

Appendix 6

7.7 Please say why not granting consent to the transfer of land, or if applicable, to the assignation of the tenant's interest, would be likely to result in harm to the community to which the CB relates

It is not a choice between a functioning facility in community ownership and a functioning facility in private ownership. Rather the choice lies between a functioning community facility in community ownership and no facility at all.

At the heart of the present Application is the enthusiastic engagement, commitment and drive of the North Queensferry community and the consequent access to community share fundraising and complementary public/charity sector grants. The present owners have not, since 2017, been able to restore and re-open the Albert (and, indeed, have taken active steps which have adversely affected its fabric). However, even if the Albert were sought to be sold to another private owner, there is little likelihood of it being restored and re-opened. Given the costs involved in saving this historic building, it is highly unlikely that a commercial operator would be able to make a business case and take on significant costs to restore the Albert to its intended use. If the present Application is not granted, the most likely options that remain for the building are further deterioration towards dereliction, potentially demolition; or for a change of use and redevelopment as residential property. Neither of these options will deliver the community benefits which will flow from the grant of consent to the present Application.

In particular, without the reopening of this community facility, the community will lose the direct and indirect social and cultural benefits that would flow from having an active community hub and pub, including having a social focus for the community, and the direct and indirect economic benefits referred to above. An important part of the heritage of the community would be endangered, and the relevant planning and policy objectives would become more difficult to achieve.

Refusal of the Application would not simply damage the Community through loss of potential benefits (which is bad enough) but it would also result in positive damage to the Community – the danger of a slow decline of the community into becoming just another bedroom suburb, the loss of an important heritage asset and, in Tom Kerridge's words, the loss of the community's soul.