

| MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY | | | |
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| MEETING OF THE: | AUTHORITY | | |
| DATE: | 29 JULY 2014 | REPORT NO: | CFO/048/14 |
| PRESENTING OFFICER | DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE | | |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: | KIERAN TIMMINS | REPORT AUTHOR: | KIERAN TIMMINS |
| OFFICERS CONSULTED: | STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP | | |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | WIRRAL YOUTH ZONE | | |

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| APPENDICES: | APPENDIX A: APPENDIX A(1) APPENDIX B APPENDIX C | BUSINESS PLAN APPENDICES TO BUSINESS PLAN MAP OF BIRKENHEAD SITE INDEPENDENT VALUATION |
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Purpose of Report

1. To request Members confirm their previous decision to transfer land freed up at the Birkenhead fire station site to support the creation of a Youth Zone.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members agree the transfer of land in principle to support the Youth Zone subject to :-
 - a. An appropriate company being set up.
 - b. The project funding be finalised and the Business Plan staying broadly in line with that detailed within Appendix A.
 - c. A lease being agreed. This being based on a peppercorn rent.
 - d. Finalised agreement being reached on how the fire station and Youth Zone will work closely together on the shared visions and aims around youth engagement and support.
 - e. The provision of a designated Youth Engagement space being created for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service within the Youth Zone.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will recall that in building Birkenhead PFI station, a reasonably sized plot of land was freed up as shown in Appendix B.

4. The Authority was approached by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council in 2010 to see if that land might be available to create a "Youth Zone". Wirral officers and Members have visited Toxteth Firefit, and other similar facilities, and wanted to create an equivalent offer for the young people of Wirral. The Birkenhead site was considered ideal in terms of a neutral location, and having good transport links.
5. Members will be aware that the Authority works well with all the districts to maximise the value of the assets in public ownership and improve the overall services for the community it serves. Currently, for example, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council are supporting the Authority in identifying a suitable site in west Wirral for the West Kirby with Upton station merger proposal.
6. The Authority agreed in principle to transfer the land to support such a project (CFO/182/10).
7. Wirral have been working with a charity called "OnSide" who provide a comprehensive consultancy service in the development of high quality facilities and delivery of young people's projects. OnSide has its origins in the nationally acclaimed Bolton Lads' and Girls' Club, and has now built another 5 successful Youth Zones across the North West.
8. Wirral and OnSide have set up a Shadow Board chaired by John Syvret of Cammell Laird, and includes representatives from Peel, Bibby Shipping, Wirral Borough Council and the Authority. So far, £3m capital funding has been identified, with the results of further bids awaited. The "OnSide" model is to set up a Charitable Company to build, own and manage the Youth Zone (similar to the model for the Firefit Hub).
9. The Shadow Board has consulted with local young people and developed a brand/name for the centre of "The Hive". The next stage for the project is to conduct a design competition to design a building that meets the needs and aspirations of the local young people. The Shadow Board have asked that the Authority confirm their decision from 2010 to give them enough certainty to feed into that design competition and allow it to proceed.
10. The final transfer of land can only take place to the Charitable Company once this has been set up. It is expected that the transfer would be a long term lease on a "peppercorn" rent, with strict covenants/controls about how the land is used. They would operate as a protection of the Authority's interest in the land in the unlikely event of a fundamental failure of the Youth Zone project.
11. In recognition of the contribution from the Authority, it is accepted that both organisations would work together to maximise the impact on services for young people and for the site to work as a "campus". The gym would be branded as "Firefit". Further details of the partnership opportunities are set out in page 20 of Appendix A to this report. In particular it has been agreed in principle that the company when formed will work with the Authority to deliver Prince's Trust (and potentially our other youth engagement programmes) in support of the youth zone by utilising its rooms and facilities.

12. The current Business Plan for the Youth Zone is set out in Appendix A.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. The location of the Youth Zone has been chosen to maximise services to all young people in Wirral.

Staff Implications

14. None specifically arising from this report.

Legal Implications

15. A lease of land would need to be agreed between Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council and the Authority so this is not a donation of land. This can only be achieved once the Company has been set up formally and appropriate applications made to the Charities Commission. The completion of the lease would also only be expected when all other elements of the project are in place (e.g. full funding and agreed operational aspects) In addition a joint venture or partnership agreement may be beneficial to establish how the two organisations can work effectively together to best serve the young people of Wirral.

16. A further report will need to be submitted to Members when the Company and Charitable status has been established for final approval.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

17. If the Authority chose not to support the project, it might realise a capital receipt from the sale of the land. An independent valuation is being obtained and is attached as appendix C. This valuation indicated that the land is estimated to be worth £250,000 based upon:-

- a Freehold interest in the subject site
- with the benefit of full vacant possession
- Planning Permission for Non-food retail and fast-food restaurant/drive-through for development
- And allowing 9 months for marketing.

Planning permission has not been sought by the Authority at this time.

18. The proposal is based upon transferring the land instead on a 'peppercorn rent' to the charitable company that will run the youth zone

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

19. None specifically arising from this report.

20. The concept of a youth zone is identical to the model that the Authority has developed at Toxteth. Such centres act as hubs for positive interventions with young people and for diversionary activity from antisocial behaviour. The Firefit hub in Toxteth, for example, focuses work in south Liverpool during the mischief night/bonfire night period that has helped reduce the incidence of fire. The close relationship developed with fire crews helps change perceptions of young people, reduce attacks on firefighters and engage with the potential workforce of the future. Agreement in Principle has been reached that a Princes Trust programme will be run from the youth zone.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/182/10 RESIDUAL LAND RELEASED AS PART OF THE PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE PROJECT (Previous report on this subject.)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
