

Isambard House Café Expression of Interest – Guidance Notes

Summary:

These guidance notes are intended to assist applicants in preparing their submission and to help the Town Council evaluate the suitability of a prospective concessionaire for the café space within Isambard House.

The information provided will enable the Town Council to assess the quality, sustainability, community benefit, operational capability and long-term viability of your proposed café operation. Applicants are encouraged to provide as much relevant detail as possible to demonstrate their vision, experience and ability to deliver a successful and welcoming café that complements the Town Council objectives of Isambard House.

In addition to responding to the questions provided, applicants are welcome to include any further information they believe may strengthen their proposal, including innovative ideas, examples of previous projects, supporting evidence, business plans, references, testimonials, case studies or any other information relevant to the operation of the café concession in the last box on the application form.

The Town Council is particularly interested in proposals that demonstrate:

- A clear understanding of the opportunity and local market.
- A sustainable and financially viable business model.
- Experience in hospitality, catering or customer service.
- A commitment to high-quality customer service.
- Community engagement and social value.
- Support for local suppliers and producers where appropriate.
- Environmental sustainability and responsible business practices.
- Ideas that will increase the attractiveness and success of Isambard House as a destination for residents and visitors.

Applicants should ensure that all information submitted is accurate, complete and clearly presented, as it will form part of the assessment and interview process.

Additional information provided outside of the guidance questions will also be considered where it is relevant to the proposed operation of the café concession.

Q1. Please tell us about your immediate and long-term plans for the café space within Isambard House.

Please outline:

- Your overall vision and concept for the café.
- Proposed opening days and hours, including any seasonal variations.
- Food preparation arrangements, including whether food will be prepared on-site, locally sourced, or supplied externally.
- Sample menu offerings, including breakfast, lunch, snacks, children's options and dietary requirements (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc.).
- Hot and cold drink offerings, including any speciality products.
- Plans for sourcing local produce and supporting local suppliers where possible.
- Proposed pricing strategy and value-for-money offers.
- Staffing levels, recruitment plans and staff training.
- Customer service standards and how these will be maintained.
- Health, safety and food hygiene procedures and compliance.
- Any special events, themed evenings, or promotional events you may wish to host.
- How you would work with local organisations, community groups, and visitors.
- Ideas for increasing footfall and encouraging repeat visits.
- Plans to make the café welcoming and accessible to all members of the community.
- Your short-term priorities for the first 12 months of operation.
- Your longer-term aspirations for the café.
- Any proposed investment in equipment, furnishings, technology or improvements to the customer experience.
- Your approach to environmental sustainability, including waste reduction, recycling, compostable packaging and energy efficiency.
- Measures you would implement to minimise food waste.
- Details of your experience operating cafés, hospitality venues or similar concessions.

Q2. What understanding have you developed of the opportunity at Isambard House, and what research have you carried out regarding the operation of a café in this location?

Please outline:

- Your understanding of Isambard House, its purpose, and the role the café would play within the wider facility.
- Assessment of the likely customer base.
- Any site visits undertaken and observations made regarding the location, footfall, accessibility, and surrounding amenities.
- Your understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with operating a café from the available space.
- Relevant experience of operating cafés, catering services, hospitality venues, or other customer-facing businesses.
- How would you attract and retain customers throughout the year, including during quieter periods.

Q3. Once the café is established and fully operational, how will you ensure the concession remains financially sustainable, resilient and successful throughout the term of the agreement with the Town Council?

Please outline:

- Any anticipated challenges and how you would address them.
- Marketing and promotion plans, including social media and digital engagement.
- How you will attract new customers.
- Any loyalty schemes, promotions or customer incentives.
- Plans for maintaining trade during quieter periods.
- How you would manage increased costs, competitor or changing demand.

Q4. How will your concession contribute to the wider objectives of Isambard House and benefit the local community?

Please outline:

- How will the café complement and add value to the hire bookings, services and overall visitor experience at Isambard House.
- How will the café create a welcoming and vibrant environment.
- How you will ensure that the café signage enhances the café's presence while remaining appropriate for its location.

END