<b>-£13,142</b>
£12,634	MBC Staff Recharges	£12,530	£5,221	£5,221	£0
<b>£12,634</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£12,530</b>	<b>£5,221</b>	<b>£5,221</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>-£145,537</b>	<b>Cobtree Golf Course</b>	<b>-£116,490</b>	<b>-£25,353</b>	<b>-£7,089</b>	<b>-£18,264</b>
£32,886	MBC 2/9ths share	£26,000	£10,833	£10,883	£50
<b>-£112,651</b>	<b>CMET Total</b>	<b>-£90,490</b>	<b>-£14,519</b>	<b>£3,794</b>	<b>-£18,313</b>
	<b>MANOR PARK</b>				
£0	Overtime	£4,000	£1,667	£0	£1,667
<b>£0</b>	<b>Employee Costs</b>	<b>£4,000</b>	<b>£1,667</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£1,667</b>
£65,524	Hard Landscaping	£15,300	£6,375	£8,869	£2,494
£1,624	Gas	£2,040	£850	£584	£266
£12,438	Electricity	£12,040	£5,017	£5,121	£104
£986	Water Metered	£1,220	£508	£792	£284
£0	Sewerage & Env Services	£1,120	£467	£0	£467
£7,402	Trade Refuse Collection (Internal)	£8,160	£3,400	£4,100	£700
£3,468	Premises Insurance	£2,320	£967	£967	£0
£12,556	Equipment Purchase	£0	£0	£0	£0
£0	Equipment Hire	£540	£225	£0	£225
£0	Vehicle Leasing & Running Costs	£2,600	£1,083	£775	£308
£0	Vehicle Insurance	£810	£338	£338	£1
£0	Cash Collection	£2,470	£1,029	£0	£1,029
£0	Protective Clothes	£540	£225	£0	£225
£6	Photocopying	£540	£225	£0	£225
£821	General Expenses	£4,080	£1,700	£2,112	£412
£6,131	General Expenses - VAT	£6,120	£2,550	£2,550	£0
£5,330	Audit Fee	£5,440	£0	£150	£150
£3,296	Professional Services Security	£500	£208	£529	£321
£5,079	Professional Services Consultancy	£3,120	£1,300	£0	£1,300
£0	Direct Telephones	£210	£88	£0	£88
£0	Mobile Telephones	£110	£46	£0	£46
£150	General Insurances	£150	£63	£63	£1
£0	External Print & Graphics	£170	£71	£0	£71
<b>£124,811</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£69,600</b>	<b>£26,733</b>	<b>£26,950</b>	<b>£217</b>
<b>-£123,790</b>	Fees & Charges - Car Parking	<b>-£110,000</b>	<b>-£55,529</b>	<b>-£48,420</b>	<b>-£7,109</b>
<b>-£27,361</b>	Other Income - Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd	<b>-£40,000</b>	£0	£404	£404
<b>-£8,290</b>	Other Income	<b>-£5,000</b>	£0	£0	£0
£0	Licences	-£80	£0	£0	£80
<b>-£61,468</b>	Rent Income (Café)	<b>-£34,000</b>	<b>-£8,500</b>	<b>-£14,414</b>	£5,914
<b>-£220,909</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£189,080</b>	<b>-£64,029</b>	<b>-£62,430</b>	<b>-£1,599</b>
£51,400	MBC Staff Recharges	£53,060	£22,108	£22,108	£0
£121,372	MBC Parks Management	£132,600	£33,150	£30,342	£2,808
<b>£172,772</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£185,660</b>	<b>£55,258</b>	<b>£52,450</b>	<b>£2,808</b>
<b>£76,674</b>	<b>Cobtree Manor Park</b>	<b>£70,180</b>	<b>£19,629</b>	<b>£16,970</b>	<b>£2,659</b>

Provisional Outturn 2021/22	Cobtree Manor Estate	Approved Budget 2022/23	Profiled Budget as at 31st August 2022	Actual as at 31st August 2022	Variance at end of August 2022
	<b>KENT LIFE</b>				
£2,569	Repairs & Maintenance of Premises	£10,930	£4,554	£2,420	£2,134
£6,930	Premises Insurance	£8,250	£3,438	£3,438	-£1
£515	Equipment Purchase	£0	£0	£0	£0
£1,226	General Expenses - VAT	£1,530	£638	£638	-£1
<b>£11,240</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£20,710</b>	<b>£8,629</b>	<b>£6,496</b>	<b>£2,133</b>
-£73,600	Contract Income	-£70,730	-£35,365	-£35,365	£0
<b>-£73,600</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£70,730</b>	<b>-£35,365</b>	<b>-£35,365</b>	<b>£0</b>
£9,114	MBC Staff Recharges	£9,180	£3,825	£3,825	£0
<b>£9,114</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£9,180</b>	<b>£3,825</b>	<b>£3,825</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>-£53,246</b>	<b>Kent Life</b>	<b>-£40,840</b>	<b>-£22,911</b>	<b>-£25,044</b>	<b>£2,133</b>
	<b>RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES</b>				
£5,959	Repairs & Maintenance	£13,270	£5,529	-£206	£5,735
£50	Electricity	£0	£0	£0	£0
£3,391	Non-Domestic Rates	£0	£0	£0	£0
£515	Equipment Purchase	£0	£0	£0	£0
£795	Professional Services	£0	£0	£0	£0
£500	Premises Insurance	£290	£121	£121	-£0
<b>£11,210</b>	<b>Controlled Running Costs</b>	<b>£13,560</b>	<b>£5,650</b>	<b>-£85</b>	<b>£5,735</b>
-£19,971	Rent Income	-£30,000	-£12,500	-£13,849	£1,349
<b>-£19,971</b>	<b>Controlled Income</b>	<b>-£30,000</b>	<b>-£12,500</b>	<b>-£13,849</b>	<b>£1,349</b>
£2,540	MBC Staff Recharges	£2,620	£1,092	£1,092	-£0
<b>£2,540</b>	<b>Rechargeable Costs</b>	<b>£2,620</b>	<b>£1,092</b>	<b>£1,092</b>	<b>-£0</b>
<b>-£6,221</b>	<b>Residential Properties</b>	<b>-£13,820</b>	<b>-£5,758</b>	<b>-£12,842</b>	<b>£7,084</b>
<b>-£95,444</b>	<b>OVERALL TOTALS</b>	<b>-£74,970</b>	<b>-£23,559</b>	<b>-£17,122</b>	<b>-£6,437</b>
-£42,237	Investment Income	-£40,000	-£10,000	-£13,595	£3,595
<b>-£137,681</b>	<b>Net (surplus)/deficit for operational &amp; investment activities</b>	<b>-£114,970</b>	<b>-£33,559</b>	<b>-£30,717</b>	<b>-£2,842</b>
£69,645	Repayment of car park construction costs	£69,650	£0	£0	£0
<b>-£68,036</b>	<b>Net (surplus)/deficit after repayment</b>	<b>-£45,320</b>	<b>-£33,559</b>	<b>-£30,717</b>	<b>-£2,842</b>

## COBTREE MANOR ESTATE TRUST - CASHFLOW PROJECTION

APPENDIX 2

Activity	Year Ending 31st March	Current Year									
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2031	2032	2033
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Golf Course - MBC staff recharges	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	19	19
Golf Course - Running Costs	40	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	
Kent Life - Running costs	21	22	23	24	25	26	28	29	31	32	
Kent Life - MBC staff recharges	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	14	14	
Manor Park - Running costs	73	77	81	85	89	93	98	103	108	113	
Manor Park - MBC Management Fee	133	139	146	154	161	169	178	187	196	206	
Manor Park - MBC staff recharges	53	56	58	61	64	68	71	75	78	82	
Residential Properties - Running costs	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Residential Properties - MBC staff recharges	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>505</b>	
Golf Course - Annual payment from operator	139	100	105	110	116	122	128	134	141	148	
Kent Life - Annual payment from operator	71	73	76	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	
Manor Park - Car parking income	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	
Residential Properties - Rental income	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd. Will Trust Income	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	
Café/Visitor Centre - Annual payments from operator	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>447</b>	
Payment: MBC 2/9ths Golf Course Net Surplus	19	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	26	
Investment Income - Charifund	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	
<b>NET OPERATIONAL SURPLUS OR DEFICIT (-)</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-44</b>	
<b>Capital Expenditure:</b>											
Car park resurfacing works repayment - total costs £335,000	67	67	67								
Storage container (as per Mike's report)	50										
Footpath Repairs	25										
Play Area											
Café concrete hardstanding											
Llama House works											
	<b>142</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>ADJUSTED OVERALL SURPLUS/DEFICIT (-)</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-44</b>	
<b>Cashflow Forecast:</b>											
<b>Bank Account balance</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>429</b>	
Annual surplus/deficit (-)	-50	6	-4	53	39	24	8	-9	-26	-44	
21/22 MBC share of golf club surplus	-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Bank Account balance as at 31st March</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>384</b>	

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# Agenda Item 14

## **COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE**

**26 October 2022**

### **Cobtree Estate Update**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	26 October 2022

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mike Evans, Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Boxley

#### **Executive Summary**

An update report on the Cobtree Estate and its constituent venues and facilities.

#### **Purpose of Report**

Noting

#### **This report asks the Committee to consider the following recommendation:**

1. That the contents of the report are noted.



# Cobtree Estate Update

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the Strategic Plan objectives for the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	There are no risk management implications in this report.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	Financial implications from this update are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Senior Finance Manger (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	Staffing implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Legal</b>	There are no specific legal implications at present as this report is presented for noting only.	Team Leader, Contracts and Commissioning MKLS
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team
<b>Equalities</b>	The report is for noting and contains no recommendations that would propose a change in service, therefore no equalities impact assessment will be required.	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of our community and residents through its day-to-day operations.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies	Leisure Manager

<b>Procurement</b>	Procurement implications are managed day-to-day in line with council procedures and policies.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and align well with the actions of the biodiversity and climate change action plan. Maintenance of trees, engagement through educational days for children and four volunteer activity projects, and encouragement and support to Kent Life with rain water harvesting, recycling, and renewable energy generation are all positives inline with the intentions of MBC action plan.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 In the last six months facilities using the Cobtree Estate have continued their recovery from the pandemic and many have demonstrated positive customer performance against their most recent pre-pandemic levels (2019).

### **Cobtree Manor Park**

- 2.2 For the seventh consecutive year Cobtree Manor Park was awarded a Green Flag.
- 2.3 Based on car park usage data there have been 31,174 vehicle visits to the Manor Park between 1 April 2022 and 18 September 2022. For the same, full period last year there were 40,418 and pre-pandemic (2019) there were 36,329 visits.
- 2.4 General improvements beyond the daily maintenance regimes have continued to be made at the park to enhance the visitor experience. Improved drainage has been installed around the toilet entrances and plans are formulating to improve footpaths and the areas around the café building.
- 2.5 In September the park staged two performances of Robin Hood, delivered as part of the Hazlitt Theatre's outreach programme across four outdoor sites in the borough. There were a total of eight shows with 800 people attending, 261 of these were at Cobtree Manor Park making it one of the more popular venues.
- 2.6 Following a successful event last time, the GLOW light festival will be returning to the park in December.

- 2.7 A new link with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership will deliver four educational days for children and four volunteer activity projects in the park in 2022 and 2023.

### **Cobtree Golf Course**

- 2.8 The Golf Course continues to attract visitors and receives consistent positive feedback on social media from those who play there. Membership grew in August by 45 (a typical month might see 10-12 new members) and there have been 68 Golf Day bookings since April.
- 2.9 A total of 20,399 rounds were played in the period 1 April 2022 to 21 September 2022, which compares favourably with pre-pandemic (2019) levels for the same period of 18,611.
- 2.10 The venue has been used for parties and events as well as by several regular users who hold business meetings there.
- 2.11 Course improvements continue with a programme of tree and drainage works, as well as ditch renovations. The course conditions survey shows consistent improvement month-on-month.
- 2.12 There has been a recent spate of anti-social behaviour affecting the course, with two golf buggies being stolen and found burnt out locally. Some minor course damage has been repaired but the two buggies were written-off.

### **Kent Life**

- 2.13 The venue has recently employed a new operations manager with experience in managing large public leisure venues. He is also keen to explore further recycling opportunities and other actions to support action on climate change, including rainwater harvesting and opportunities to generate on-site power.
- 2.14 Overall admission numbers are above those budgeted for by the operator with 94,555 visitors attending the venue between 1 April 2022 and 21 September 2022. During the summer holidays daily visitor numbers reached 800 on many occasions. School visit numbers are especially encouraging, mainly due to the promotion of the venue through links to the curriculum.
- 2.15 New attractions have been added like the hands-on mud kitchen, a new pony enclosure and updated habitat for guinea pigs and rabbits. Kent Life has recently acquired some rare breed sheep and will be looking to breed pigs on site.
- 2.16 The venue has hosted a number of events including 19 weddings, 101 children's parties, corporate events, the Hops n Harvest festival and advance planning is in place for upcoming events like Halloween, Fireworks and Winter Wonderland.

- 2.17 The operator has applied for planning permission to create a new restaurant area. For this a Deed of Variation will be signed to extend the agreement by the available five years. The new expiry date will be December 2030.
- 2.18 Agreement has been reached with the Young Farmers for them to install a power connection to Forstal Field. Once their trustees have signed the agreement it will come back to the Committee for sign-off.
- 2.19 The Council has included Kent Life as a possible location for the siting of a changing place toilet in an external funding bid. At the time of writing the outcome of this bid is now yet known.

### **Cobtree Café**

- 2.20 The current café operator's lease expires on midnight 16 April 2023 and consideration is underway to seek a new operator. End of agreement plans are in place to ensure a smooth handover back to MBC and that all obligations on the tenant are met.
- 2.21 The operator has recently complied with requests to repair items in the toilet area.
- 2.22 Café business has been positive with the operator reporting turnover for Quarter 1 as 32% higher than the pre-pandemic period (Q1 2019).
- 

## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee can note the information in this report.
- 3.2 The Committee can choose not to note the information in this report, however previous iterations of this committee requested regular updates on the operations of the Estate so knock on impacts and decisions can be foreknown.
- 

## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the information in this report is noted.
- 

## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.
- 

## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 No consultation has taken place since the last update report.
-

**7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

7.1 Any comments from the Committee will be passed on to the relevant party.

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**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

- None
- 

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None

# Agenda Item 15

## COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE

26 October 2022

### Cobtree Café Letting

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	26 October 2022

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mike Evans, Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### Executive Summary

Decisions are required about the future of Cobtree Café, given the impending expiry of the current operator's lease. This report sets out the decisions to be addressed within formal recommendations to be made to the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee.

The recommendations in this report are linked to the Cobtree staff welfare facilities report on this same agenda.

#### Purpose of Report

Decision

**This report makes the following recommendations to the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee:**

1. That the leased and retained areas of the café premises are reviewed to achieve optimum financial returns and operational suitability at Cobtree Manor Park.
  2. That agents are appointed to act on behalf of the Charity, engage the market, source prospective tenants and assist in selecting the most suitable tenant for the park and their quotation of £9,500 payable on successful completion is approved.
  3. That the lease of Cobtree Manor Park Café is placed on the market and offers are invited from prospective tenant operators.
  4. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement to agree Heads of Terms with the preferred new tenant to achieve the optimum annual financial return and operational situation for Cobtree Manor Park Café.
-

# Cobtree Café Letting

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the Strategic Plan objectives for the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	Risk implications are outlined in section 5.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	Income from the café contract reduces the net running costs of the park. Funding for the £9,500 agents fee can be accommodated within the existing budgets.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Legal</b>	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers.	Team Leader, Contracts and Commissioning MKLS
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations will ensure a continuation of service and therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The recommendations will not have an impact on crime and disorder.	Leisure Manager



<b>Procurement</b>	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will follow a transparent lettings process to find a new tenant operator for the golf course. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change. It is recommended that pending decision, future contracts for the café letting include provision for reducing waste, utilising plastic alternatives, energy efficacy and carbon reduction goals in line with MBCs action plan.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 DA GT Ltd, through its subsidiary company Cobtree Café Ltd, has been operating Cobtree Manor Park Café since 2018. DA GT Ltd (DAGT) won a competitive tender for the running of three Maidstone cafes, the other two being Mote Park Café and Maidstone Museum Café. DAGT exited its agreements at Maidstone Museum and Mote Park Café and it will not be renewing its lease at Cobtree Manor Park by mutual consent.
- 2.2 Prior to 2018, the café was run in house at a loss to the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity (CMEC). Since letting the café to a private operator the charity receives an annual rent of £25,000 and an 8% share of all turnover, which is a stable income for the estate to be receiving against its fixed expenditure. The lease of Cobtree Manor Park Café (the café) expires in April 2023 and a new tenant must be found to continue the operation and the provision of services at the park.

### Building layout

- 2.3 The café building (shown in appendix 1) contains the park toilets, which are part of the café tenant's lease area, and a corner office which is retained by the council for staff welfare.
- 2.4 The corner office was formerly the park manager's office but the park manager no longer spends every day in the park and is able to work remotely when on site. The location of this corner office means it would make an ideal point of sale opportunity for the new café tenant. It would add more value to the opportunity used in this way as opposed to being retained for staff welfare. If the corner office is let to a new café tenant then alternative staff welfare provision will be required for the park staff at Cobtree. A separate report on this is included in the agenda.

## **Public toilets**

- 2.5 The public toilets at Cobtree Manor Park are leased to the café tenant and the café tenant has the responsibility and obligation to open them for the public each day. Over the last five years there have been disputes with the tenant over the management of these toilets and the new lease gives an opportunity to review the arrangements for how public toilets in the park are managed.
- 2.6 Removing the obligation to manage the public toilets makes the café lease opportunity more appealing to prospective bidders and gives the council greater control over the toilet opening hours and standards of cleanliness.
- 2.7 An indicative quote for managing the toilets has been obtained and this can be managed within operational budgets and a service charge contribution from the café tenant can also be obtained. This management structure will also ensure that café staff can focus all their attention on catering.
- 2.8 Letting the entire café building to a new café tenant, without any retained areas, will enable CMEC to make the lease a fully repairing and insuring lease and will mean the café tenant will be solely liable for all utilities costs. Savings in these areas will be used to meet the costs of managing the public toilets.
- 2.9 These suggestions are subject to tenants accepting final terms but it is believed this approach positions the opportunity to the market in the best way.

---

## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 This Committee is required to formalise two decisions. Decision one is the decision to readvertise the café opportunity or not, and decision two is the decision to keep the lettable spaces the same or to alter them.

### **Decision one**

- 3.2 **Not search for a new café tenant**

This option would mean that catering provision at Cobtree Manor Park either ceases or is brought in house. The café is a popular facility at Cobtree Manor Park. It is part of a day out in the park and links to increased visitor numbers. Before 2018 the café was run in house by a team of council staff and this was not financially successful. Outsourcing this provision has given CMEC a stable annual income with additional performance uplift payments, and it gives operational certainty to park visitors.

**This option is not recommended.**

- 3.3 **Advertise the lease opportunity to the market**

Outsourced provision of the café offer at Cobtree Manor Park ought to see the stable annual rental income to CMEC continue. It will also enable CMEC to assess multiple operators and select one who complements the park best. **This option is recommended.**

## **Decision two**

### **3.4 Retain the same premises arrangements**

Working practices in the park have changed since the premises arrangements were set in 2018. Hindsight has also enabled us to assess day-to-day arrangements and review the way in which things work. The current arrangements contribute to some operational challenges that take up a lot of officer time and cause conflict between organisations on site. The expiry of the current lease provides an opportunity to review the way in which the spaces in the premises are let or retained and so **this option is not recommended**

### **3.5 Review the premises arrangements in conjunction with identifying new tenants**

The new lease gives CMEC the opportunity to review the lettable spaces and the retained spaces. In evaluating the re-let we have identified some improvements that can be made that ought to be favourable to CMEC and also to new café tenants and this option will allow us to seek new terms and new arrangements as part of the new lease. **This is the preferred option.**

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## **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 CMEC seeks to present the most attractive rental proposal to the market to achieve the most successful terms with a new tenant.
- 4.2 Working arrangements in the park have changed significantly since the 2018 café lease was signed and we have identified that the let spaces and the retained spaces can be reviewed and managed differently to achieve the objective stated at 4.1.
- 4.3 An agent's opinion has identified that reviewing the premises arrangements is the best approach to CMEC, but the final agreed terms are subject to agreement by at least one incoming tenant. There are a number of variations for how the premises as a whole are let and retained. Depending on how the spaces are apportioned, CMEC will be liable for additional capital and revenue expenditure as identified in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.7, and will also benefit from revenue savings as explained in paragraph 2.8.
- 4.4 Agents can take the café opportunity to the market and engage with prospective tenants to find the best tenant outcome for CMEC. The final outcome can reset premises and management arrangements for the café spaces and the public toilets. An agent who has successfully performed identical services for the council at the Mote Park Café has quoted £9,500 to complete this service for CMEC.
- 4.5 The final terms of a new lease will require a future decision from this Committee when the final let and retained spaces are known and the final capital and expenditure amounts of that variation can be assessed and compared. For clarity, the recommendation made today is that the spaces are assessed as part of the reletting, with delegated authority to agree

favourable terms for CMEC given to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement. The final lease terms along with the varied capital and revenue positions will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

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## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal relate to the uncertainties and challenges in the leisure and hospitality sector at present. Being agile in our approach will ensure our proposition is attractive to the market and will enable us to deliver the most beneficial terms possible.
  - 5.2 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
- 

## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 No public consultation has taken place on this matter, but advice from leisure and hospitality agents is in agreement with the approach that we had identified.
- 

## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

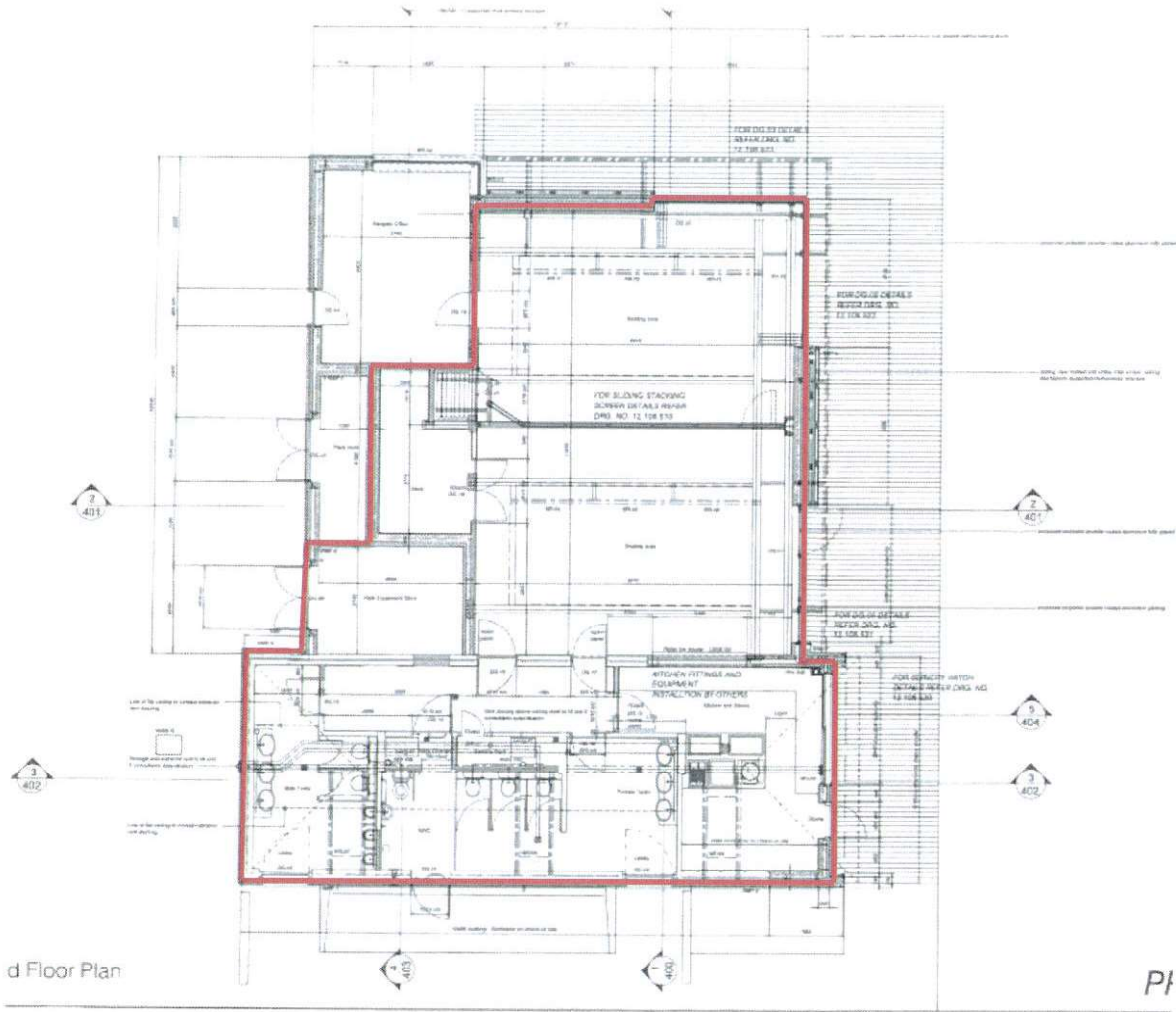
- 7.1 Following a decision on these recommendations, CMEC will formally appoint an agent to assist with marketing and advertising this opportunity to the market.
  - 7.2 Quotations required for the various variations will be collected so that combinations of premises can be assessed.
- 

## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

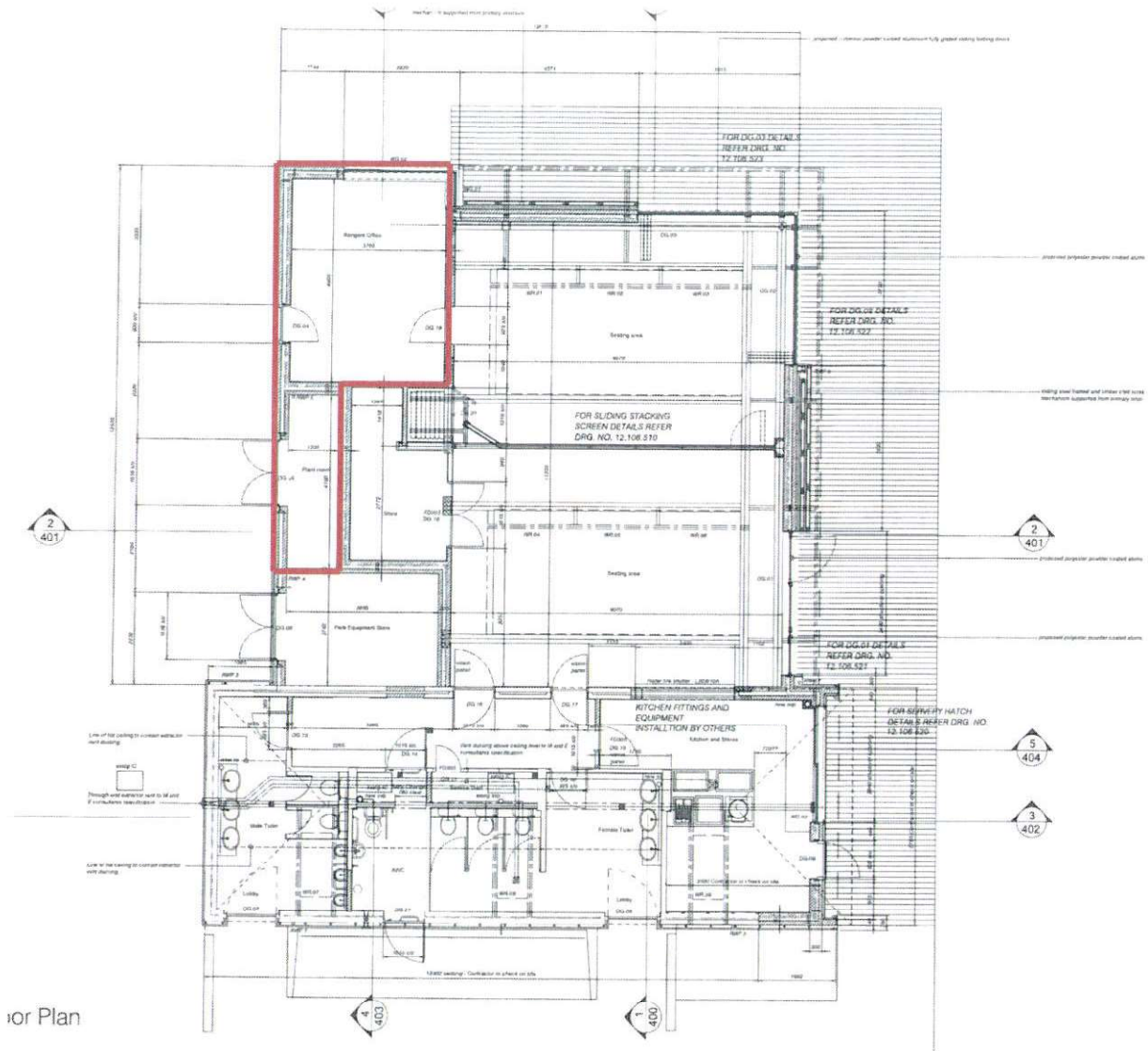
- Appendix 1: Plan of the Cobtree Manor Park Café building showing the let spaces on page 1 and the retained spaces on page 2.
- 

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None



Plan 2 – Cobtree Café (Internal Demise)



for Plan

Plan 3 – Cobtree Café (Retained Internal Demise)

**COBTREE MANOR ESTATE  
CHARITY COMMITTEE**

**26 October 2022**

**Cobtree Staff Welfare Facilities**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	26 October 2022

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mike Evans, Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

Decisions are required about the future of Cobtree Manor Park Café. The *Cobtree Café letting* report, also part of this agenda, sets out a direction of travel with the premises arrangements at Cobtree Manor Park Café. A variation to the premises arrangements is likely to require capital expenditure for the provision of suitable staff welfare and storage facilities, with that capital expenditure maximising revenues in other areas and negating the need for future revenue expenditure.

This report provides additional information on building allocations at Cobtree Manor Park and seeks authority for capital expenditure to address the lack of suitable staff welfare facilities.

**Purpose of Report**

Decision

**This report makes the following recommendations to the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee:**

1. That, subject to any necessary consents, a new stand-alone staff welfare and storage unit for park staff at Cobtree Manor Park, in keeping with the look and ethos of the park, is installed into the park.
2. That the old storage container is removed from the park and salvage costs for it are sought.
3. That capital expenditure of £50,000 for the provision of a stand-alone staff welfare and storage unit is approved.
4. That the final undertaking of items 1,2 and 3 above are subject to also agreeing applicable café premises terms that make the need for new staff welfare spaces actionable.



# Cobtree Staff Welfare Facilities

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the Strategic Plan objectives for the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the cross-cutting objectives of the council.	Leisure Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	Risk implications are outlined in section 5.	Leisure Manager
<b>Financial</b>	Accepting the recommendations will demand new spending of £50,000. Funding has been identified for this within the existing resources.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Legal</b>	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers subject to any necessary planning permission or procurement processes.	Team Leader Contracts and Commissioning MKLS
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team.
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations will ensure a continuation of service and therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals, in particular council staff members working at Cobtree Manor Park.	Public Health Officer

<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Crime and disorder considerations will be managed as per parks and open spaces policies and procedures.	Leisure Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report is for consideration in conjunction with the report titled *Cobtree Café Letting* which is part of the same agenda.
- 2.2 The proposal to review the retained areas of the Cobtree Manor Park Café (café) are likely to see the park ranger need new welfare facilities. The park ranger previously used a metal storage container in the park for welfare, but this facility deteriorated and became less and less unsuitable. At present the ranger is using the room that was previously the park manager's office for welfare, marked on page 2 of Appendix 1. The park ranger uses the container for storage only.
- 2.3 The office room used by the park ranger is larger than it needs to be and would have more value if it were let as catering hospitality retail space. The *Cobtree Café Letting* report seeks to proceed in that direction of travel and this report seeks authority to manage the consequences of that and to provide suitable staff welfare facilities that are overdue.
- 2.4 The park ranger works full time in Cobtree Manor Park. They are supported by the Mote Park and Cobtree Manor Park Manager who splits his time across both parks. Other members of the Parks and the Grounds Maintenance teams support work and projects at Cobtree throughout the year.
- 2.5 The welfare facilities provided in the container are no longer usable. The container is no longer weather-proof and water ingress has taken the electrics out of action. It has no heating and in the winter water can freeze on the floor inside making it slippery and unsafe. Rust to the container will soon render it unsecure meaning it cannot be used solely as a storage container either. As well as its unsuitability, the container is also a blot on the landscape of Cobtree Manor Park.
- 2.6 Reclassifying the retained and the let spaces of the café presents an opportunity to increase the service provision to the people in the park, to maximise rental yields from a café tenant and to use the yields from the café to provide suitable welfare facilities for staff. A new stand-alone

welfare unit will be more in keeping with the look and the feel of the park and make it a more attractive place to visit.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

#### **3.1 Not provide new welfare facilities**

The staff in the park have access to welfare via using the vacant park manager's office as a rest area. This office has running water but it is larger than it needs to be and is also part of the café building. Continuing to use it as a staff room means we continue to be a sub-tenant in a café building we let to someone else and we also deny the café the opportunity to use that room as a sales kiosk selling drinks and snacks in the park thus hampering our ability to obtain maximal rents. **Continuing with this set up is not recommended.**

#### **3.2 Use the Elephant House as a parks management building**

Surveys have been undertaken and quotes obtained for converting the Elephant House into a parks management building. The Elephant House is far larger than required for welfare and storage and it could be converted to include a staff room and office. However, doing so requires more investment than a stand-alone unit, it requires additional investment to ensure utilities services can support the building and it sits a fair distance away from the main hub of park activity meaning when in use it would present some operational challenges.

**For those reasons this option is not recommended.**

#### **3.3 Provide a new stand-alone welfare and storage unit in the park**

A new stand-alone unit can achieve what the park needs in a relatively cost-effective way. It can be located close to the main activity areas of the park and in the vicinity of utilities and services. It will be decorated accordingly to match the aesthetic and appeal of the park, making it visible and discreet at the same time. This option will provide suitable provision for park staff and will also release the potential of the café building.

**For those reasons this option is recommended.**

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 CMEC seeks to maximise opportunities within Cobtree Manor Park and deliver the best destination park experience possible. The facilities within the park enable CMEC to do that.

4.2 In line with the *Cobtree Café Letting* report, the execution of this expenditure is subject to identifying a tenant who also wishes to proceed in this way. The final terms of a new lease will require a future decision from this Committee when the final let and retained spaces are known and the capital and expenditure implications of that variation can be assessed. The recommendation made today is that capital expenditure of £50,000 is approved in order to make this direction of travel viable.

## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal relate to the uncertainties and challenges in recruitment at present. Using the café lettings opportunity to provide improved welfare and working conditions for our staff ensures that we remain attractive to current and future employees and will enable us to deliver the most enjoyable park possible.
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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 Parks staff have been informally consulted on this matter and in the assessment of the available options.
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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

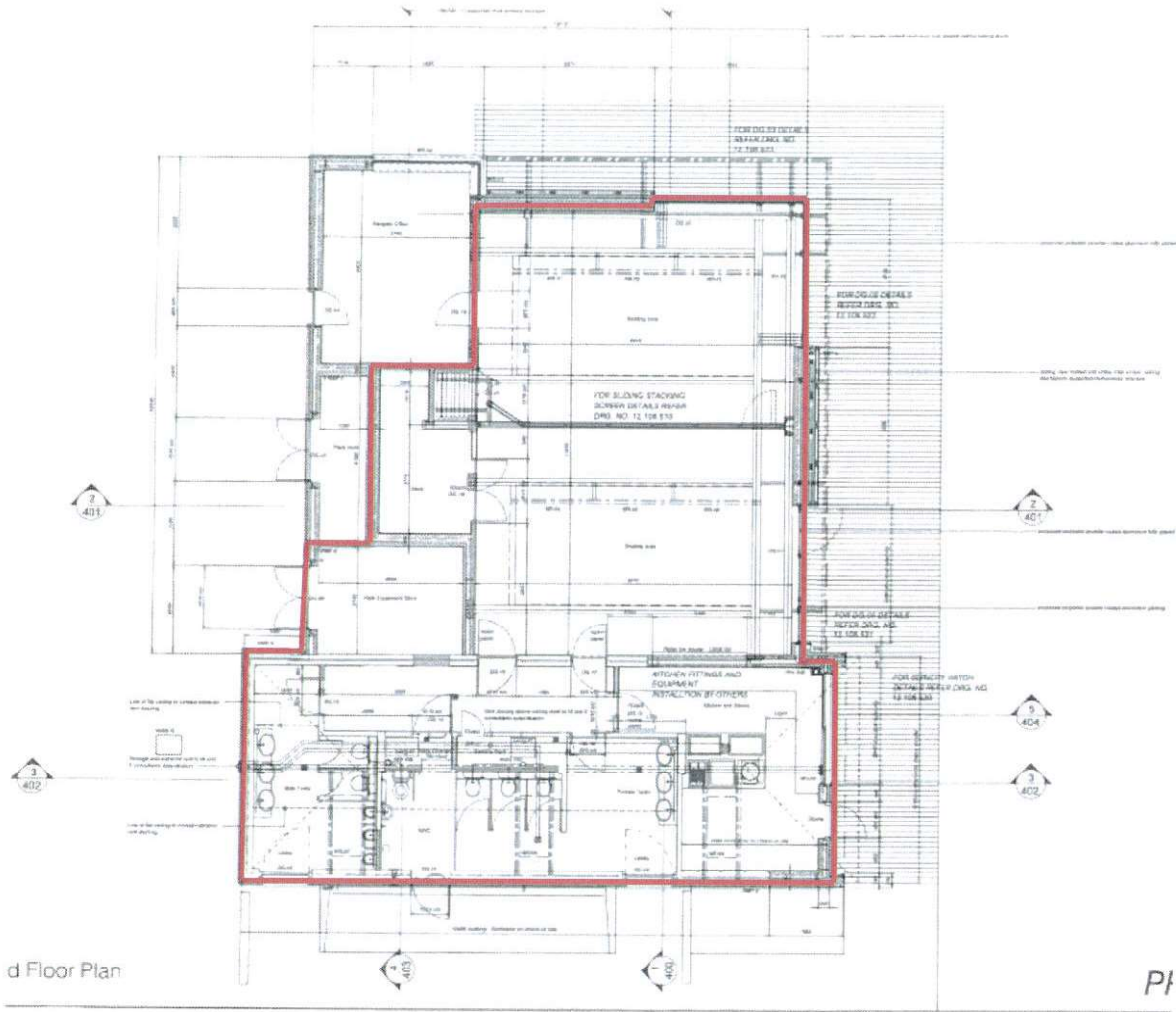
- 7.1 Following a decision on these recommendations, CMEC will complete the quotation and assessment procedures to obtain the best quote for the provision of the stand-alone unit and its installation. Indicative quotations from one provider that has been used before have been used in the writing of this report and in the assessment of options.
- 7.2 Planners will be engaged so that applications for the relevant permissions for the stand-alone unit can be obtained.
- 7.3 Quotations for all elements of this project and the various variations will be compiled and brought to a future meeting for final decision.
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

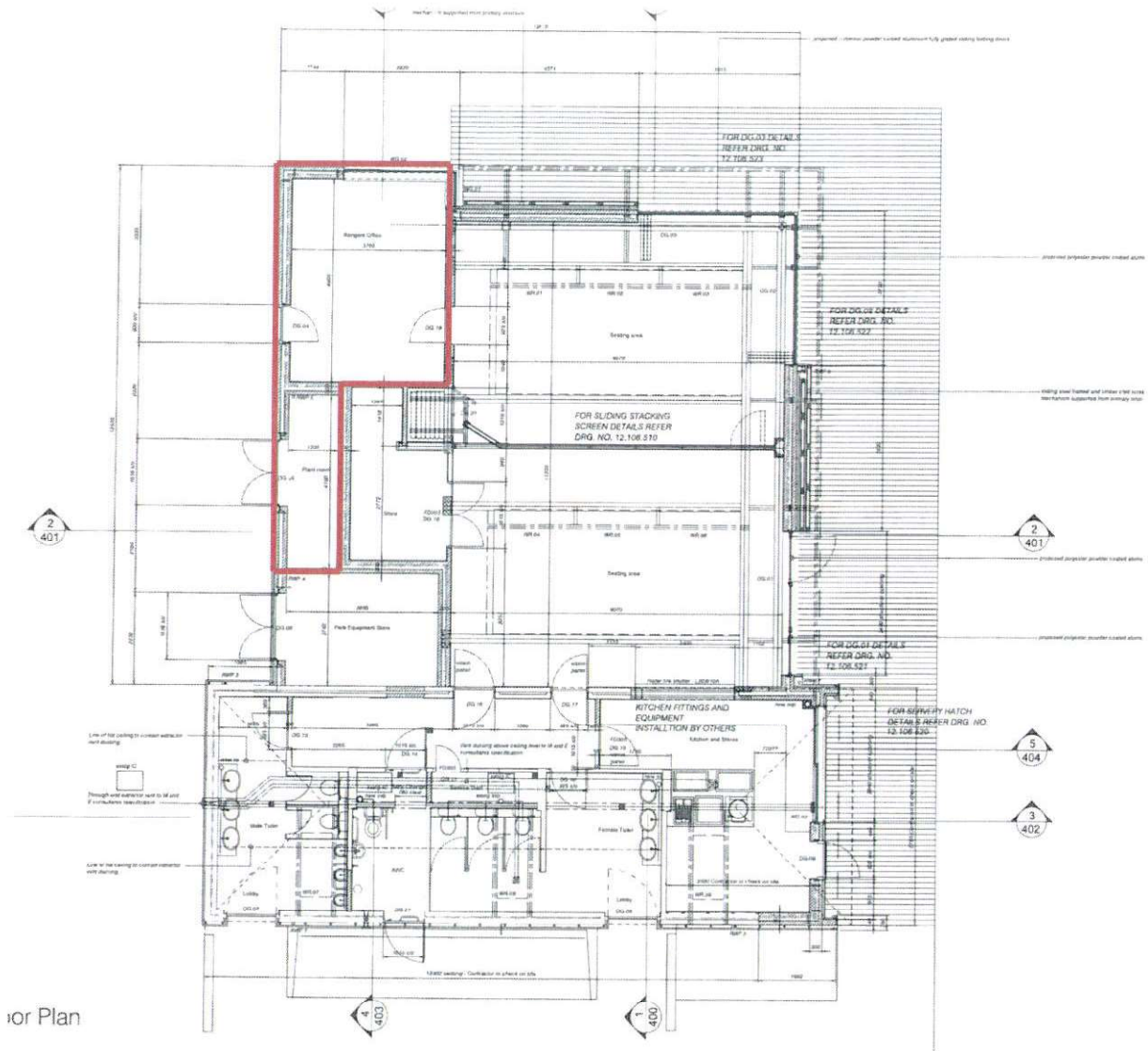
- Appendix 1: Plan of the Cobtree Manor Park Café building showing the park manager's office outlined red.
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None



Plan 2 – Cobtree Café (Internal Demise)



Plan 3 – Cobtree Café (Retained Internal Demise)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted