

FINANCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NEW WALLASEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 7 NOVEMBER 2002

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report seeks approval of the financial recommendations of the New Wallasey Partnership Board from its meeting on 7^h November 2002.

2. Projects approved by the Board

- 2.1 The following projects were approved at the New Wallasey Partnership Board meeting on 7th November 2002:-

2.2 Liscard Hall Feasibility Study

- 2.2.1 Liscard Hall is a Grade 2 Listed Building, in the ownership of the Council. The Central Park Programme Steering Group has considered potential future uses for the building as they see it as having great potential to become an interpretive and visitor centre for Central Park and Wallasey as a whole. It is currently leased to Serve Wirral Training, who have indicated their support for this approach.
- 2.2.2 New Wallasey has funded a structural survey of the building by the Department of Property Services, which has now been completed. It reveals that, although there are no structural problems requiring immediate action, there are essential repair and maintenance tasks to carry out, to prevent serious structural deterioration. This is particularly important as the building is listed Grade 2, and the Council has a duty of care to keep it in good structural order.
- 2.2.3 The New Wallasey Board has therefore agreed that the next step in determining a wider role for the building and its immediate surroundings is to commission a Feasibility Study. This will look at a range of options for broadening the use of the Hall. These might include conferencing and meeting facilities, the refurbishment of the theatre, a café/restaurant, a visitor centre and exhibition area geared to interpreting the history of Wallasey, new toilets, improvements to the car parking and access arrangements, and additional educational courses.
- 2.2.4 In addition, the Feasibility Study would include an assessment of additional costs to carry out associated building adaptations, and explore potential funding sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund or the National Lottery New Opportunities Fund “Fair Share” initiative.

2.2.5 The Council has already agreed that projects for the latter should be targeted at the Wallasey Constituency, with particular reference to greenspaces, public parks, youths causing annoyance and the issue of children's play. Specific areas of focus include Central Park, where the opportunity exists to build on the achievements of New Wallasey funded schemes.

2.2.6 The Board has accepted that the cost of commissioning the Feasibility Study is uncertain at this point, but has agreed a ceiling of £15,000, for budgetary purposes.

2.2.7 The Board agreed the following recommendation:

To fund the commissioning of a Feasibility Study, up to a figure of £15,000, to explore the potential of the building as a major cultural, interpretive and visitor centre for Wallasey, provided the work can be completed by 31 March 2002.

2.3 Seven Waves Radio Project - Grant

2.3.1 This application was submitted by the Leasowe Play, Youth and Community Association (LPYCA), working in partnership with Wirral Metropolitan College. It will provide training in radio broadcasting and undertake a series of 28 day trial broadcasts, in anticipation of the establishment of a permanent community radio station in about 2 years' time. Funding for the revenue costs of the scheme is being sought from the European Social Fund.

2.3.2 Consultations with New Wallasey's Pathways and non-Pathways Local Area Partnerships have now been undertaken, and all support the application. The applicants have also discussed their proposals with the Voluntary Sector Alliance.

2.3.3 There will be a total of 30 training places available every year, each of 15 weeks' duration. 20 trainees will be from Pathways areas, funded by the European Social Fund. The LPYCA/College match will support the remaining 10 places, which will be made available to non-Pathways Wallasey residents.

2.3.4 The revenue costings are the subject of an application to the European Social Fund, with further match being provided by LPYCA (rental) and Wirral Metropolitan College (tuition fees, which will be met by the Learning and Skills Council).

2.3.5 20 trainees per annum will achieve the qualification - a Merseyside Open College Network Intermediate Certificate in radio broadcasting, which is the equivalent of an NVQ2. The applicants acknowledge that there will only be a limited demand from potential employers for this particular qualification as such. Nevertheless, they argue that the training will enhance the employability and motivation of participants, and encourage them to undertake more advanced training in other media studies.

2.3.6 The project will follow other models of good practice (e.g. Knowsley Community Radio, Radio Regen) in developing its long-term sustainability. One of the tasks of the Project Manager will be to secure sponsorship, advertising and other funding sources. The aim is to launch a full-time community radio station after 2 years.

2.3.7 The Board agreed the following recommendation

That a contribution of £35,000 SRB be awarded towards the Seven Waves Radio Project, from the Community Determined Initiatives allocation, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) SRB will be released only on receipt of written confirmation that the revenue streams, including European Social Fund, are in place, and 3 competitive quotes have been obtained for the equipment and building works,**
- (b) The equipment purchased using SRB will remain the property of the Council (on behalf of New Wallasey Regeneration), and be entered on the New Wallasey Asset Register.**
- (c) The applicants will confirm in writing that at least one third of the training places to be provided by the project will be made available to non-Pathways residents.**

2.4 *Local Area Partnership Support Project*

2.4.1 The issue of continued community empowerment and development beyond March 2003 has been the subject of ongoing debate for some time. Various projects have been put forward to provide appropriate support, including a Capacity Building programme and an enhanced Community Action Fund. However, these have tended to be one-off palliatives, rather than sustainable initiatives.

2.4.2 The Programme Manager of New Opportunities on Wirral has been working on an alternative approach which will provide longer term assistance to Wirral Pathways communities, to ensure that they fully engage in, and benefit from, the policies, strategies and funding from Objective One, Neighbourhood Renewal, Housing Market Renewal and other emerging programmes.

2.4.3 It is crucial that the New Wallasey communities obtain maximum benefit from this approach, in particular the 3 non-Pathways Local Area Partnerships, (New Brighton, Wallasey Village and Liscard) which will otherwise be relatively isolated after the 31st March next year. In essence, the proposal is for New Wallasey to fund some of the initial costs of a team which will provide support to the Local Area Partnerships, Pathways and non-Pathways, and Voluntary Sector Alliance, from April 2003 to June 2007.

2.4.4 The proposal submitted by New Opportunities on Wirral has received qualified support from the Community Action Team and the Community Development Initiatives (CDI) Programme Steering Group.

2.4.5 The bid envisages a total funding package of over £2 million, which will include contributions from ERDF and ESF, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, SRB4, and Wirral

MBC. The New Wallasey contribution to this package would be £160,000. In return, the six Area Partnerships would gain:

- 1 full-time Partnership Co-ordinator until 2007,
- 1 part-time Assistant Co-ordinator for 4 years,
- 1 part-time administrative post for 2 years,
- Access to a centralised pool of equipment, materials and stationery,
- Access to a support fund of £1,000 per Partnership per year, and
- Access to professional advice/support and training/seminars.

2.4.6 The posts created are new and will do different things from the existing Pathways posts.

2.4.7 This project will replace the Community Capacity Building and enhanced Community Action Fund projects, which the Board has previously awarded in principle budgets amounting to £100,000.

2.4.8 The project will have a Steering Group comprising the Chairs of the Local Area Partnerships and the Voluntary Sector Alliance, who will ensure that the outputs continue to be met. This will also give an opportunity to discuss and agree work programmes and related issues.

2.4.9 There are obviously issues over timescales, and the desire of the North West Development Agency, for New Wallasey to expend all its SRB resources by the end of this financial year. However, as this project is one of New Wallasey's main "succession" strategies for helping New Wallasey's Local Area Partnerships to continue and develop beyond New Wallasey's lifetime, the NWDA has agreed that it be possible to extend the funding beyond 31 March 2003.

2.4.10 The Cabinet made a decision on the 14th August 2002 to close the existing Pathways project and to develop a new scheme that will include the New Wallasey proposals. Should the wider bid not proceed for any reason, the New Wallasey money can still be matched against ERDF for a project for that area alone.

2.4.11 The Board agreed to give in principle support to a significant New Wallasey contribution to this project, with conditions to safeguard "ownership" by the community partnerships, as well as ensure a continuing dialogue and consultation with the New Wallasey team, and the community and voluntary sectors, as the project is being progressed.

2.4.12 The Board agreed the following recommendations:

- 1. That a contribution of up to £160,000 be awarded in principle, from the Community Determined Initiatives Budget, towards the Local Area Partnership Co-ordination project, subject to the following conditions:**
 - (1) Further discussion over the detail of the proposed posts,**
 - (2) Further consultation with individual partnerships and the voluntary sector,**
 - (3) The early establishment of a Community and Voluntary Sector Steering Group to oversee the detailed development of the project**

- proposal as it affects New Wallasey,
- (4) Further discussion about the organisation to be responsible for employing the proposed staff, their office base(s), lines of reporting and related issues,
 - (5) The Appointments panels must include a representative from both Pathways and non-Pathways partnerships, to be nominated by the Community and Voluntary Sector Steering Group, and
 - (6) Confirmation that all the match funding identified is in place, before the project commences.

2 That negotiations continue with the North West Development Agency over carrying-over New Wallasey SRB expenditure into 2003/04 (and even beyond), in order to support this vital succession project.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

3.1 The resources required will come from the SRB 3 initiative for New Wallasey. There are no direct staffing implications to the New Wallasey team or Wirral MBC.

4. Equal Opportunities Implications

4.1 A number of schemes, will benefit vulnerable residents.

5. Local Agenda 21 Implications

5.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications arising from this report.

6. Local Member Support Implications

6.1 The report has implications for Seacombe, Liscard, Leasowe, Wallasey and New Brighton wards.

7. Background Papers

7.1 Files are held at the New Wallasey Regeneration office at Egerton House.

8. Planning Implications

8.1 It is a condition of grant award that all projects obtain the necessary consents (planning and building regulations) prior to the commencement of the project.

9. Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly from this report.

10. Human Rights Implications

10.1 There are no human rights implications arising directly from this report.

11. Recommendations

11.1 That the allocation of SRB funding to the following projects be approved, as recommended by the New Wallasey Partnership Board.

- i. Liscard Hall Feasibility Study - £15,000**
- ii. Seven Waves Radio Project – Grant - £35,000**
- iii. Local Area Partnership Support Project - £160,000.**

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