



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Future Use of Arnot Hill Park Lodge

Date: 2 February 2006

Author: Head of Cabinet Office on behalf of Leader of the Council

1. Purpose of the Report

- § To seek Cabinet approval for the use of Arnot Hill Park Lodge as a Youth Drop-In Centre, subject to planning permission being secured for this purpose.
- § Subject to planning permission being granted, to seek Cabinet approval for letting of Arnot Hill Park Lodge to Nottinghamshire County Council on a peppercorn rental basis to operate and manage the building's use for this purpose.

2. Background

In 2004, the Council's Community and Quality of Life Committee and the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership (the Gedling Partnership) completed a review of quality of life for young people in the Borough.

The Committee made a range of recommendations, which have since been supported and prioritised by the Council and the Partnership.

The recommendations form the backbone of an Action Plan for young people currently being delivered through the Gedling Partnership's Youth Action Group. Progress towards these has been reported to Cabinet and to the Partnership Executive.

One of those recommendations of the review was that: -

The LSP partners support and work together to develop innovative, localised sessional "one stop shops" in appropriate venues to meet the needs of young people in terms of recreation, health and career advice.

For this to happen, suitable sites need to be found.

Arnot Hill Park Lodge is the small detached building at the pedestrian entrance to Arnot Hill Park off Nottingham Road. It has been used for various purposes in the past, including as a residence for the Civic Centre caretaker, but is currently used as a storage facility by Leisure Services. The building has recently benefited from improvement works to prevent it falling into disrepair, including a replacement boiler and redecoration.

During 2005, the Leader of the Council suggested that use of this building for such a purpose represented an under-utilisation of the asset and further suggested that it might be a suitable location for a youth one-stop shop.

Initial discussions were therefore entered into with relevant partners who confirmed they would be interested in putting the building to this use, should it be made available. Partners have also given an indication of services that could be offered to young people from the building should the proposal go ahead. The Gedling Partnership has offered support for the idea in principle.

There have since been further discussions about adaptations which may be required if the building is to be used for this purpose.

3. Proposal

3.1 – Overall Proposal - The proposal is for Arnot Hill Park to be adapted for use as a Young Persons' One Stop Shop to meet the needs highlighted in the review recommendations above.

The One Stop Shop would be used for a range of advice and support services provided through various agencies in particular for one-to-one and/or drop in use for advice and support around health/career advice, youth outreach work etc

The location is thought to be ideal for such a purpose, being part of a facility used by young people, on or close to a number of bus routes serving significant areas of the Borough but not surrounded by residential areas.

Services proposed to be provided from the site include:

- § Counselling,
- § C Card Scheme registration (contraception related) and health related support,
- § Personal advice and consultations
- § Group work including District Youth Assembly meetings, group workshops/training/ discussions etc delivered by the various partners
- § Information sharing with agencies being able to promote their services/ activities etc. to young people.

Agencies providing these services could include: -

- § Notts County Council Youth Service/Young People's Counselling Service/Youth Engagement Team/Community Development Team/Social Services
- § Gedling Schools Nurse Team
- § Gedling PCT
- § Gedling District Youth Assembly
- § Youth Inclusion Support Project
- § Police
- § Arnold Churches Together
- § Fire Service
- § Connexions
- § Voluntary Youth Sector
- § BTCV,
- § Millennium Volunteers
- § NCC Disability Support Team
- § County Contact (in conjunction with Civic Centre)

All have expressed an interest in providing services through this route.

These services would be provided at various times, including outside office hours.

I have been advised that the proposed change of use would require planning permission, therefore all proposals put forward in the report are subject to such an application being successful. If members are supportive of the proposal, a planning application for the change of use will be submitted.

3.2 – Management and Supervisory arrangements - In potentially offering the facility, it is not proposed that the Borough Council should offer managerial and supervisory support for its activity (the Borough Council's contribution would be the asset itself).

It is therefore proposed that the One-Stop Shop should be managed by a Steering Group made up of user agencies, and that this Steering Group should coordinate usage.

Any formal letting agreement would be with Nottinghamshire County Council, who would in effect be the lead partner.

It is suggested that the rent should be set at a peppercorn basis, as a reflection of the Borough Council's contribution to the initiative. Other related property costs would need to be borne by the County Council as the lessee. These include business rates (when the property becomes separately rated), maintenance costs and relevant utility charges (the building is separately metered for gas and electricity).

Set up and adaptation costs would also be borne by the County Council, including all equipment and furnishings. I understand consideration is being given to funding applications to support these acquisitions if the proposal is agreed.

The most significant adaptation costs relate to ensuring compliance with Disability Discrimination Act requirements. County Council contractors have surveyed the building for this purpose and estimate costs of compliance to be around £20,000.

Adaptations proposed to secure compliance with this legislation include minor alterations to Arnot Hill Park which would need to be negotiated with the relevant GBC departments.

Adaptations would also need to be consistent with the building's planning status and would need to be addressed through the planning process.

Again, the County Council would need to fund these adaptation works if the proposed use is agreed. It is understood that any failure to comply would be a shared responsibility of all agencies providing services from the building.

It has also been suggested that the Lodge could also form a base for Park Rangers for Arnot Hill Park, should the proposal from Leisure Services be accepted. This could go some way towards addressing a further recommendation from the 2004 CQL/LSP review concerning better supervision of parks.

This has been considered by the Youth Action Group, but it is my understanding that there are some concerns about this proposed further use, which it is felt might not be consistent with the often confidential nature of some activity highlighted above.

Alternative provision also needs to be made to meet Leisure Services' storage requirements.

4. Resource Implications

As outlined above, in offering the building, the Borough Council would not be in a position to offer further organisational support. The offer would therefore be on the basis of the facility being "self-managed" by whichever agency might take on lead responsibility for its operation.

The main cost to the Borough Council is therefore the notional loss of income from offering the building at a peppercorn rent. The Estates and Valuation Manager suggests that, if used as offices, the building might generate an annual rental of around £2,750, though such income is not generated at present.

As outlined above, it is proposed that all set-up and ongoing costs should be borne by the County Council (the County Council would of course be free to

share those costs with other partners involved in the venture, but would be held accountable for them itself).

5. Recommendation

Members are **recommended** to:

- § Approve for the use of Arnot Hill Park Lodge as a Youth Drop-In Centre, subject to planning permission being secured for this purpose.
- § Subject to planning permission being granted, approve the letting of Arnot Hill Park Lodge to Nottinghamshire County Council on a peppercorn rental basis to operate and manage the building's use for the purpose highlighted above.
- § Consider whether it would be possible to incorporate a shared use of the facility to allow for its use as a base for future Park Wardens.