

INTEGRATED REGENERATION STUDY FOR BIRKENHEAD/WIRRAL WATERS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the commissioning of an Integrated Regeneration Study for Birkenhead/Wirral Waters to define a clear, single, comprehensive plan for regeneration which integrates Housing Market Renewal, New Growth Point and economic development priorities and programmes.
- 1.2 Cabinet is asked to approve the use of £60,000 Investment Strategy and £60,000 Housing Market Renewal funds to establish a budget of £120,000 to meet the cost of the study and delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration to appoint a consultant following a restricted tendering exercise in line with the Council's Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Birkenhead is one of Wirral's key strategic priority areas for regeneration. It is the largest priority neighbourhood for housing market renewal in Wirral and is also the focus of the New Growth Point initiative. It is central to Peel's proposals for Wirral Waters and is in an area where long-standing Masterplans exist namely Woodside and North Birkenhead or where plans are emerging such as the Town Centre. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) also identifies Birkenhead as a priority for regeneration and development.
- 2.2 In order to deliver effective regeneration it is essential that a single integrated strategy is put in place for Birkenhead which knits together all existing plans, proposals and programmes to establish a clear vision and purpose for the neighbourhood. The purpose of this study is to produce a single, integrated comprehensive spatial regeneration plan for Birkenhead to inform conversations and discussions with funders and other partners about regeneration.
- 2.3 The aims of this study are to produce a spatial plan which:-
- reviews, refreshes and combines previous regeneration studies about Birkenhead into a single vision, story and spatial plan
 - can inform the Council in its discussions and negotiations with funding bodies
 - can advise on investment decisions, regeneration priorities and programmes for Birkenhead
 - assesses housing need and demand information for Birkenhead including affordable and supported housing and helps to provide clarity over how these needs can be met
 - evaluates potential delivery vehicles for regeneration in Birkenhead
 - aligns Housing Market Renewal and Growth Point strategies and investment programmes
 - provides a design guide for new-build housing in Birkenhead which can be used to improve standards of development and design.

- 2.4 Carrying out this piece of work will advise on the production of similar integrated regeneration plans for other priority areas such as Egremont, Seacombe, Tranmere and Rock Ferry in the future. These include the partnership neighbourhoods, which form the interface between Wirral Waters and existing HMRI focus areas and will demonstrate the integration between Wirral Waters, the Growth Point and HMRI.
- 2.5 Cabinet is asked to agree a maximum budget of £120,000 for this piece of work jointly funded by Wirral's Investment Strategy and Housing Market Renewal programmes.
- 2.6 Cabinet is advised that the successful consultant will be appointed via a restricted tendering process, meaning that a two-stage route will be used. Stage 1 will involve all interested parties submitting a pre-qualification questionnaire in response to a public advertisement. Stage 2 will involve short-listed parties being invited to submit a detailed tender. This complies with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Cabinet is asked to give delegated authority to appoint a Consultant to progress the study. The value of the work is below EU procurement rules and does not require an advertisement to be placed in the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union).
- 2.7 It is likely that the study will take some months to complete and interim findings are scheduled to be produced in Autumn 2009. The study will be presented to Members for consideration and incorporated into the Local Development Framework when appropriate.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is estimated the study requires funding of £120,000 and Cabinet is asked to agree to use £60,000 from the Investment Strategy programme and £60,000 from the Housing Market Renewal programme 2008-11.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This study will be managed by existing staff in the Regeneration and Corporate Services Departments.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This project will involve an appropriate level of consultation with stakeholders and will determine solutions such as meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people.

6.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 HMRI and New Growth Point programmes aim to create safer neighbourhoods through creating safer living environments.

7.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The level of new development proposed in Birkenhead will see the construction of homes and buildings which are highly energy efficient and more environmentally sustainable than the buildings they will replace.

8.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The purpose of this study is to provide a co-ordinated update of existing strategies and emerging strategies for Wirral Waters, the Growth Point and Housing Market Renewal Initiatives. Co-ordination of development in this area is central to the achievement of the

Council's Investment Strategy objectives. The study will feed into the Council's Local Development Framework and provide a spatial focus for the areas around the Wirral Waters project, for which Peel Holdings are preparing a Strategic Regeneration Framework and spatial masterplans.

8.2 Later phases of this study will provide for the integration of the Birkenhead spatial masterplans into the Local Development Framework, potentially through the preparation of a series of Action Area Plans.

8.3 Regeneration of Birkenhead and south Seacombe is consistent with the spatial strategy of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), as the inner area of Wirral (defined as the Housing Market Renewal Initiative Area) is a focus within Policies LCR1 and LCR2 of RSS.

9.0 **ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The potential regeneration programmes which this area will benefit from will tackle fuel poverty through energy efficiency and will promote income and wealth via employment creation.

10.0 **SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Regeneration in Birkenhead and in Wirral in general, aims to promote greater inclusion of residents, improve socio-economic outcomes for residents and improve neighbourhood sustainability.

11.0 **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The wards affected directly by this report are Bidston and St. James, Birkenhead and Tranmere and Seacombe.

12.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None.

13.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 That the commissioning of an Integrated Regeneration Study for Birkenhead/ Wirral Waters and the use of £60,000 Investment Strategy and £60,000 HMRI to fund the cost of the study be agreed and authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration to appoint a consultant following a restricted tendering exercise in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

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