

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan:	No
-------------------------------	-----------	-----------------------------	-----------

CABINET

26 JANUARY 2011

REPORT OF ACTING HEAD OF CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

A.7 POTENTIAL LEASE OF LAND AT GAS HOUSE QUAY HARWICH

(Report prepared by Andy White)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the principle of leasing Council owned land at Gas House Quay, Harwich shown on the attached plan (Appendix A) following the return of tenders.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the decision of the Portfolio Holder for Community, Partnerships and Renewal on 15 October 2010, to initiate the process to consider potential land transactions in respect of land at Gas House Quay in Harwich, officers invited tenders for the lease of the site as a whole or in two parts.

Four tenders were received and have been evaluated. Two tenderers are considered to have made bids that are in line with anticipated values and should be considered for acceptance. Both have made a bid for the whole site or for separate, different, parts of the site. Both include details and proposals illustrating ways that they propose their use of the site would contribute to the local economy.

Accordingly there is potential to let the site as a whole or in two parts to support commercial use. Further detail on the nature of bids and terms is included in the report in Part B of this agenda.

In addition to tenders the Council has received a written representation from the High Steward of Harwich and a petition entitled Save the Gas House Creek Car Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That Members consider the letter from the High Steward of Harwich and the petition received.**
- (b) That Members determine in principle whether, subject to their decision in Part B of this agenda, they wish to let the site for commercial use.**

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Alternatives for productive use of the site will contribute towards the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Promote sustainable economic growth

- Regenerate the district and improve deprived areas

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

The proposed lease is in accordance with the framework set out in the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy 2011/12 and supports the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Tenders have been received that are in line with open market values for the site the detailed financial implications are considered in the report in Part B of this agenda.

Risk

The key risk is potential for the site to remain unutilised, resulting in it not contributing to any of the Corporate priorities, or earning an income for the Council.

LEGAL

This action proposed is within the Council's discretionary powers.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of Crime and Disorder, Equality and Diversity, Health Inequalities, Consultation/Public Engagement and Wards; and any significant issues are set out below.

Consultation/Public Engagement

The Council has received a petition of around 582 signatures seeking the use of the site as a car park.

Ward

Harwich East

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The Council owns the site at Gas House Quay. The land is contaminated, and works have been completed reinforcing the exterior of the existing piles with steel plating. The site has been capped with a macadam layer.

The adopted Local Plan and Harwich Masterplan identify the site for future use as a car park but Members wish to consider potential alternative uses for the site. On 15 October 2010 the Portfolio Holder for Community, Partnerships and Renewal decided (No 1987) to initiate the process to consider potential land transactions in respect of the land. ECC are currently implementing improvements to the public realm in the area near the site.

The Local Plan and Harwich Masterplan have been adopted by the Council including the proposal of the use of the site as a new car park that would replace spaces that were to be lost at The Quay. The design of the works at The Quay has evolved and the loss of parking is reduced. In addition the Council's public car park nearby is underused and could be made more attractive by some minor changes to charging and physical features.

The use of the site at Gas House Quay as car park will not directly lead to the creation of jobs on the site. The site is also an opportunity for further commercial sea front use in Harwich that is not dependant on one of the existing major operators.

Funding has been secured for the enhancement of highways in the area of the site. This

work is to be designed by Essex County Council and can be widened to incorporate gateway features to enhance the area separately from any property transaction.

The tenders received indicate that there are potential commercial uses for the site that include proposals for the safeguarding and generation of employment.

CURRENT POSITION

Tenders

Following the decision of the Portfolio Holder for Community, Partnerships and Renewal on 15 October 2010, to initiate the process to consider potential land transactions in respect of land at Gas House Quay in Harwich, officers invited tenders for the lease of the site as a whole or in two parts.

Four tenders were received and have been evaluated. Two tenderers are considered to have made bids that are in line with anticipated values and should be considered for acceptance. Both have made a bid for the whole site or for separate, different, parts of the site. Both include details and proposals illustrating ways that they propose their use of the site would contribute to the local economy.

Accordingly there is potential to let the site in two parts and support two commercial enterprises. Further detail on the nature of bids and terms is included in the report in part B of this agenda.

Public Representation

The Council has received a written representation from the High Steward of Harwich a copy of this is attached as Appendix B.

The Council has also received a petition of around 582 local signatures entitled Save the Gas House Creek Car Park. The text of the petition is:

“The undersigned call on Tendring district Council to implement its decision to create a much-needed additional car park for Harwich Town at Gas House Creek. We believe that the present levels of congestion are unacceptable and are detrimental to residents, businesses and tourists alike and will be made worse by the reduction of parking resulting from the proposed public realm works to Harwich Quay.”

The full petition will be available for Members’ inspection at the Cabinet meeting.

FURTHER HEADINGS RELEVANT TO THE REPORT

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Plan indicating locations of Potential leases.

Appendix B – Letter received from the High Steward of Harwich