

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2008
Subject:	Development of the Cedars Hall site, Uxbridge Road, Harrow
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director Community and Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Mote - Portfolio Holder Community and Cultural Services
Exempt	No – Part I
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Notes of meeting with Local Residents 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2008  Appendix 2: Notes of meeting held with Weald TRA, 8 April 2008.  Appendix 3: (Supplemental Papers) Notes of meeting with local residents 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2008  Appendix 4: Weald TRA draft proposal document.

## Section 1 – Summary And Recommendations

The report sets out the options available to the Council in respect of the development of the Cedars Hall site.

### RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is requested to consider the report and agree the action below:-

#### 1) Option 3 – Community Use hall –

- a) The Weald Tenants and Residents' Association (Weald TRA), acting as the lead group for all current "Community Use" interest in the Cedars Hall site, to submit a formal proposal for the development and management of the Cedars Hall site, as a "Community Hall". The proposal document must clearly demonstrate that there is reasonable prospect of the necessary capital funding of between £500,00 and £750,000, being secured.

The Weald TRA proposal to be submitted to the Council (Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services) no later than 30 June 2008.

- b) The Weald TRA to agree, with the Council's Estates Manager and Legal Department, the terms and form of the proposed legal documentation, including lease agreement – noting that the Council will require a commercial rent to be realised from the property.

The terms and form of the proposed legal documentation, including lease agreement, to be agreed with the Council no later than 31 July 2008.

- c) The Weald TRA to submit to the Council (Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services) for independent audit and validation, a comprehensive and long-term business plan (10 years), which clearly demonstrates that the "Community Hall" enterprise, can be financially viable and commercially successful over the long term, without any reliance on support, financial or otherwise, from the Council.

The Weald TRA business plan to be submitted to the Council no later than 31 July 2008.

- d) The Weald TRA to confirm, to the Council, no later than 30 November 2008, that they have secured all necessary capital resources, to enable the comprehensive refurbishment of the Cedars Hall site (internal and external), to enable it to be brought into use as a "Community Hall".

- e) The Weald TRA to submit a full planning application to the Council for the development of the Cedars Hall site no later than 30 November 2008.

- 2) If any of the above requirements are not realised, to agree that the Community Use hall option should be abandoned; this decision being taken by the Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Community and Cultural Services.

And, in this event, agree :

**3) Option 2 – Build houses – private housing**

Authorise the Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services, to conclude disposal of the cedars Hall site for residential development at best consideration, including placing all necessary advertisements; and

- 4) authorise Director, Community and Environment Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Community and Cultural Services to invest up to £100,000 from the sale proceeds, to improve local community facilities.

**REASON**

To enable the development of the derelict Cedars Hall site.

## Section 2 – Report

### Introduction

Cedars Hall and site has remained vacant since November 2006 when Wembley Rugby Club disbanded. It had originally been anticipated that the site could be used for the provision of Emergency Housing as a replacement to Amner Lodge. Cabinet have since determined that the site would not be suitable for such a use and this report therefore considers the range of potential alternative uses for this site.

It is clear that the site is becoming increasingly more derelict and will soon be an “eyesore”. It is absolutely essential that action is taken in a timely way to remedy this, and critically to prevent the broader adverse implications typically associated with derelict property.

There is a covenant on the land preventing its use without the previous written consent of the London County Council for any purpose other than as a public open space, a public recreation ground or a public sports ground, or for the erection of any buildings or structures as may be incidental thereto. Harrow Council has taken legal advice, which confirms that as statutory successor to the London County Council, the Council has the right to give or withhold consent to the use of the land and construction thereon of buildings for purposes other than those stated above.

## Vision and Corporate Priorities

This report considers options in line with the following Vision and Corporate Priorities :

1. Deliver cleaner streets, better environmental services and keep crime low;
3. Improve the well-being of adults and children and the care of those who most need our help;
5. Improve the way we work for our residents;
6. Develop communities where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

## Background

A consultation meeting with local residents, chaired by the Corporate Director Community and Environment Services, was held at Cedars Youth Centre on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

At this meeting residents gave their initial view in respect of the development options set out below. The feedback from residents is noted under each option and the notes of the meeting, which have been published on the Council's website, are attached with the report at Appendix 2.

A further consultation meeting with local residents, chaired by the Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services, was held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The key comments from residents will be reported verbally at Cabinet, during Members' consideration of this report. The notes of this meeting will be published on the Council's website, and copies of these notes will be circulated to members of Cabinet at Appendix 3, under cover of Supplemental Agenda Papers.

## Options

### 1. Create Open Amenity Space

Officer's advise that there is no requirement for such use in this location as there is sufficient in the surrounding area and with the nearby green belt land.

The Council would incur the cost of demolition, remediation and landscaping which are estimated at £75,000/£100,000. There will be no capital receipt against which these costs could be offset. Additionally, there will be ongoing maintenance costs with revenue budget implications in the order of £2,500 - £5,000.

*Resident feedback* – it was considered that additional open space was not necessarily needed, but this is one of the two options most readily supported by the local residents at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## **2. Build Houses**

### **a) Social Housing**

The site is large enough (approximately 0.19 of a hectare – 0.47 of an acre) to provide 30 flats or, alternatively, up to 10 houses.

The capital receipt for this type of scheme is very much dependant on the grant funding availability of the RSL, but is estimated in the region of £300,000 / £400,000.

Additionally, existing Section 106 monies could be paid to the RSL to enable a disposal on this basis to be at best consideration to the order of £1,250,000.

An element of the capital receipt say £50,000 / £100,000 could be used to enhance the Youth Centre, park and other local community facilities.

### **b) Social Housing in conjunction with the Hatch End Leisure Housing Development**

The Hatch End site would support a private development of high value, probably large detached, residential units. If the two sites were developed together then the affordable housing element could be built on the Cedars Hall site with a capital receipt in the region of £300,000 / £400,000.

An element of the capital receipt say £50,000 / £100,000 could be used to enhance the Youth Centre, park and other local community facilities.

The capital receipt for this type of scheme is dependant on the grant funding availability of the RSL. This could therefore range from a minimal sum up to a maximum of £500,000.

An element of the capital receipt could be used to enhance the adjacent Chicheley Youth centre and other local community facilities.

### **c) Local Housing Company**

The site could offer affordable housing through a new scheme of Local Housing Companies (LHC's). Councils will be able to offer their own deals for key workers and first time buyers through new homes built on their land.

Under such proposals, however, the land cost is taken out of the equation hence there would not be a capital receipt.

#### **d) Private Housing**

Given the desirable residential location and aspect over the adjacent park this would produce significantly the highest capital receipt.

The Council's Property Agents Allsop advise that generally for residential development land there is still strong demand up to £2m. Larger lot sizes above £2m have become more difficult to finance especially those above £5m. Allsops are consequently of the view that this site should sell well given its good location and aspect over park land.

The site is large enough to take approximately 9 houses and the sale would prohibit by restrictive covenant the development of the site for flats. The capital receipt for this type of scheme is estimated at £1,250,000.

Additionally, Section 106 funding estimated at £50,000 would be secured, which together with an element of the enhanced capital receipt say, £50,000 / £100,000 could be used to improve/ or extend the Youth Centre, enhance facilities in the park and/or develop other local community facilities.

*Resident Feedback* – the building of houses was not supported at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008. Residents commented that Social Housing would require the covenant to be revoked. The land was left by Lady Blackwell to LCC in lieu of death duties in 1957.

#### **3) Community Use/Hall**

The existing property is considered to be beyond economic repair and could not be let in its current condition.

The cost of refurbishment to a standard which meets the requirements of all current regulations is estimated at not less than the existing replacement cost. The cost of a replacement building of similar size (3370 sq. ft.) would be approximately £400,000 / £500,000.

Additionally, running costs of at least £50,000 per annum will need to be provided for within the revenue budget/business plan.

Initial Officer enquiries indicate that the Community Asset Fund, which offered grants for the transfer of assets into the Community, has now closed and will not re-open. Funding for either refurbishment or rebuilding will therefore be needed to be secured from other sources.

The Big Lottery Fund has in the past provided grants nationally for buildings under its Community Building Scheme however this closed in April 2007. For reference purposes: it provided funding up to £500,000 although for funding over £250,000 50% of the funding had to be found from alternatives sources. There are currently no specific grants for Community Buildings from the Big Lottery Fund, but Officers understand that a consultation stage is to be reopened to consider further community asset funding but that no dates have been agreed yet.

Other sources of capital grant funding, and loans, may exist. However, the Weald TRA will need to undertake all necessary research to access these. The effort required here is likely to be considerable and should not be underestimated.

The Corporate Director of Community and Environment has met with the Vice Chair of the Weald RTA and a representative of First Call Housing Foundation, an organisation appointed as consultants by Weald RTA and which generally supports Residents Associations, to hear details of what the TRA propose. The notes of this meeting are set out in Appendix 3 to this report. The TRA will require the support of the Council to the project in terms of surveying expertise, building design, planning application and time to secure grant funding. The TRA would also need the Council to transfer the freehold or grant a 125 year long leasehold interest in the property to the Weald TRA. The Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services, has advised the Weald TRA that the Council will not transfer the freehold of the property without realising “best consideration”. Weald TRA have submitted a draft proposal document, which is attached at Appendix 4.

Another option suggested by Officers, as referenced in Option 2(d), involves providing capital investment to extend the youth centre to provide additional community facility in particular to Weald TRA

*Resident Feedback* – this was the second option most readily supported the local residents at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

#### **4) Place of Worship**

The site may be suitable for the development of place of worship subject to compliance with the relevant UDP policies.

The capital receipt for this type of scheme is estimated at £600,000.

It is considered unlikely that there would be any Section 106 funding from such a proposal.

An element of the capital receipt say, £50,000 / £100,000 could be used to enhance the Youth Centre, park and other local community facilities.

*Resident Feedback* – this was not supported at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

#### **5) Retail Convenience Store**

The site is physically large enough to take for instance an “Express/local” type store, operated by the major retailers, of up to 3000sq.ft gross plus parking.

Planning Officers advise any retail use may need to pass a formal assessment to determine local need and viability for additional retail provision, which is called the “sequential test”, as laid out in PPS6. This test does not apply to small stores. The presence of the nearby superstore in Hatch End would preclude any major retail development. Additionally, it should be noted that the site is in a predominantly residential area and is outside a designated retail area.

The capital receipt for this type of scheme is estimated at £700,000.

Additionally, Section 106 funding estimated at £15,000 would be secured.

An element of the capital receipt say, £50,000 / £100,000 could be used to enhance the Youth Centre, park and other local community facilities.

*Resident Feedback* – this was not supported at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## **6) Heritage/Museum**

An initial approach has been made to the Council from the Cinema Museum who are currently looking for new premises.

An inspection was made recently by the Head of Service Cultural Services who has reported that Cedars Hall is not an option due to its size and condition.

*Resident Feedback* – this option was not presented at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## **7) Do Nothing**

This is an extremely unattractive option which ideally should not be taken forward by Members.

It is clear that the site is becoming increasingly more derelict and will soon be an “eyesore”. It is absolutely essential that action is taken in a timely way to remedy this, and critically to prevent the broader adverse implications typically associated with derelict property.

This approach would not generate a capital receipt.

The Council would retain responsibility for health, safety and security issues resulting in costs of at least £20,000 per annum.

*Resident Feedback* – this was not supported at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## **Consultation**

Extensive consultation has taken place with local residents and this will be ongoing as the planning for development progresses.



## **Legal Implications**

### **Best Consideration**

Under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 except with the consent of the Secretary of State a Council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.

However, the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 provides for the disposal of land at less than best consideration other than by way of a short tenancy in the following circumstances;-

The Local Authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of its area, or of all or any persons resident or present in its area:

- a) The promotion or improvement of economic well- being;
- b) the promotion or improvement of social well-being;
- c) the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being; and

The difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000.

### **Open Space**

Under Section 123(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, any disposal of land consisting or forming part of any open space would need to be advertised for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper, and any objections considered.

### **Title Considerations**

Residents state that the land was left by Lady Blackwell to LCC in lieu of death duties in 1957. However, title to the land passed to the Council in 1980 as statutory successor to the London County Council.

There is a restrictive covenant on the title not without the previous written consent of the London County Council to use or allow to be used the land or any part for any purpose other than as and for a public open space, a public recreation ground or a public sports ground or for the erection of any buildings or structures as may be incidental thereto. The Council has obtained legal advice to the effect that as statutory successor in title to the London County Council, the Council has the right to grant or withhold consent to use or building in contravention of the restrictive covenant.

## **Equalities Impact**

The proposals outlined in this report comply with Corporate Equalities Plan Section 2.1 Effective Consultation with Communities and Partners; 3.1 Equality in Service Access and Delivery; and 3.3 Equalities Impacts are built into Procurement arrangements

The strategic development of this land will enhance the quality of life for all sections of the community and has the potential therefore, to strengthen community cohesion through good public space and interaction. To ensure that services are fully accessible to all sections of Harrow's diverse community, equity and cultural sensitivity will be integral to the design, planning and implementation of the proposed developments of this land.

The Project Group are committed to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on the preferred option for redevelopment. The equality impact process should help identify any likely adverse impact on any specific group of users. Proposed consultation strategy will help inform individual action plans which will be monitored to ensure best practice and improved equalities outcomes.

## **Community Safety Implications (s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998)**

The property requires continual secure maintenance work with ongoing associated costs, and remains vulnerable to graffiti and unauthorised access. It is, therefore, essential that a quality development with due regards for "Section 17" is completed in a most timely way.

## **Performance Issues**

No BVPIs or NIs will be directly affected by the proposals.

However Option 2d will feed into improvements to :

NI 154 and 155 Nos of Affordable Homes delivered (Net and Gross)  
NI 159 Supply of ready to develop Housing Sites

Both of the recommended options meet the KLOE 3.2 in the Use of Resources Assessment

### **3.2 The organisation manages its assets effectively and sustainably to help deliver its strategic priorities and service needs.**

Evidence that the organisation:

- has a strategic approach to asset management based on an analysis of need to deliver strategic priorities, service needs and intended outcomes;

- manages its asset base to ensure that assets are fit for purpose and provide value for money; and works with partners to maximise the use of its assets for the benefit of the local community.

### Financial Implications

There are currently ongoing revenue costs in maintaining the property for which there is no budgetary provision.

A disposal of the site at best consideration would provide a positive capital receipt for the Council albeit that ultimately the anticipated disposal price might be affected by the state of the current financial markets.

### Section 3 – Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Sheela Thakrar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2008		
Name: Jessica Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 15 May 2008		

### Section 4 – Performance Clearance

Name Tom Whiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director (Strategy and Improvement)
Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2008		

### Section 5 – Contact details and background papers

**Contact:** Andrew Connell – Portfolio Surveyor Strategic Property on 0208 424 1259 or x2259, email [andrew.connell@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.connell@harrow.gov.uk)

#### **Background Papers:**

Minutes of Cabinet Meetings of 9th November 2006 and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007

**IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?**

1.	Consultation	YES/NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES /NO

### **CEDARS HALL PUBLIC MEETING**

**20 February 2008 at 8.00pm**

*Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director for Community and Environment, welcomed members of the public to the meeting. One of his responsibilities was the Council's property portfolio and he had circulated a note of the meeting in order to start a positive discussion regarding the future use of the Cedars Hall site. He introduced Councillors Tony Ferrari and Paul Scott, who represent Harrow Weald Ward. Councillor Robert Benson had sent his apologies. Councillor Susan Hall, the Portfolio Holder for Environment Services, was also in attendance.*

A verbatim record would not be taken at the meeting. The aim was to capture the key points of the discussion and to provide the opportunity for the public to raise ideas for the development of the site. The notes would be published on the website and provided to Ward Councillors. A copy would also be sent to members of the public who provided their contact details.

He proposed that the meeting be structured in three parts:

- Residents had contacted him concerning the arrangements that had led to the meeting;
- A discussion as to what residents would like to see on the site. A report would be submitted to the Cabinet in April which would set out all the options the property professionals had evaluated to enable the Cabinet to decide how to proceed. He would outline a list of suggestions for the site from the officers to gauge the opinions of the meeting; and
- The Councillors and residents to discuss the options put forward and the Councillors to wrap-up the discussion. All would have the opportunity to put forward views.

Paddy Lyne, Chairman of the Residents Association, referred to questions she had raised on the matter and asked which streets had received the letter concerning the arrangements for the meeting as a number of nearby streets had not been notified. She was informed that 500 letters had been delivered by Conservative Councillors. She queried why the Liberal Democrat Councillor had not been involved.

Andrew Trehern stated that if one of the ideas put forward by the residents was that they would like further engagement, he would ensure that by the time the report was submitted to Cabinet every reasonable practical opportunity had been taken for local residents to inform the report.

The residents stated the view that four days was insufficient notice for a public meeting. Andrew Trehern responded that, in retrospect, he would have liked the arrangements to have been more effective, but the important thing now was that the ideas of the residents were put forward.

A resident enquired how the housebound would be able to put their ideas forward. Andrew Trehern stated that the residents were aware of the specific needs within their community. Once the good ideas and question and answer list was available the distribution would be able to include the housebound if the Council was advised of their details – they would have the opportunity to write in and, if they were unable to write, an officer would visit to help them.

In response to a question as to why the local residents association was not contacted it was stated that initially dialogue was being undertaken with residents immediately surrounding the site, but consultation would also take place with representative groups.

Councillor Ferrari stated that as a Ward Councillor he had considered that a meeting should be held with residents on the subject and had had 500 copies of a letter advertising the meeting printed and delivered. If 500 had been insufficient, more could be produced another time. He hoped that the discussions could be taken forward with cross-party support.

Councillor Paul Scott stated that whilst he had been unhappy with the scale of the original notification and had brought it to the attention of Andrew Trehern, he was happy to work with Councillor Tony Ferrari and Councillor Susan Hall.

Following further concerns on the distribution of the notification from residents, Andrew Trehern undertook to discuss with the three Ward Councillors, the roads to be included in any future distribution; the community groups to be contacted; and timescales for notification. He undertook to discuss with Access Harrow how those who were unable to attend a public meeting could put forward their views. The Harrow Observer and free papers were suggested by a resident.

## QUESTIONS/COMMENTS AND ANSWER SESSION

Q - A resident referred to the mess on the site and stated that three days ago, three fridges had been left standing on the corner.

A - Planning on the future of the site had previously been based on demolition of the structure so other than security fencing the Council had not been spending money on it.

Q - Where would the money come from?

A – Any development would be undertaken in partnership with another organisation. Whether that is achievable would be a key feature of the appraisal regarding affordability.

Q – Lady Blackwell left 50% and in 1972 50% was raised by the residents.

A – Whilst the structure existed there was a benefit to the community and now the next phase was being considered.

Q – How can you say that the Council owns it then?

A – The Council is acting on behalf of the community.

Q – What about our 50%?

A – The local community has had the benefit of the facility for over 20 years.

Q – The residents paid so why do we not get it free?

A- I will take the question away and will ensure that you get an answer. The land was appropriated to the Council for community use.

Q – If the residents could take it over themselves and make it a charity would the Council refurbish it?

A – The Council will engage in any sustainable proposition.

Q – I attended a course where we met two women who had done this in Westminster.

A – It is one of the options that can be looked into as part of the appraisal. If you or any of your neighbours want to look at how this can be taken forward you will need to meet with the officers quickly. It will need to be a sustainable proposition.

Q – You could include the objectors to the original planning application in your list of addresses.

A – Thank you for the suggestion

Andrew Trehern suggested that the meeting consider suggestions for the development of the site. A list of initial suggestions compiled by the estate team was read out:

1. Open space – it was considered that additional open space was not necessarily needed.

Q – This would not bring income into the Council

A – It is a significant issue but not the only one.

2. Social housing. This was not supported by the meeting.

Comment that social housing would require the covenant to be revoked but if it became social housing there would be even more social housing without gaps. It was left by Lady Blackwell to LCC in lieu of death duties in 1957. If you build any form of housing it will gradually be all housing.

3. Private residential housing – this was not supported for the same reasons as social housing above.

4. Leisure development on the Hatch End Site – it would be a substantial leisure centre

Q – Where would we be able to park then?

A – If this was taken forward the Council would look at some housing development on the site with a possible link with housing on this site.

5. Let the property for community use. This could be organised through existing organisations or a new group. I will ensure access to officers to discuss funding but you will need to move fast.

Q – Why do we need to move fast?

A – Because the development currently on the site is an eyesore.

Q – Why do you not advise communities on how to apply for grant?

A – That is what I am offering you

Q – April is not long enough to set up a charity.

A – We can get to a high level view quite quickly as to whether you could put together a sustainable proposition. If so Members could consider the option in April and if it embraces it then detailed planning can take place.

Q – Could the Tenants Association approach it?

A – If it were not a serious proposition it would not be on the list.

6. A place of worship. This was not supported. It was noted that the Council had extensive demands from religious groups for property

Q – What sort of groups

A – All denominations: Christian, Jewish, Hindu, etc.

Q – You mention several religious groups, has there been an approach from any of them?

A – There has been no specific approach for religious use of this site but groups are keen to have land in Harrow. The site has not been marketed in any way.

Q – Is there pressure from groups for land?

A – It is the Council's policy to take any land for disposal to auction in order to realise best value

7. Retail development. This was not supported.

8. To do nothing – the building is an eyesore and something needs to be done.

The residents were asked for their suggestions as to how to proceed with the land.

S - Approach Watford Football Club as they have a successful programme and it could enable the youth centre to enlarge. It is not on your list.

A – It is an officer list only

S-there is a great lack of something for older people – a need for a day centre. Need for items for the extreme spectrums of the population.

S-young mothers and babies, mother and toddlers, coffee mornings, Kickboxing, community-run activities.

Q- What is the condition of the interior, it is not used in its present state

A – Even if a similar configuration was proposed we would need to look at demolition.

Q – What about the actual outside skin?

A – The configuration does not lend itself to flexible use. There are different levels – we need to ensure that there is access for everyone.

Q – Have you looked at sponsors?

A – No we haven't. Sponsors for what. The Watford Football Club proposal is sponsorship.

Q – A multi community centre – elderly, kids. If you get someone to put it up, can we have it?

A – There is the Community Asset Scheme. A critical part of that is the concept of sustainability for these issues.

Q – If it was by grant and we did not buy it who would get the revenue?

A – The concept of free use does not work as you will need a substantial income stream to sustain it.

S - Use for polling and other groups to enable provision of free facilities

S -There are 3 PFI initiatives in the borough for resource centres – what about a fourth resource centre?

A – These are shared services between the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Council. The Council's resource centres are typically adult social care.

S - Get the Health Authority involved

S – A Healthy Living Centre

Q - Would the Council take it forward for £1?

A – *This approach relates to the Government's Community Assets' Scheme and we would be prepared to consider whether a sustainable partnership could be taken forward.*

Q – Could there be a feasibility study from independent people to look at the cost of refurbishment and rebuilding?

A – I will ensure that the report to Cabinet covers the cost of refurbishment and the benefits of refurbishment but these would probably not be for the long term. We need to find ways of helping you develop specialisms to take it forward.

Q – The profit would need to go back in. Would we have to pay you rent?

A – *Under the Community Asset Scheme you would not need to pay rent. If the property is demolished and there is a community scheme that is not part of the Community Asset Scheme then there would be a long lease with a ground rent determined by the Valuation Office, normally on a five yearly basis, which is reviewed relevant to the value of the property. (NOTE: The Community Assets' Scheme applies to the refurbishment of existing property – not the development of new buildings).*

Q – What about exemptions?

A – NNDR rebates can be available to charities.

Q – The Council is strapped for cash. Why is it necessary to sell it as it could be assimilated into open space for football, tennis courts?

A – No decision on the future of the site had been taken.

The Council still has an overarching role to facilitate community development. The Council heard your views about the previous scheme my team put forward and rejected it. My job as an officer is to take your suggestions forward to members together with suggestions from my team and it is for the Members to decide which option they would wish to be developed.



Q – What if the Cabinet rubbishes our proposals?

A- If the Cabinet decides that none of the options put forward are suitable I expect that it would say what sort of things it would like to think about with a local developer. I would expect to receive a list with a business case

Q – If the building was not there, would this discussion be taking place or would it be left as open space? Other areas that are smaller have pavilions on.

A – Building on parks is exceptionally difficult to do. The Portfolio Holder and I have a duty to protect the environment but this land is already built on. There are no plans to build on parks.

*Q – It was originally open space under the 1906 Open Spaces Act. It would be building on land built under covenant for community use. If houses are built on it some of us will probably go for judicial review.*

Q - It is such a short time for people to get together, you don't give us much time

A – It is a genuine offer of assistance to the lady. I know what needs to be done and I think the April deadline is achievable.

Q –If the Council had had a reasonable working relationship with Genisis it would have gone ahead

A – The Cabinet heard your views.

Q – When the officers put together a report and make recommendations, will Cabinet vote? When planning applications are submitted, the plan is made public, officers do a studied report and the public are given time to comment, there is no such mechanism for Cabinet. We want the facility to comment in detail.

A – I said earlier that I was prepared to attend a further meeting to go forward with captured feedback from you for Cabinet. In the notes I will give a proposal on how we can engage residents once the report is drafted

Q – Is the planning process bypassed?

A – Definitely not.

Q – Will your paper prioritise and analyse and provide recommendations?

A – The Council is subject to the same planning requirements as everyone else. Part of the options appraisal is whether the concept is in accordance with the planning process.

Q – So it goes to planning down the line?

A – Whichever development goes into the business case and if building is proposed then it will go into the planning system before the land is generated.

Q – Can you ask the Cabinet for an extension of time?

A – The report to Cabinet may have more than one option so I suggest it comes back when it has been worked through with partners.

Councillor Paul Scott outlined the process for the 10 April Cabinet including the fact that members of the public could attend and ask questions. If the site subsequently went to the planning committee the public could attend

Q- Would part of the Cabinet meeting be in Part 11?

A – It would be a Part 1 report as there were not any confidential issues at this time.

Comment – residents should be cautious to agree just to demolish and leave the land, it would be better to ensure that there was something on the site that was of benefit to the community. The people of Harrow Weald gave the money to build the hall but we never had a return on our investment so this could be used by us, about £60k.

Councillor Tony Ferrari undertook that he would ensure residents had adequate time to assess the plans and he would ensure that the consultation was broad and extensive.

Q – If the meeting is 10 April and the same notice is given as for planning then the report will need to be published to the public by 20 March.

A – It will be a tough target. I will inform you how much time is available and perhaps talk to the Ward Councillors to arrange a further date. This could be organised with a smaller group. It may not be three weeks but residents will be given reasonable notice.

Q – Whichever project is selected, will the Council fund it?

A – No funding had been set aside for the development of this site so the financial consequences had to be borne in mind

Q – If the 20 March deadline is difficult, could we suggest the Council need to act quickly as we have been asked.

A – It was intended that there would be good engagement to capture good feedback resulting in a well structured document

In summary the residents were thanked for attending the meeting and for the positive way they had put forward ideas.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

## Appendix 2

### Minutes from a meeting held on 8 April 2008 between the Weald RTA and Harrow Council

Present: Lee Choules – Vice Chair Weald TRA  
Ewemade Orobator – First Call Housing Foundation  
Andrew Trehern – Corporate Director Harrow Council  
Belinda Prichard – Strategic Property - Harrow Council

1. Lee Choules attended as the Vice Chair and representative of the Weald RTA, willing to lead a community project to bring Cedars Hall in Community Use. First Call Housing Federation is an Agency, which provides support to residents groups. Ewemade Orobator will provide support to the TRA in working up a plan for the property.
2. Lee outlined that the strong feeling from neighbours and residents, that the hall should provide a multiuse community centre. The area was lacking in facilities and activities for both the elderly and young people. The Youth Club offered space at £50 per hour, but the TRA wanted Cedars Hall to provide accommodation at three levels; nil cost, subsidised cost or full rate. The TRA's vision was a centre that provided the following types of use/accommodation:
  - Provide space for hire such as line dancing, art exhibition space, etc, at full cost.
  - Office suites to support new businesses. The Centre would provide serviced style accommodation at a subsidised rent between a peppercorn (nil rent) to market rent.
  - Private Members Club – there is an identified in the community for such a facility. It would remain a private members club, not to be let out for parties and functions. The income generated from this would subsidise other activities. Money towards the internal refurbishment could be provided by the brewery in a retro payment scheme, Courage were active in this regard.
  - Business Suites, which would provide computers with Internet access for the local community. There would be free computer courses for the elderly and desktop publishing courses. Cards could be produced for sale with proceeds going to the Centre.
  - An enterprise scheme for the youth population teaching about marketing, finance, and teamwork with - again - profits being ploughed back into the Centre.
  - Activities for disabled groups.

The TRA do not want the Centre to act as a money-making machine but for activities to subsidise one another.

3. Andrew explained that the Council had estimated that the cost of refurbishment was high and that in the Council's opinion it equalled the cost of rebuilding the Centre, estimated at £500k. The Council had made enquiries with the Big Lottery and Department for Communities and Local Government and understood that there would be no further funding from the Community Assets Fund as this was a one-off grant.
4. Ewemade explained that the TRA would make applications to the Community Buildings Fund from the Big Lottery and other charitable organisations such as Esme Fairburn and Lloyds TSB. These groups would also provide funding for revenue costs such a staffing. Any grant application would need to be seen as a partnership between the Council and TRA and that the TRA and First Call welcomed the support being given by the Council.
5. Lee explained that the TRA had already approached Watford Football Club and Kier Construction who had agreed to support the project. Kier would be able to provide professional services and possibly materials.
6. Andrew asked what the TRA needed from the Council to achieve their goal. Lee asked for:
  - Access to the building for a surveyor to inspect. This is currently being arranged.
  - Cabinet support from the project in terms of surveying expertise, building design, planning application and time to secure grant funding. The TRA would also need the Council to transfer the freehold or a 125 year long leasehold interest in the property to the organisation.

### (Supplemental Papers) Notes of meeting with local residents 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008

#### **CEDARS HALL PUBLIC MEETING**

**7 May 2008 at 7.00pm**

*Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director for Community and Environment welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and introduced Councillor Robert Benson, Councillor Tony Ferrari and Councillor Paul Scott, who represent Harrow Weald Ward. Andrew Trehern had circulated copies of the report which would be presented to Cabinet on 21 May. He reminded the residents that public questions for Cabinet must be submitted before 5pm on 16 May.*

It was proposed that the meeting would be structured as follows:

- That Andrew Trehern present the report to the public and discuss the recommendation to be put forward to Cabinet.
- In response to Andrew Trehern's presentation, the residents would ask questions of both himself and the Councillors.

*After a brief introduction, the residents engaged Andrew Trehern in a question/comments and answers session:*

A resident commented that a letter sent by themselves on 18 April had yet to be answered, adding that the lack of communication represented one of the biggest problems with the future of Cedars Hall. She enquired as to where the Council had drawn the main points and figures of the report from, and suggested that the Council had already made up their mind on the future of the site, irrespective of the report being sent to Cabinet. The resident expressed her dissatisfaction in regards to the previously proposed distribution of consultation leaflets to the surrounding area and queried whether the actual amount promised had indeed been sent out. She concluded in commenting that generations of residents had put a great deal of effort into the site and that if the land was sold, then it would be fair that the community received a share of revenue for future schemes.

Q – Why does the Council not reply to any letters and emails?

A – All letters should be addressed to Democratic Services; replies have been sent to every email and letter, except the resident's letter dated 18 April.

The resident commented that they had paid to send their letter by recorded delivery and that it was impolite not to reply. Andrew Trehern responded that, since concerns about the distribution of consultation were raised at the last meeting, the same company that distributed Harrow People would be used for further consultations with residents. He hoped that this effort illustrated a willingness to work with the community.

Q – Why do we have to come up with more money than the Council for site development?

A – The cost of refurbishment or knocking down and rebuilding is the same amount, with the ongoing maintenance costs somewhere in the region of £5,000. The figure reported for taking over Cedars Hall was sourced from the residents and tenants association themselves.

Q – Why should there be a cost to the tenants?

A – We are not asking individuals for money. The report is a response to the community's idea for a community centre. After the Government closed down funding schemes, a very constructive meeting was had with the tenants and residents association. As a result, the residents and tenants association have pulled together the groundwork in support of option one within the report.

In response to a comment that the Wealdstone Tenants and Residents Association (WTRA) only covered a certain number of the roads surrounding the Cedars Hall site, Andrew Trehern confirmed that the Council was asking the WTRA to become the 'umbrella body' for the proposals, which represented all of the local interests.

In response to a resident's request for an explanation of option one within the report, Andrew Trehern confirmed that:

- The Community Assets Scheme, which sought to bring derelict buildings back into use, had been closed down by the Government.
- A lottery-funded Community Premises Scheme had also been closed down by the Government.
- The WTRA must put forward their proposal by 30 June.
- The WTRA would have to liaise with Council and legal officers about the terms relevant to the business plan by the end of July.
- The WTRA would have to advise the Council by November if their bid had been successful.
- There were still some figures missing from the proposal, but that he felt there was plenty of time to rectify this before 30 June. The tenants had thus far organised themselves, responded to the opportunity, and created a community focused report.

Q – Why have our questions not been answered?

A – After I found out that some roads were missed out from the distribution, I arranged for the company's distribution manager to knock on doors. As a result, a further three roads were leafleted. This is a reasonable response to comments.

Q – How much would option one of the report cost overall?

A – Between £500,000 and £750,000.

Q – Why the rush for the recommendation to Cabinet?

A – If we can't get the scheme off the ground then we will have to look into selling and developing the land. If option one was run with then the number of houses on the site would be restricted to nine for private sale. The report demonstrates what I have heard at meetings and this is what I will present to Cabinet.

Q – What does the Cabinet Grant mean?

A – Money is needed to be secured by the community. The WTRA have been looking at other sources, such as secure loans and subsidy based resources. It's about community security - a lease for the site from the Council. The community has to set up a commercial business to meet the financial demands.

Q – How much would the rent be for the site?

A – We're unsure. There could be a reduced rent for the period of start-up. We want methods that contribute to Harrow as a whole.

Q – Will the Council be giving any money to option one of the report? Why is the Council not going to fund this? There have been empty properties in Long Elms for five years and nothing has been done about them.

A – The report contains all of the commercial figures. These figures are usually confidential and have been made public in an effort to build trust.

Q – If the scheme became a charity, would this change some of the costs? Some charities only have to pay for rates. If you sell the land for £1.25m, how much of this will come back to the community?

A – If the enterprise achieved charitable status, the tax and ratings would change. But charity status and Council subsidy do not always run smoothly together. The application would have to go to the Grants Advisory Panel and be submitted in September. If the land was sold then £100,000 would be made available for local community services. My job is about maximising the Council's assets. If you want to change the amount that the community will receive back from the sale then you need to lobby your local Councillors.

Q – Have you spoken to the WTRA about charitable status?

A – Yes.

Q/C – I have talked to people in business, and if the land is to be used for houses then it should be valued closer to £2m. Why not use cross fertilization from other schemes? If the land at other sites, which are being sold off around the borough are sold with planning permission, then more capital could be generated. This money could be used for the Cedars Hall site.

A – We could push to generate that much money, but that would result in building 35 flatted units on the site. At the last meeting residents indicated that they didn't want major developments. We've moved forward with a sensitive proposition. If the land was sold

the money would come into the Council's coffers and earn interest. The money would sit in the revenue account and not the capital account, which helps determine your Council tax. Cross fertilization does happen. Selling the land with planning permission would result in more houses being built. The communities react when they see dense developments. The Council has to be even-handed.

Q – Is my report that I submitted being included in the report, which is being submitted to Cabinet?

A – Not yet, it can be appended.

Q – How can the Cabinet make their decisions without the (above questioner's) report? The support from the planners and architects is not in the report to Cabinet. We don't have the money for this. The commercial rent will scupper the scheme for us before it starts.

A – The report is needed by 30 June. The yet-to-be-appended report had some interesting key facts. Regarding the issue of rent, the freehold transfer would not happen. You've come forward with a proposal and the request for peppercorn rent. The decision that Cabinet makes regarding rent is dependant on the detail of the lease agreement. We have to agree these details to facilitate objectives.

Q/C – If the rent is more than £40,000 then that would be too much.

A – The request was made for peppercorn rent.

Q - What about the European Social Fund (ESF) and support from the Council?

A – We'd give you planning advice and access to surveyors - this is 'high level' support. We'll not draw all your plans, but we'd help facilitate your development. ESF could be a source of main funding. We'd give you support to help you secure the funding, but not do it for you.

Q – The timeframes are tight and are not making it very easy. WTRA have only £4,000 in the bank. We've no funds for plans specifications, time to get grants, and we can't afford to pay for services. We can do reports, but maybe not in time for the deadlines. We've managed to secure £8,000 of services, but the companies would not be able to act until they have seen our plans. How can we achieve this?

A – The report is my interpretation of what was asked at the last meeting. If members agree, you have a platform for your proposal. We've given you milestones, and we will meet my side of the bargain then it is up to you to make the opportunity.

Q – As you don't have the rights to put forward a proposal then why waste time? Why not tell us about the covenant? You're trying to set up hurdles for people who have no way of succeeding. Why take this proposal to Cabinet?

A – We would not produce a report that didn't contain a reasonable understanding of the law. It is based on the legal advice we have been given. We don't want that eyesore, we want something sustainable.



Q – Where can we get word on the covenant and where can we get word of what you can do on it? Would the Council give the money to the community? If so, how much? You gave £300,000 to the community project in South Harrow, which has been very successful.

A – The £300,000 was for additional sports facilities for a beacon centre. The money was given during a time when we thought that there was more cash available. Now we are much more restrained.

Q – Why did you not send the information on the covenant to the lady who sent the letter on 18 April when your department sent it to me straight away?

A – The lady in question sent many questions within that letter and my colleagues are working on replying to them all.

Q – I'm concerned you are selling the freehold on this land. Is this the case?

A – That is option two of the report.

Q/C – The covenant relates to the whole of the land. You are seeking to sell land and remove the covenant, which includes the areas which you are not selling. Theoretically, the park could also go. Ealing Council was defeated over such a matter. This building, when it becomes non-functional, will become homes. You will have to go to the land tribunal. The Council will have stiff opposition and it will run for a long time. We are concerned if there is no feasible way for the community centre. How it was run before was not very good.

A – The two previous enterprises at the site had been failures. The report makes the recommendation that the covenant could be overturned. Our legal team have advised us that this would be successful. You could challenge the decision - we have a good record of decision making in Harrow. We are looking to remove an eyesore.

A Harrow resident reported that a charity was established in Harrow six years ago and that the timescales for the proposal in the report were not viable. She added that the last thing she wanted to do is set up something in opposition to the proposed community centre, but could offer limited community use. Her organisation was in need of space, but the services would be for all of Harrow and not just the surrounding area. The project could not run with the WTRA's proposals on a full-time basis. The resident added that there are other alternatives, which could be put to Councillors.

Q/C – £1.25m is nonsense, as you can't realise it. There are the legal costs of overturning the covenant. There are the public objections, too. The value of the land is nothing. Your contribution of £100,000 is too low. It should be for more, but not just cash, but in facilitation; bringing groups together. We need practical help, not just 'top-level' help. The land is valueless and we are helping keep it in use with the covenant.

A – My colleagues have the opinion that the land has value. We are looking for sustainable community use.

Q/C – This is a stand off. You should be proud that the community wants something, and that we want to work together. It's worth more than money. It's for our children, our grandchildren and us. We can work together. The community centre is the heart of the community. Harrow is becoming a concrete city.

A – I believe that my report recommends this to Members. I was impressed with the work done by the WTRA. I'm confident that it can 'grow legs'.

Q – In your professional opinion, could the whole of the land park be lost?

A – Yes. The entire Council, staff members, Members, defend parks to the hilt. There are other developments in open spaces, but these are community developments. These are 21st Century facilities for the youngsters and the most vulnerable of the community.

Q – Why can that not be done at Cedars Hall?

A – Because of size and practicality.

Q – Why can't we do it ourselves?

A – You have time to put together the proposal.

Q – Would the planned houses encroach on the park?

A – The proposed footprint would not be over 1mm of the current land's footprint.

Q/C – Our proposals are multi-faceted. They help the elderly, the young, families, the unemployed, etc. What we are proposing to provide is something that you can't put value on. It is value for Harrow Council. There is innovation and partnership that has not even been thought of. You are not supporting it 100%. You should be supporting it financially from start to finish. The Cabinet timeframe needs to be amended. We want to hear what Members have to say.

A – I will not be amending my report. I will append your report to it. You can challenge this at public question time. This is your opportunity, including the submission of petitions, also. At Council and Cabinet you will get the opportunity to word your petition.

Q – The report says that the building is an eyesore. Surely this is the Council's fault?

A – The leaseholder had the responsibility of the upkeep. This is a typical Council lease. We are taking a robust approach to the management of assets. These are the responsibilities under the terms of the lease and they must be met. We must retain the value of our assets.

Q – Who is the leaseholder?

A – There isn't one. The leaseholder went bust. It is not up to the Council to maintain the site. We have to look at the total costs. We are not pouring money into an asset that is not sustainable.

Q – What about the property in Long Elms?

A – Empty properties cause problems. We are looking to work with the community.

Q – Why, in the report, does it say the information has to be published two weeks prior in a local newspaper?

A – This is action that we have to take.

Q – Does the Council acknowledge that this is ‘open-space’ land?

A – What I want is the WTRA to generate viable use for the site. The plan produces ways in which to overcome the hurdles. I will be supportive. The focus of this event is to make option number one fly. I’ve asked that a two-stage independent audit will assess your forward plans and proposals to decide whether they are viable.

Q – How can we build a plan if we are not given an agreed figure on the market rent?

A – You’re right ; you can’t.

Q – You’re wrapping it (the site) up.

A – We must take sensible steps. This is what we are trying to achieve. It is not something frivolous.

Q – We would need professional help to produce the first report. Where do you suppose we’d get this for nothing?

A – Present your proposal to Andrew Trehern, detailing what your needs are, and he will respond on what he can offer. It is entirely reasonable to ask.

Q/C – 30<sup>th</sup> June is unreasonable. Our consultants won’t do anything until 21<sup>st</sup> May, and then I’m going to be away in the first week of June.

A – Any letters sent to Democratic Services will be submitted to Cabinet. You can make your proposals via Democratic Services to Cabinet in the form of a question. Andrew will not change his report.

Q – Asking questions at Cabinet is not adequate.

A – It is the way the structure is set up.

Q/C – You could give more time to the process.

A – We will not touch any other part of the park.

Q/C – That doesn't mean that your successor will stick to that. Would the Council sign a new restricted covenant?

Paul Scott commented that if the site was not for community use then it is a non-starter, and that option two of the report is unacceptable. He added that he felt the proposals were good, but didn't see how it would achieve the timetable. The residents would not get any money as the building is on the disposal list. He felt that the Council are not interested in spending money with this project but making money. He commented that Andrew Trehern was in a difficult position in trying to balance things. He added that he wanted something that enhanced the park, and that if option one was not viable then the Council should turf the site, plant trees and look at it again when they had more money. That option would not be recommended because it would not make the Council any money. He concluded that he felt the Council thought the residents might give up over the covenant, due to the time it would take in the courts.

Q – When is the approach to the land tribunal going to be?

A – Nothing will happen until the process goes through, although we could move to disposal sooner than that if the milestones fail. It could be within six weeks depending on the tribunal's workload. We are endeavouring to bring a difficult property situation to resolution.

Q – The Genesis Proposal was put forward in a haphazard manner. That went to the land tribunal. Is the Council proposing to go to the land tribunal before they sell the land?

A – We would need to ensure that the land could be sold unencumbered, so yes.

Q/C – The announcements have been in the Harrow Times and not the Observer, which is the most widely read of the two. I suggest that you come to an agreement with the Observer. Even Brent advertises in our paper. We want to see it happening.

A – The Council has an agreement with the Harrow Times, which lasts for a certain duration. I will take that comment back to colleagues.

Q/C – You don't need to have an arrangement to put things in papers.

Q/C – There were two resident options. One of which was not to sell the land. You're not pushing the residents' option of having the land turned into a park. You're not pushing that.

A – The report details what the clerk has recorded. We are trying to make it clear it was your second preference.

Q – When will the report papers be published?

A – On the 14<sup>th</sup> May with the Cabinet papers.

## CEDARS HALL REFURBISHMENT PROPOSAL

Harrow Council  
Report to Cabinet  
Date: 21 MAY 2008

<b>Report for Directorate:</b>	Community and Environment
<b>Portfolio(s):</b>	David Ashton - Leader, and Strategy, Partnership and Finance; Susan Hall - Deputy Leader, and Environment Services; Christine Bednell - Children's Services; Anjana Patel - Schools and Children's Development; Marilyn Ashton - Planning, Development and Enterprise; Chris Mote - Community and Cultural Services; Barry Macleod-Cullinane - Adults and Housing; Tony Ferrari - Major Contracts and Property
<b>Title:</b>	Land at Harrow Weald, Cedars Hall
<b>Proposed Lease to:</b>	Harrow Weald TRA
<b>Report Author:</b>	Lee Choules, Vice Chairman, Harrow Weald TRA
<b>Wards affected by use:</b>	Harrow Weald, Hatch End, Headstone North, Headstone South, Wealdstone

### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

This report seeks consent for the granting of a building agreement and 60 year lease in respect of xx hectares, or thereabouts, of land at Cedars Hall, Chicheley Road, Harrow Weald, HA3 6QH (shown hatched on the plan attached as Appendix A), on terms outlined in this report so for the following proposed use of the land for considerable community benefit.

### **2.0 Summary of Proposal**

The following summary is from the full proposal prepared by Lee Choules, Vice Chairman of the Weald TRA, and spokesperson for the committee and local residents, who wish to manage Cedars Hall on behalf of a consortium of Community Organisations. The main detail is outlined in Paragraph 5.0 of this Report.

- The proposal is for the provision of a multi-purpose Community and Social Centre run by the Harrow Weald TRA in conjunction with a community consortium. The users will reflect the proudly diverse nature of Harrow. Priority beneficiaries the elderly, the young, families, the unemployed, people living with disabilities and religious groups.

- The theme will be “Your place to receive support towards work, to learn, play and pray”. This means a plethora of social, educational, training and recreational opportunities, as well as meeting rooms for the Residents Associations and Local Groups for recreational and/or religious purposes.
- It is proposed that Weald TRA would provide the transitional management of the Centre, overseeing the letting, use, finances, governance and sustainability of the Centre. However, a Community Management Team will ultimately manage the Centre on a day-to-day basis. This may include representatives from Watford Football Club, who are currently providing a major football programme (“Kickz”) in the area as well as representatives from the local community. Examples include leaders from the Cedars Youth Club and Kier, major works provider for Harrow Council who wish to encourage training and apprenticeship as a result of the Centre's refurbishment and continual development.
- Appendix B indicates the projected Cash flow for the Centre over the first 3-year period. This shows estimated net profit of between £100,000-£120,000 over the term. This is based on anticipated income from the users' profile highlighted in Paragraph 5.0 of this report.

## **2. Site History**

The site has a history of being used as a Community Centre going back to 1967. A planning application was submitted LBH/1972 for Erection of Community Centre and extension to car park. In 1968 a further application LBH/1972/1 was granted for the erection of a Community Hall. In 1975 a further application LBH/1972/3 was granted for a single storey building on the site. The Council has always supported the use of this site for Community Use, so our proposal is completely in line with historical uses and would continue the use of the land as existing. The planning history dictates that the local community have had a need for this kind of facility and it has been utilised well, with the demand on facilities having risen to accommodate the needs of the local people.

### **2.2. Financing the Development of Cedars Hall**

The site would need a minimum of £750,000 to bring it up to date and fit for purpose and for initial staffing and capital costs. Please see Appendix B for a three-year cash flow projection which confirms how the site will be self funding after this initial investment. External funding is being pursued and preliminary discussions with potential funders, such as Friends Provident, has identified a source of capital and revenue funding that could attract up to £200,000. In addition, we would like the Council to explore and partner a bid to the European Social Fund and others.

Weald TRA and the Community Consortium understand that support from the Council would be conditional on suitable external funding being identified and being agreed by a date set by Cabinet, if a number of other alternative uses for the site, are not to be given priority consideration.

If sufficient time is granted, we are confident of identifying suitable funding routes. The TRA also wishes to recognise the ongoing support that is being offered by the Council in terms of officer time and resources. Officers of the Council have been supporting the development of this proposal in terms of provision of access to the site, discussing and liaising with community representatives over the development plans, offering planning support and advice, reviewing the refurbishment proposals and offering logistical support.

We would ask that this support continues as well as the Council making available to us the services of the Council's planners, architects and design services with respect to providing plans and technical services.

### **3.0 Relationship to Council Plan priorities**

The proposed grant of a building agreement and lease supports a proposed development that links with the following Council Plan priorities:

- Theme 1 - Create positive futures for children and young people
- Theme 2 - Improve well-being.
- Theme 3 - Regenerate our Borough
- Theme 4 - Strengthen our communities
- Theme 5 - Increase organisational effectiveness

### **4.0 Recommendations**

We ask Cabinet to recommend: -

- 4.1 Agree that, subject to paragraph 2.2 of this Report being successfully pursued, a building and refurbishment agreement with a 60-year lease at peppercorn rent be granted to Weald TRA in respect of xx hectares, or thereabouts, of land at Cedars Hall, Chicheley Road, Harrow Weald, as shown hatched on the plan attached as appendix A, on terms outlined in this report (See para 5.1).
- 4.2 Authorise the Corporate Director, Community and the Environment, to agree the precise site boundaries to be made available under the proposed agreement and lease, taking into consideration negotiations relating to adjoining land and all relevant title, environmental, highway and planning matters. The Council making available to Weald TRA the services of the Councils planners, architects and design services with respect to providing plans and technical services.
- 4.3 Authorise the Valuation and Asset Manager to deal with all ancillary matters arising consistent with the principles of these recommendations and in accordance with the Council's legal and financial regulations.

### **5.0 Information**

Weald Tenants and Residents Association, in conjunction with the local community, wish to refurbish Cedars Hall, to a multi purpose Community and Social Centre, for the use by the population of Harrow Weald, which will include facilities for the elderly, the young, families, the unemployed, disabled and ethnic population, for which Harrow Weald is proudly diverse.

## 5.0 Information –contd.

We wish to provide social, educational, training and recreational opportunities, as well as meeting rooms for the Residents Associations and Local Groups. Social opportunities by providing 'clubs' for families and the elderly, the unemployed, a bar lounge area for the entire community to socialise. Education by providing classes such as 'silver surfers' internet training for the elderly, lectures and lessons for the elderly and families such as Line dancing classes, welfare benefits sessions, crime prevention, hobbies and so on. Opportunities for the young to join a club or activity, learn a skill and develop new interests, such as Scouts, Judo, decorating and plumbing. Opportunities for the disabled to come to an accessible venue and take part in any activity that is on offer and provide a meeting place for new or existing disabled groups in Harrow Weald. Provide Ethnic groups' meeting rooms for any leisure and religious purposes.

The opportunity to provide permanent accommodation, for Weald TRA (and Hatch End TRA, which seeks to amalgamate with Weald TRA), by way of an office/committee room. Weald TRA has no permanent base, even though it is the largest Council-funded Residents Association in Harrow. Recently we were approached with a request by Hatch End TRA to amalgamate with us; this would swell our numbers significantly and our resources would be stretched even further. A permanent office and meeting room would address our accommodation needs and assist us in providing even more assistance to the residents of 5 Wards which our TRA borders with.

A Business Suite, which will provide Internet access and Internet training, for everyone within the community. We will have the opportunity to provide a variety of work and life support courses e.g, Internet use, CV's, producing newsletters, and letter writing skills, writing C.V's, producing budgets for household accounting, helping people manage their money. This would be combined with use for (free and subsidised) training and lectures provided by lecturers and voluntary agencies. Opportunity to use the Business Suite to run 'Young Enterprise' style activities for the 12 -16 year old group from the community, teaching them about marketing, finance, sales, design, website design and team working and confidence building. The Business Suite would also be available to provide Skills Training for the unemployed and people looking to come off benefits and return to work. This training would be provided by local trainers and agencies that work in conjunction with the DWP, Skills Council, and similar agencies that are funded to provide this kind of training and can afford to run training and hire this venue for this purpose.

A multi purpose studio which can be used to provide space for various activities such as dance lessons for all ages, keep fit for all ages, Judo/ Martial Arts clubs, new and existing Community clubs, Scouts/Cubs/Guides and new and struggling clubs/groups that need a venue at a free or reduced rate locally. Pensions and Benefits exhibitions, voluntary groups presentations, local art exhibitions will all benefit from this studio and the opportunity will be created to run and provide numerous activities, exhibitions, drop in advice sessions, coffee morning, mother and toddler groups and miscellaneous other uses in keeping with the need of the community. There is also scope to hire out this facility to users in the private and voluntary sector, bringing in revenue for the Centre. A kitchen for refreshments for staff, user groups and functions.



## **5.0 Information –contd.**

The ability to run coffee mornings and social activities for the elderly, with refreshments. This provides some elderly people with social opportunities, the opportunity to read leaflets on pensions and benefit advice, home security and insulation, etc. This would also be a small source of revenue from coffee mornings and refreshments to hirers.

Private Members Social Club to provide community spirit and entertainment to all groups from the local community. Combined Lounge Bar and Dance Hall to provide weekend only entertainment and quizzes, bingo, darts and pool competitions, family disco's, organise outings to the coast and places of interest. Available for members' use only, the premises will not be hired out for private functions. The use, in this instance, is purely for the local community, by way of membership linked to address within the locality. The facility will not be hired out, not even to members. It is important to have a place where the elderly, families and single people are able to go to, to meet in a safe and well-managed facility.

A Conference Room which may be used by the local community for meetings, local businesses, the Council and other agencies to hold meetings and consultations, on a free and paid basis dependent on the hirer. The Conference Room would be able to accommodate a small number of people in the region of 25-50 depending on the room layout requirements. This room would service a multitude of users and social and business services to local people and external bodies, bringing in revenue for the Centre. Meeting/Conference room facilities are at a premium in the borough and this will make much needed space available to local people, agencies in Harrow and commercial entities that need a venue for training, interviews, meetings and consultations.

Small Office suites ("4" Varying in size from 2 person to 4 person suites) which can be let on short-term licence to people within the local community/Harrow, that are in a business start-up situation, enabling them to have an office base and resources of a 'serviced offices' style venue, to enable them to enter into self employment and provide local employment. Office suites will remove some of the barriers to coming off benefits and encourage local entrepreneurs to establish themselves in Harrow. Offering these suites at a subsidised rate will attract interest and, along with the other facilities within the Centre, such as work skills training, and IT Training, will assist people, from the work skills training to be provided in the Centre, in setting up their business. The rent and service fees will bring in revenue for the Centre.

## **5.0 Information- contd.**

### **Links with other Users**

Our proposal to refurbish Cedars Hall has attracted interest from a variety of potential users and service groups. We have, to date, had discussions with the following:-

#### **Watford Football Club**

Watford Football Club currently run the successful "Kickz" Project at Cedars Youth Centre. They provide sports, football and coaching opportunities to young people aged up to 16 years of age. We have discussed, with their representatives, the possibility of using some of our facilities - in particular the Studio - to enhance the activities that they currently provide in the venue next door. Watford Football Club is proposing to invest in Cedars Youth Club, and they have intimated that they would be willing to look at some form of sponsorship for the Cedars Community Centre and approach some of their own sponsors for assistance.

#### **Youth and Community Service**

We have had discussions with representatives of the management and leaders who run Cedars Youth Centre and - again - they have intimated that they may see a use for the studio and other facilities within Cedars Community Centre, to provide additional services and opportunities to the young people of Harrow. We have also had discussions with the local Church (opposite Cedars Hall) about linking in with the many groups and courses they run with users of all ages.

#### **Kier**

Kier is well-known to Harrow as the Partner in Major Works and Maintenance on behalf of Harrow Council. Kier has to date provide an estimate of the cost of refurbishment of the Centre. They are currently reviewing the quote and will - if the proposal is agreed - offer tenders for the work to get us the best possible price and seek to lower the original estimate of the proposed works. Previously, there have been discussions around Kier using the Centre to provide sessions on decorating, plumbing and maintenance to a wide range of users. Kier are keen to interact with communities and there are numerous opportunities for Kier and Cedars Community Centre to work together, with other groups and agencies, to provide training, resources and apprenticeships coming out of Cedars Community Centre.

#### **Other Opportunities**

Subject to approval by Cabinet, there are opportunities to market the Centre to numerous agencies, to buy into the project in joint ventures and/or innovative projects, which will support the elderly, young people, the unemployed, families, the disabled, ethnic groups, hard to reach and excluded people. Typically, some of the agencies we could market include Age Concern, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Business Links, Citizens Advice Bureau, Drug Action Team, Harrow Association of Disabled People , Kids Can Achieve, ADHD Support Group, Carers Support Harrow, MIND, Housing Advice Centre etc. The proposals recognise the importance of provision for the elderly, families and single people, so recognising that the Centre operates within a Middle Layer SOA Ward,

the local Members Social Club would be run on a 'non profit' basis with all surpluses being reinvested back into the main community centre to aid the running and facilities costs. The Management plans to approach a major brewery to subsidise the Club's refurbishment.

## Details

The following heads of terms of a building agreement/agreement for a lease have been provisionally agreed with Weald TRA: -

### 5.1 Suggested Terms of Agreement

- a. Within x months of the agreement, the Cedars Hall Community Centre (CHCC) shall develop the land as outlined in paragraph 5.0 above and in accordance with plans and specifications approved by the Council as landowner and planning authority and, upon satisfactory completion of the works, the Council and CHCC shall complete a lease.
- b. The Lease shall be for a term of 60 years commencing on a date to be agreed.
- c. The demise shall comprise all that land shown hatched on Appendix A, together with all buildings and erections and other works thereon carried out under the agreement.
- d. In consideration for the CHCC providing the community benefits outlined in paragraph 5.0 of this report, the rent shall be a peppercorn rent.
- e. The demise shall be used as a multicultural and multiuse facility with only the prescribed uses as outlined in paragraph 5.0 of this report and for no other purpose without the expressed and written agreement of the Council.
- f. The CHCC shall work, in partnership with the Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Team, to facilitate the Community Asset Management Plan, which will include a capacity building, and continual development skills programme. The Council will provide Cabinet with a Report for approval before the Centre is handed over to the Community. Failure to manage the Centre consistently with these Plans, as measured by the mutually agreed performance indicators, may lead to the Council revoking the lease.
- g. The CHCC, in accordance with schemes previously approved by the Council, such shall maintain the same in a clean and tidy condition throughout the term.
- h. The CHCC shall be responsible for all outgoings, repairs and maintenance and shall keep the whole of the demise, including the building(s), paths, structures, erections and all other land, boundaries, cables, conduits drains, etc, in good and tenable condition throughout the period of the lease.
- i. The CHCC shall insure all buildings and structures on the demise.

- j. The CHCC shall not erect, or permit to be erected, any new buildings or structures without the previous written consent of the Council as the Landlord.
- k. The CHCC shall enter into an agreement to be prepared by the Council's Head of Legal Services embodying, inter alia, the above terms together with such other conditions as are usually incorporated in agreements of this nature. Each party shall bear its own costs in connection with the agreement.

## **5.2 Financial Implications**

Does the proposal have financial implications for the Council?

The Council would forgo a potential rental in the region of £xxxxx per annum under the proposed Cedars Hall Community Centre lease, together with Council's legal and surveyor's costs.

## **5.3 Legal implications**

Does the proposal have legal implications for the Council?

A lease at less than market value is proposed and it must be demonstrated that this is justified through the value of community benefit arising from the proposal. A disposal of land below best price obtainable for the well being of community falls within the General Consent Order provided that the value that the Council is foregoing does not exceed £2 million.

The well being of the local community generally should be the objective of the Council in supporting development proposals for Cedars Hall without appearing to be favouring any particular organisation. The Council needs to ensure that the demise is available for community use, possibly throughout the term of the 60-year lease. There may be state aid implications if the Cedars Hall Centre is held to be carrying on economic activities (such as charging for the use of the Conference Rooms Business Suites etc). However, potential challenge for state aid may be countered by:

- (i) The fact that the proposal is preceded by a competitive selection process leading to Weald TRA's investment proposal being selected as the best offer obtainable in the open market to take the development of community facilities forward; or if the Council could prove that the community benefits to be generated from the proposed scheme exceed potential monetary value receivable by the Council if the land was to be sold at market price.

## 6.0 Options

The Council has the following stated objectives: -

- Better use of physical assets
- Extend community access to community and leisure facilities in Harrow Weald
- Work in partnership with learning, community and youth groups for the good of Harrow.

The Cabinet has the following options in considering the proposals set out in this report.

### 1. Approve the recommendations set out in this report

In approving the recommendations set out in the report, funding and investment of approximately £750k might be secured for the provision of long-term value adding community provision for which there is an acknowledged gap in provision.

### 2. Not agree the recommendations in the report

If the recommendations of the report are not agreed, Weald TRA would have to withdraw its application for funding and revisit its development proposals and funding opportunities. The opportunity to secure provision of a multi use community centre would be delayed or lost. Consideration would then be given to the inclusion of the land within proposals being considered and to advertising the land for sale on the open market. In this connection, the Cabinet should consider the potential loss of substantial investment in community provision.

## 7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

The development proposed by the Weald TRA fulfils an acknowledged gap in provision. Weald TRA wishes, in the short term, to locate itself and its support services to other residents in the Harrow Weald area and, in the longer term, be part of the long-term management team for the site.

In order to progress its proposals, the Club needs to secure the site and approximately £750,000 capital and revenue funding its proposals, net of land costs. The site at Cedars Hall has been identified.

The Weald TRA would wish to partner in a bid to the ESF and, if successful, would need to identify sources (such as Friends Provident and others) to meet a shortfall in funding of approximately £250,000 for start up costs from equipment to staffing.

The Community may only be in a position via low level funding applications (Awards for All as an example) and via match funding support from partners, to provide only £10-20,000 funding and has no other capital or revenue funding to meet the costs of the proposed agreement and lease.

The development of the land, as facilitated by the proposed development agreement, will represent a capital investment of approximately £1.2 million in community facilities in the Borough, in the initial phase and this could be a basis for attracting additional government support.

The Weald TRA has a long- established presence in the Borough, is known and respected locally and has demonstrated an ability to provide and administer local support and to identify viable funding schemes.

The CHCC proposals will bring valuable benefits to the local community, including the following: -

- The chance for the first time in the borough to secure a one-stop multi-use community, social, educational and multi faith facility.
- Provision consistent with our obligations under your “Every Child Matters” strategy and wider provision for young people in Harrow.
- The basis for an active community engagement development plan that will increase the numbers participating, upon the grant of the proposed lease.
- The CHCC’s proposals include wider community learning and work support activities at the refurbished new site.
- The development of the Centre at Cedars Hall will help facilitate the development of the already locally successful Kicks Programme run by Watford FC, but in a new partnership with the Council.
- The £750,000 of initial investment would represent a significant investment in community facilities in Harrow Weald and fills identified gaps in community provision.

## **8.0 Resources and Policy Priorities Impact Statement**

We recognise that the Council's Corporate Director for Community and the Environment would wish to report on this matter.

## **9.0 CONSULTATION INFORMATION**

In preparing this Report, we undertook the following consultation:

### **Consultation, Contacts and meetings on this:**

Neil Hart - Watford Football Club 3 March 2008

Nigel Brown – Meeting with KIER 11 April 2008

John Bullock - Meeting KIER 1 May 2008

Malcolm John, Corporate Funding Manager, Corporate Finance, London Borough of Harrow

Local Residents – ongoing

Weald TRA Committee

### **CEDARS HALL PUBLIC MEETING**

20 February 2008 at 8.00pm Cedars Youth Centre.

Meeting with Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director for Community and Environment, Lee Choules Weald TRA and First Call, 8th April 2008 to discuss Weald TRA Proposal.

### **CEDARS HALL PUBLIC MEETING**

7 May 2008 at 7.00pm Cedars Youth Centre.

## **9.1 Appendices**

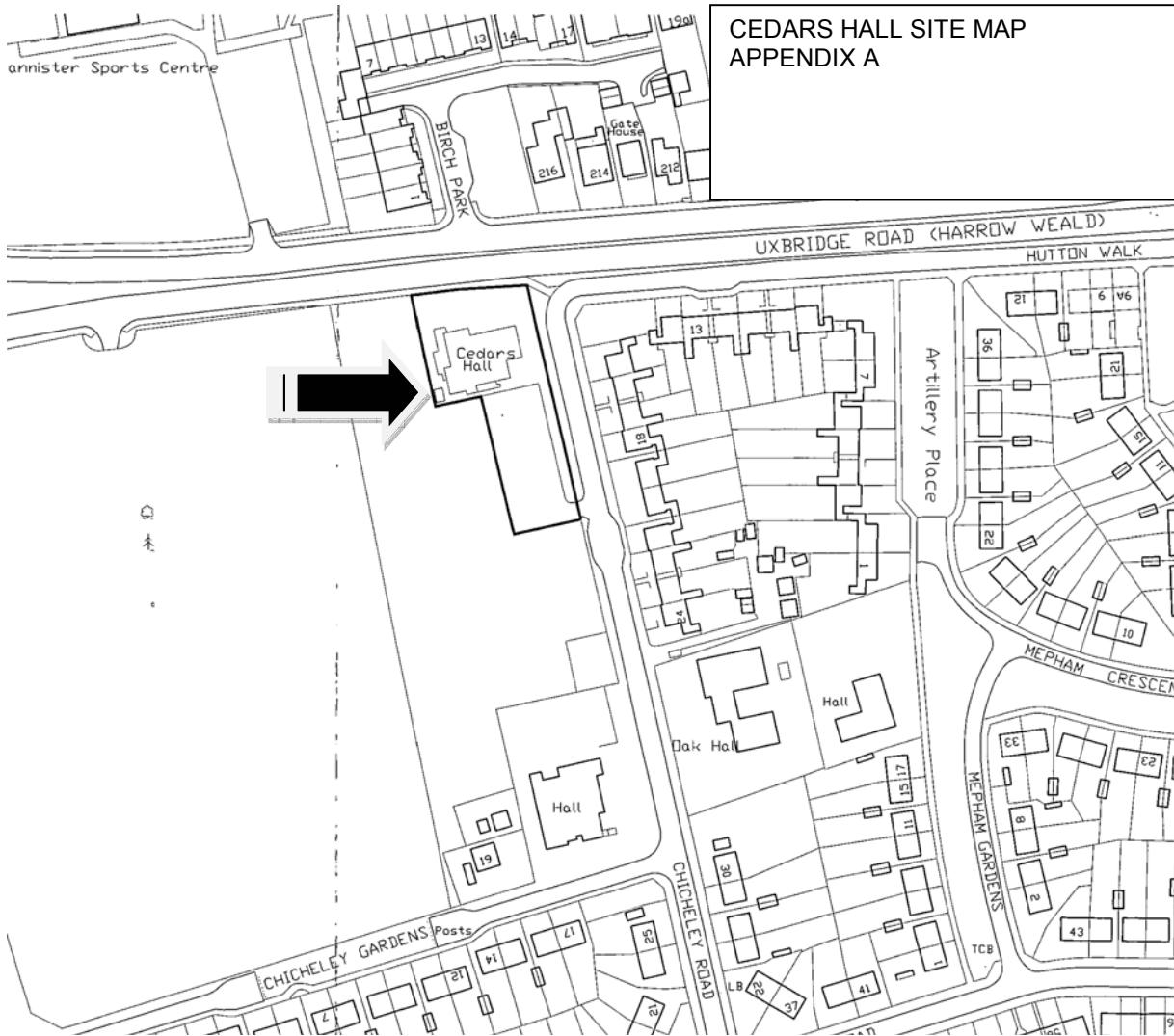
Appendix A –The Site Map

Appendix B – Cedars Hall Community Centre -3 Year Cashflow Projection and notes to the Financial Assumptions

Lee Choules Vice Chairman, Weald TRA. May 2008.

APPENDIX A

SITE MAP.





## Appendix B

### Financial Notes on the 3 Year cash flow for Cedars Community and Social Centre

The actual financial figures have been included in a separate document attached to this report. The financial information may be considered to be potentially commercially sensitive and the Council may give consideration to reviewing these under Part II.

#### Notes on Financial Assumptions

We have made assumptions on the expected level of use of Cedars Community and Social Centre. Using Year 1 as the baseline, in proceeding years we allowed for between an 8 and 20% annual increases in the level of use, fees, hire fees and sales, from hire the facilities to the community, community groups and external agencies, as well as patronage of the Social Club.

#### Sales and Hire Charges

Social Club Wet Sales	Based upon 7 day trade including weekends. We estimate that income will be £415 per day Monday – Friday and £500 on a Saturday and Sunday, from combined wet bar sales, income from gaming machines(on rental) and sale of rolls and snacks.
Social Club Memberships	We estimate that due to the size of the area that the Social Club will attract an annual membership from adults and family memberships totalling 1000. With an estimated 100 members joining per month at a rate of £10 per membership.
Misc. Bingo/Raffle	Bingo and Raffles are a favourite activity of club members and will produce a small profit per game/draw. The figures quoted reflect weekend and weeknight games and draws.
Conference Room	The proposed rate for Hire of the Conference Room would be set at £50 for a maximum of 3 hours hire. With a hire ratio of 5 hirers per week, split between day and evening use, this produces £1000 a month.
Office Suites	2 Person Accommodation rate to be let at £200 per month x 2. 3 Person Accommodation to be let at £260 per month x 2, gives a monthly income of £920.
IT Business Centre	Hired out for £40 for a maximum of 3 hours. With a ratio of 3 hirers per week, this produces £480 a month.
Revenue Grants	We plan to secure an initial revenue grant of £10,000 during the refurbishment of the centre and then apply for subsequent revenue grants from grant making bodies, which are in line with our aims and proposed services. In total we hope to secure 4 revenue grants over a 12-month period, which will provide continuing funding for between 2 and 5 years.

**Direct Costs and Cost of Sales** These costs are indicative of commercial rates and prevailing taxes and utility charges. Contribution to staffing of the Social Club will come from committee members who will support the paid staff with voluntary hours, such as the Social Secretary and House and Bar Secretary.

**Potential Agencies and Users**

- Age Concern
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Business Links
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Harrow Association of Disabled People
- Drug Action Team
- ADHD Support Group
- Carers Support Harrow
- Kids Can Achieve
- MIND
- Housing Advice Centre
- Safer Neighbourhood Police Team / Crime Prevention
- Harrow Council
- HAVS
- NHS Direct
- Family Planning Association
- Local Community Groups
- New Community and neighbourhood groups
- Harrow Wide Groups
- Commercial Entities