

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 9th April 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

West Kirby Regeneration - The Sail Project

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides further information in relation to the Sail Project in respect of issues raised by Cabinet at its last meeting on March 19th.

2. Update on progress

- 2.1 At its meeting in December 2008 (minute 289 refers), Cabinet approved a three month extension to the lock out agreement with Carpenter Investments to the 10th April 2009. Members will recall that the scheme's details had been amended to reflect both the current economic situation and changes made as a result of the consultation.
- 2.2 The revised design proposals were presented to Cabinet on 19th March. At this meeting, Members expressed concern about the loss of car parking, the design of the hotel and the specification for the sailing school. Further details have now been provided by the developer by way of response to these issues (see sections 3, 4 and 5).
- 2.3 Carpenter Investments has also provided financial details about the scheme in the form of a development appraisal. This information is currently being reviewed by the Council's appointed independent consultants.
- 2.4 We await the final report from the appointed consultants in respect of the independent assessment of the development appraisal. This will be available to report to Cabinet on 23rd April. As the lock out agreement expires on 10th April 2009, it is recommended that a further extension of the lockout agreement to 23rd April is agreed.

3. Proposed mitigation for the loss of car parking

- 3.1 As reported to Members on the 19th March, the revised scheme put forward by Carpenter Investments does not now include any sub-basement car parking on the Dee Lane site. The Dee Lane site currently provides 171 public parking spaces. Carpenter Investments has provided a revised site plan for the scheme (see appendix 1) which includes provision of 90 public parking spaces on the Dee Lane site.
- 3.2 To mitigate the net loss of public parking provision on the Dee Lane site, Carpenter Investments propose bringing the car park in front of the sailing school into wider public use. This car park is currently only available for lake licence holders and as a result is under-used. Periodically the car park is forced to close in bad weather but such inclement weather invariably reduces the number of visitors to West Kirby anyway. Carpenter Investments proposes retaining use for lake licence holders as part of the terms of that licence, with a pay and display provision for the general public. The car park would be actively managed to ensure that preference is given to lake licence holders at peak times for sailing. A revised site plan (see appendix 2)

indicates a further capacity of 110 parking spaces with up to 80 public parking spaces expected to be available once parking provision for any lake licence holders has been taken into account.

- 3.3 The Director of Regeneration is supportive of these parking proposals subject to provision for lake licence holders being maintained in line with current provision. Carpenter Investments would manage both car park sites and receive the revenue from parking tickets. However, further discussion with Carpenters on the details of such an arrangement will be required.
- 3.4 Members are reminded that in the event that Cabinet continue to support this proposal and the developer ultimately submits a planning application, the Director of Technical Services would require a Traffic Management Assessment to be carried out which would include the issue of parking provision.

4. Sailing School Specification and Layout

- 4.1 In response to concerns raised about the specification for the sailing school, the Director of Regeneration has confirmed in principle his support for the proposed design and specification being put forward. The specific concerns in relation to the inclusion of disabled toilets and the location of diesel storage have now been addressed (see revised floor plan at appendix 3).
- 4.2 Officers are in continuing discussion with Carpenter Investments' architect to ensure the design fully meets the requirements of the Director of Regeneration. Appendix 4 outlines the requirements as indicated by the director of regeneration. Carpenter Investments has re-affirmed that all design and layout requirements are or will be reflected in the final sailing school design.
- 4.3 Subject to the scheme proceeding to a full planning application, further matters of detail in relation to the layout will be examined in line with the requirements of the planning process and building regulations approval.

5. Hotel Design

- 5.1 Carpenter Investments has indicated that the submitted design remains the one that they wish to proceed with. They have reviewed the design following members' comments but feel unable to make any significant changes. The quality of the scheme was acknowledged by an independent panel through a 'Places Matter Design Review' panel session in February as reported previously to members on 19th March.
- 5.2 Carpenter Investments advise that whilst the general design concept will not change, a number of design modifications will be required as a result of the design evolving through the planning process, to ensure that improvement measures and technical requirements are taken into consideration.

6. Development Appraisal

- 6.1 A Development Appraisal for the project has been provided by Carpenter Investments and this is currently being scrutinised by the Council's appointed independent, external assessor. It is proposed that the findings of the independent assessment and officer's conclusions will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet on 23rd April. This

report will contain commercially sensitive information and will be exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.

7. Asset Management Implications

- 7.1 The current Sailing School is an important leisure facility on a lake which hosts events of international significance. It is in significant need of repair. The Dee Lane car park has not been declared surplus.
- 7.2 The proposed development opportunity would involve the Council offering up the site on a long lease arrangement to be agreed with the Developer, with the Council retaining the freehold interest. The Council managed elements of the development i.e. the Sailing School would be leased back to the Council on a pepper corn rent.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The main financial implication will be the outcome of the independent assessment of the development appraisal that will be reported to Cabinet on 23rd April.
- 8.2 The improved facilities are expected to bring about increased usage in terms of both the lake and the sailing school which will generate increased revenue to the Council from both these income streams.
- 8.3 In terms of on-going maintenance, the developer proposes to lease back the sailing school to the Council through a full repair and maintenance lease, with the Council responsible for maintaining the sailing school as it does currently. Carpenter Investments has indicated that the Council will be liable to pay a small, nominal service charge in relation to the communal areas around the sailing school.
- 8.4 Disposal of the Dee Lane car park would result in a loss of car parking revenue of approximately £28,000 per annum to the Council. Should the scheme proceed, this would require an adjustment to Technical Services budget.
- 8.5 Disposal of both sites will result in a loss of revenue to the Council in respect of a number of rented units and kiosks of £10,800 annually. Should the scheme proceed, this would require an adjustment to Cultural Services and Technical Services budgets.

9. Staffing implications

- 9.1 There are no additional staffing implications. Liaison in relation to this project is provided by the Special Initiatives Team and Investment Strategy Team within the Corporate Services Department.

10. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 10.1 The provision of new, improved public facilities will bring about equal opportunities benefits in terms of access.
- 10.2 The current, free blue badge-holder parking provision at Dee Lane will be affected by these proposals. However, under planning guidelines there will be a requirement to make provision for blue badge bays in any new or revised car parks. Whether there is a charge for such use would be up to the site operator.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Implementation of the project will result in Community Safety improvements with the increases in foot fall and general activity at the junction between Dee Lane and South Parade during evening time.
- 11.2 If the project is supported and goes through to a full planning application, the Police Architectural Liaison Officers will be engaged to ensure the principles of 'secure by design' are incorporated into the design detail.

12. Local Agenda 21 implications.

- 12.1 Implementation of the project proposals will result in major environmental improvements and a high quality sustainable development. Any final development proposal will need to satisfy an environmental impact assessment (including Habitats Regulations Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment if appropriate) and take on board the views of all relevant consultees including Natural England.
- 12.2 The proposal is an important element of the regeneration of the Borough.

13. Planning Implications

- 13.1 Proposals identified within the report will require planning permission and will be reported upon as and when they come forward. The proposals are in conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy Policy RDF3 in their support for improving the image of coastal resorts to attract inward investment and tourism, and Policy LCR4 in terms of consistency with regeneration programmes and policies.
- 13.2 The site of the existing sailing school is within the Developed Coastal Zone in the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and adjacent to the Dee Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is also a Special Protection Area of International Importance. Redevelopment of the Sailing School is in principle appropriate, subject to UDP Policy CO1. The site of the Dee Lane car park to the East of The Parade is within the West Kirby Key Town Centre. Development of the hotel at Dee Lane is therefore in principle appropriate as a town centre use.
- 13.3 In due course, Carpenter Investments will be required to pursue further relevant consultation through the planning process in line with standard planning guidance and procedures.

14. Anti-poverty implications

- 14.1 There are no anti-poverty implications.

15. Social inclusion implications

- 15.1 There are no social inclusion implications.

16. Local Member Support Implications

- 16.1 This report is of particular importance to Members in Hoylake and West Kirby and Thurstaston wards.

17. Background Papers

- 17.1 Background papers in relation to this report are held by the Special Initiatives Team in the Corporate Services Department.

18. Recommendations

- 18.1 That Cabinet notes the content of this report and considers this information along with the report that will be provided to Cabinet on the 23rd April outlining the outcome of the independent assessment of the development appraisal.
- 18.2 That the lock-out agreement be extended to the 23rd April 2009.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

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