

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

9 MARCH 2011

JOINT REPORT OF HEAD OF LEISURE SERVICES AND ACTING HEAD OF CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

A.5 DOVERCOURT SEAFRONT IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE AND PROPOSED NEW LEASE OF DOVERCOURT BOATING LAKE, LOW ROAD, DOVERCOURT, ESSEX

(Report prepared by John Higgins and Andy White)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report has 2 strands:

1. To update Cabinet on the ongoing Dovercourt seafront improvement works.
2. To consider the principle of granting a new lease to operate the boat hire concession at Dovercourt boating lake (site is shown edged bold on the attached Appendix A).

A further report in part B of this agenda seeks approval of proposed terms for the new lease.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following repairs to the Dovercourt model boating lake, refurbishment of the Dovercourt roller skating rink and the demolition of the previous unsafe boathouse, works on the replacement Dovercourt boathouse have now begun. The replacement costs are being met in part from the remaining £18,000 Dovercourt seafronts improvement budget with an additional £11,000 funding from the recently created Asset refurbishment and repairs budget.

To re-let the Dovercourt boating lake boat hire concession, tender documents were circulated to eleven individuals who expressed an interest in submitting a tender. One completed tender was received which, whilst being disappointing from a response perspective, is from a local family who have been good Council kiosk tenants for some years and who have some innovative ideas and plans for the boat hire concession.

It is the view of officers that the preferred option would be to support the granting of a new 14 year lease. This would allow the return of the boat hire trading concession, which is a valuable tourist attraction.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members agree to enter into a new lease over the Dovercourt Boating Lake, Low Road, Dovercourt for fourteen years from 1 April 2011 subject to Members'

decision in respect of the terms proposed in the report in part B of this agenda.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Re-establishing the boat hire concession, facilitated through Council investment, will further compliment the existing tourism offer and augment the available facilities adjacent to the Blue Flag beach. This contributes to the corporate priority 'building a thriving tourism industry' and delivering sustainable economic growth within the Dovercourt area.

The provision of recreational facilities in Dovercourt contributes towards improving health priorities and promoting healthy and active lifestyles within both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

Rebuilding the replacement boathouse will be funded from the remaining Dovercourt seafronts improvement budget now that the Dovercourt Roller Skating rink refurbishment is virtually completed, together with an additional £11,000 funding from the recently created Asset refurbishment and repairs budget. No member authority is required in this regard as a resolution has been made. The financial position is outlined as follows:

Dovercourt Seafront Project Works Position Statement	Costs £ (000)
Total Budget comprising £50,000 seafront improvements and a further £10,670 S106 contributions	60.7
Model Boating Lake repairs and Boathouse demolition	10
Roller Skating Rink & Clubhouse renovations.	32
Total Costs To Date	42
Budget Remaining For Boat House Replacement	18.7
£11,000 virement from the Asset refurbishment and repairs budget	

The additional funding is required despite post-quotation negotiation and with the Council's own Technical Services team undertaking all of the site clearance, ground works and provision of the required concrete pad.

Risk

There is always a risk with any lease arrangements that the tenant will fall behind with payments or that their business plans are unrealistic. In this instance the proposed tenant is an existing Council Tenant with a proven history of good tenancy.

LEGAL

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

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Consideration has been given to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the new boathouse design and construction materials chosen seek to minimise potential vandalism and theft.

The provision of improved tourism facilities at Dovercourt may have a positive impact on

levels of anti social behaviour in the District by providing a diversionary activity for young people.

Equality and Diversity

The recommended tenant has identified provision of both arm and leg-powered hire boats in his tender.

Health Inequalities

Regenerative investment and re-opening of this tourist attraction will re-establish a fun, open-air tourism facility which demands moderate physical input.

Ward

Harwich East Central

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

With a view to regenerating the area economically and stimulating the tourism economy of Dovercourt, the Council has undertaken a number of improvement projects which include building new public conveniences costing around £385,000 and £143,000 investment on new air handling equipment at Dovercourt Swimming Pool. On 7 July 2010 Cabinet approved a £50,000 budget for further Dovercourt seafront improvement works which included;

- Emergency repairs and improvements to the model boating lake
- Demolition of the unsafe boathouse
- Roller Skating Rink renovations
- Building and re-letting a replacement boathouse for the boat-hire concession

A further £10,670 from S106 contributions was added to the budget when the Dovercourt Roller Skating Rink enhancement works quotations were received above the estimated sum.

With work completed at the other sites, the only item remaining is the re-building of Dovercourt Boathouse and leasing arrangements to allow boat-hire. This concession is situated immediately adjacent to the Blue Flag beach and Dovercourt Swimming Pool.

An advert seeking expressions of interest for the concession lease was placed in the Harwich and Manningtree Standard and a total of 11 expressions of interest were received. All parties were sent a tender pack.

On expiry of the deadline for returns only one completed tender was received. Whilst the response is disappointing the single return is from a local family who have been good Council kiosk tenants in Dovercourt for some years and thus have experience of local tourism and who have some innovative ideas for the concession, more details of which are given in a further report in part B of this agenda.

OPTIONS

The Council has a number of potential options in considering the lease:

- Option 1 – Award the 14 year lease to the tender. **Recommended**

- Option 2 – Re-tender the lease. However, there is no guarantee of an improved offer. **Not recommended.**
- Option 3 – Undertake Council management of the facility. Additional funding would be required to purchase boats and associated safety equipment plus increased insurance liabilities and maintenances costs etc. There are opportunities to moderately increase Council revenues but these are off-set by increased costs. The risk of failure must be considered against any return. **Not recommended.**
- Option 4 – Look to establish 3rd sector management of the facility. Potentially through a joint venture sharing the risks and rewards. Research indicates that whilst arrangements of this nature should reduce operating costs, the setup costs will remain the same and 3rd party operators can lack the entrepreneurial initiative and the drive needed to establish a thriving tourism business. **Not recommended.**
- Option 5 – Do nothing. Presently, taking into account the Council’s financial position, it remains possible to withdraw the further funding necessary to re-build the boathouse and do nothing with the site. However, this would not support tourism and economic regeneration priorities and would also result in adverse press coverage as there seems to be strong local support for the return of this concession. **Not recommended.**

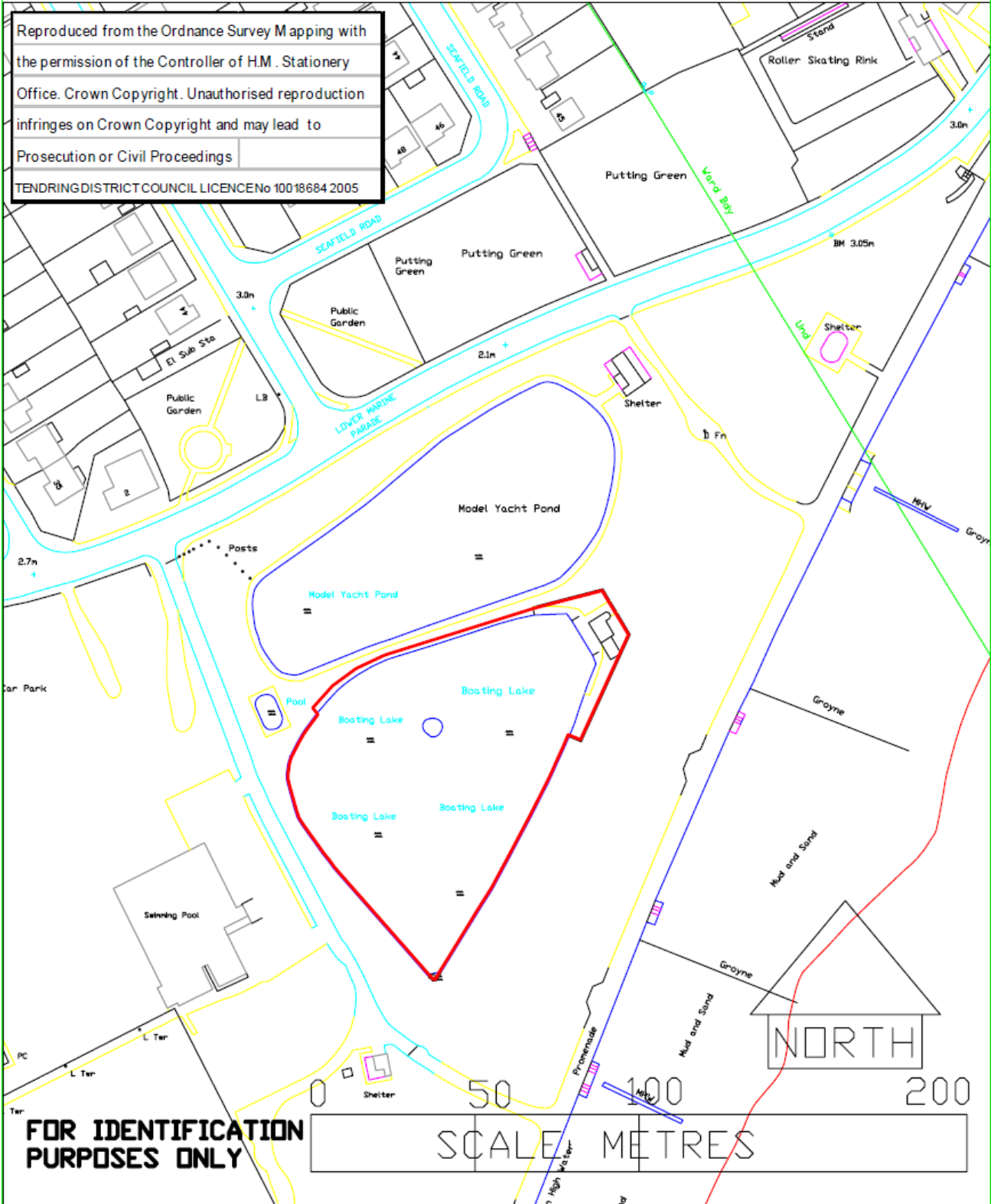
BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Location Plan

Appendix A: Location Plan



TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL
M, KNAPPETT
BA(hons). DMS.
HEAD OF CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

title: BOATING LAKE AT DOVERCOURT
drawing: LOCATION PLAN

scale:	1:1250
drawn by:	AR WHITE
date:	20 SEPT 10
drwg.No.	revision
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