

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## DELEGATED DECISION

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b><i>BIRKENHEAD DOG KENNELS</i></b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b><i>BIDSTON AND ST JAMES</i></b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><i>HEAD OF UNIVERSAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES</i></b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b><i>COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES</i></b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b><i>NO</i></b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authority to the granting of a Lease of Birkenhead Dog Kennels to the Friends of Birkenhead Kennels.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Birkenhead Dog Kennels, which is shown edged in red on the attached plan, is currently operated by the Council. The service is estimated to cost the Council in the region of £194,000 net per year.
- 2.2 As part of the Council's Technical Functions Transformational Project, work looking at alternative service options has identified a budget option which would see the Council make savings of £40,000. These savings would be achieved through the development of a formal partnership to run the service with the charity, Friends of Birkenhead Kennels (FOBK) which has been supporting the service on a voluntary basis for a number of years. Through this partnership the service would be delivered through FOBK with the Council retaining ownership of the building. However, the responsibility for the operational delivery of the service would be shared within the Partnership. The main areas of service transformation would be the transfer of most of the kennel staff to the employment of FOBK who would also deliver the administration, enquiry handling, vehicle requirements, building repair and maintenance, general equipment and staff protective clothing and equipment needs of the service.
- 2.3 The details of the service are currently being developed with the FOBK and will be documented by way of a service level agreement (SLA). It is proposed that the FOBK occupies the premises on a lease with a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, with the FOBK being responsible for maintaining and insuring the premises. The lease will include a user clause restricting the use to a Dog Kennels and associated animal welfare support services and will be linked to the SLA. The lease will include provision to bring it to an end if the SLA finishes.
- 2.4 Members will be aware of the Council's obligation to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable on the disposal of its land and property. However, under the General Consent, the Council does have the power to restrict the value of land by imposing restrictions as to its use on the grounds that to do so is in the interest of the economic and / or environmental and / or social well being of the inhabitants of the Borough and provided also that any such restriction in value does not exceed two million pounds, per

transaction. In order to meet the identified savings and deliver the service to be set out in the SLA, the FOBK will need to occupy the premises on a peppercorn rent.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 There is a risk that the FOBK will not be able to operate within its anticipated financial budget. If it is unable to deliver the level of service set out in the SLA, the lease will be brought to an end and the building will return to the Council.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The future of the Kennels has been considered as part of the recent Budget Options and operation by the FOBK is considered to be the best way of delivering the service and at the same time making the anticipated saving.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Environmental Health Manager, along with the FOBK, has undertaken consultations on the proposal.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 6.1 The property will be operated by the FOBK which is a charitable organisation, and will rely largely on volunteers.

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 7.1 The operation of the Kennels in accordance with an SLA is aimed at a reduction in the running cost of that service estimated to be £40,000 per annum.
- 7.2 The proposal will require the transfer of existing Council staff to the FOBK.

### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The lease will require the preparation of appropriate legal documentation.
- 8.2 The legal documentation setting out the terms of the Service Level Agreement will need to be prepared.

### **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

Yes - and can be viewed by following the attached link.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/regeneration-housing-planning>

### **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There will be a slight reduction in the Council's CO2 emissions as a result of the transfer to FOBK.

### **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no planning implications arising from this report.

## 12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the Birkenhead Kennels be leased to the Friends of Birkenhead Kennels on the terms now reported.

## 13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To enable the dog kennels service to continue and also to generate the anticipated savings as part of the budget options.

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## APPENDICES

Location plan.

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

No reference material has been used in the preparation of this report.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date