

Harlow Hall Proposed Community Asset Transfer (CAT)



The opportunity to take on the management of this local community hall

The Council are offering the opportunity to take on the management of Harlow Hall on a long lease under Community Asset Transfer (CAT). This leaflet explains the process in more detail, including how to apply.

🌟 What is Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and why are Croydon looking at a CAT of Harlow Hall?

Community Asset Transfer is about giving local people and groups greater control in the future of their community. The Council has identified Harlow Hall as a building where it would be appropriate to transfer the management and control of to a community organisation. We believe that a community group are better placed than the Council to develop the community access to, and invest in, this well known and loved building, which has been faithfully managed up to this point by the Trustees of the Darby and Joan Club.

🌟 Where is Harlow Hall and what does it comprise?

Harlow Hall is situated in Stanford Road, Norbury, just off the main London Road. It was built in the 1950's and comprises a main hall with stage, kitchen, side rooms and toilets.

🌟 What can the Hall be used for and what are the Council looking for in community asset management?

Harlow Hall is designated as a Community hall within planning use class F2. It is currently hired by a range of organisations for religious and social uses, including, lunch clubs, tea dances, tai chi and whist. The Council's vision is to build on this to encompass a vibrant

building fully utilised by the local community. We are therefore looking for a partner who can develop this potential. Our main requirement is that you are willing and able to proactively manage and market the Hall to all areas of the local community. You will need to take into account the current hiring arrangements, but we also recognise that you may also wish to utilise the hall for your own community use

🌟 What are the terms the Council are offering and what will my responsibilities for the Hall be?

The Council are willing to offer a full repairing and insuring lease of up to 25 years. You will need to think carefully about how long you would like the building for, depending on your individual circumstances. Your offer should also be made with an understanding of the responsibilities that come with taking on a building like this, as well as the potential income that you may receive from hiring it out.



Your responsibilities for the building will include both internal and external repairs, business rates (if applicable), utility costs, cleaning, caretaking and administration costs. The Council will insure the building and recharge the premium although you will require contents and public liability cover.



You will also be responsible for statutory testing, although the Council is willing to continue to undertake this in the short term and charge these costs back to you.

You will be responsible for setting the hire charges for the hall and associated rooms (which will be subject to approval by the Council), and proactively marketing the hall for community uses. You will benefit from any income received from occasional or more permanent hiring. We will, where possible, help you to promote the hall in our publications and on our website.

❖ How much does it cost to run and maintain Harlow Hall, and what is the annual income?

Average annual income, which has obviously been curtailed by Covid, is around £12,000 per annum, although it is recognised that there is significant scope to increase the use and income of the building. The Council has spent just over £5,000 per annum on repairs and statutory services over the past 3 years in addition to the tenant's liabilities.

A detailed breakdown of the current and anticipated costs of running the building will be available on the CAT page of the Council's website.

❖ Are any works required to the building, and what alterations will I be able to make?

The Hall is in a fair condition, and the roof was replaced in 2016. Whilst no major external works or alterations are envisaged, it is recognised that the building is looking tired internally and requires significant redecoration and a new kitchen. We would recommend that the successful party obtains an independent condition survey prior to taking on the lease.

Any major planned alterations would require the Council's written consent.

❖ What is the application process?

We are currently seeking to identify all the potential organisations interested in taking on the management of the building. This includes advertising on the Council's website, and circulation of these details

to our major community partners and to any groups who have already expressed an interest.

Interested parties will be required to prepare an expression of interest form (available on the Council's website at: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community-and-safety/advice-and-funding-community-groups/community-asset-transfers>) due by Tuesday 19th April, which will then be evaluated. Short-listed groups invited to submit a more detailed business case within a further 6 weeks and present this at interview. Final assessments and recommendations will then be made and a formal lease to the successful party granted.

It is anticipated that the lease will be in place by mid-summer.



🌟 How can I look round the building?

The building will be open for viewing on Wednesday 16th March (1pm to 4pm) and Tuesday 22rd March (5pm – 8pm). Council officers will also be available during these times to answer any questions you may have about the transfer process. Please contact Rob Lines on 020 8726 6000 x61509 or robert.lines@croydon.gov.uk to confirm your attendance at either of the viewing days.

🌟 If I am not successful, will there be other opportunities for finding a property?

The Council continually review their property assets to assess their suitability and it is possible that additional opportunities will arise in the future. If you have registered an interest in community asset transfer you will automatically be notified when properties become available.

Separately, we are also looking for a partner/tenant to oversee and develop the café provision and hire of the upper community hall at the recently refurbished Norbury Library. Given the relative proximity of the Hall and Library, we recognise there is a potential synergy for one party to take on the management of both of these properties.

In addition we are planning to market a small community centre/office at 47a Cromwell Road, West Croydon on a short/medium term lease. We will be advertising both these opportunities shortly.

🌟 Where can I find out more information?

In addition to these guidance notes, further information and the expression of interest form is available on the Council's website at: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community-and-safety/advice-and-funding-community-groups/community-asset-transfers>. If you have any additional queries please contact Rob Lines, contact details above.

