



ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Wednesday 6 December 2023

REPORT TITLE:	BIRKENHEAD MARKET OPTIONS STUDY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The current Birkenhead Market Hall is an aging building, operating inefficiently and the Council have been considering options to re-locate the market to an alternative market site for several years. A number of options have been considered and rejected for a variety of reasons detailed in the report (paragraphs 2.1 to 2.10), leaving the proposal, to relocate the existing market to a new purpose-built market hall on the site of the former House of Fraser Store (HOF), as the current option subject to the scheme being delivered to an acceptable design and cost.

The capital cost of delivery for the HOF proposal is now at £31.6 million and the emerging funding gap could have a significant impact on the Council's financial position.

The Council acquired the Grange and the Pyramids in May 2023 and as part of the acquisition Officers have undertaken a strategic review of the vacant sites and sites that could accommodate a market offer to a similar size of the HOF proposal. This paper proposes to examine in detail an alternative permanent option in the former Argos Store located in the Grange shopping centre. However, officers are mindful that the Council is at an early stage of engagement with new representatives for the market traders. This may necessitate consideration of alternatives.

The Wirral Plan 2021 - 2026 has been developed and the focus covers the following five themes:

- Safe & Pleasant Communities;
- Brighter Futures;
- Active and Healthy Lives;
- Sustainable Environment; and
- Inclusive Economy

Of course, the Council acknowledges the emerging Council plan and will ensure any further recommendations are in line with the Council Plan priorities.

This project, and the wider regeneration Programme, delivers against all the above themes. Most specifically, it will contribute significantly towards the ambitions for a thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all. Various strategies have been developed, which underpin this project. These are Stronger Economy and Birkenhead Regeneration Framework.

This matter affects the ward of Birkenhead and Tranmere. This is not a key decision albeit future decisions regarding the market are likely to involve a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to:

House of Fraser Site

1. Note:
 - a. The work to date to progress the House of Fraser site as the currently agreed location to accommodate the Birkenhead Market (as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report).
 - b. The inability for the House of Fraser site to provide the previously identified brownfield housing requirement of 89 units as referred to in paragraph 3.11 of this report;
 - c. The increased financial envelope required to construct the Birkenhead market on the House of Fraser Site as currently designed, set out in paragraph 3.10 of this report.
2. Agree that further work on the developing the market proposals on the House of Fraser site be paused at this time whilst the Argos option is considered, noting the 6-month time constraint for a decision on proceeding beyond RIBA Stage 3 for the House of Fraser site as set out in paragraph 5.3 of this report at this time.
3. Note the further work that will be undertaken on the potential future use of the House of Fraser Site, for consideration by this Committee in due course in the event that a future decision not to proceed with the development of a market on the House of Fraser site is made.

Argos Site

4. Note the limited work undertaken to date on development of the Argos site option to house a permanent market for Birkenhead as set out in Appendix 1.
5. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to proceed with procurement of the RIBA stage 3 design development and appointment of a market consultant to further develop the market option.
6. Note that the Director of Regeneration and Place will bring forward the outcome of the market feasibility and output of the market consultancy work on the Argos option to a meeting of this Committee in Spring 2024 which will include a full options appraisal on the Argos site and associated financial implications.

Wirral Growth Company LLP

7. Note that subject to future member decisions on the developer for the market and the advanced state of work on Pasture Road as set out in paragraph 3.24 of this report, consideration will need to be given to the future of Wirral Growth Company LLP and a report shall be brought to a future meeting of this Committee accordingly.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The relocation of the current market is a critical part of the Birkenhead Town Centre regeneration plan. The proposed HOF new market hall is over budget and cannot be delivered within the indicative budget allocation previously agreed by Policy and Resources Committee. In addition, other options previously considered are not practically and/or financially viable or suitable for a future Birkenhead market. The current market hall is in an ageing building and operating inefficiently with very few traders relative to the overall floor area. A review of the future purpose and operational model for Birkenhead Market is a critical part of the wider regeneration strategy for the town centre.
- 1.2 The Council has entered into a Development Management Agreement with Wirral Growth Company LLP (WGC) to deliver the HOF market option. The Agreement allows the demolition work to commence whilst design work on the new market hall is paused to allow time for the Council to consider options. This window is time limited in the Agreement to 25th April 2024.
- 1.3 The Council acquired the Grange and Pyramids shopping centre in May 2023. The former Argos unit (extending to 28,000 sq. ft) is vacant and following a high-level feasibility study is considered to be a strong alternative location for Birkenhead Market subject to a more detailed design exercise and consultation with the market traders and other stakeholders.

2.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 As part of providing assurance of decision making a number of options have previously been considered as future markets sites. These are set out below.
- 2.2 **Do Nothing** - Not developing a new market site has been considered but has been rejected as it would not enable the development of the Birkenhead Commercial District as agreed by Cabinet when it approved the Partnership Business Plan and Site Development Plan for the Birkenhead Commercial District in February 2020.
- 2.3 **Marks and Spencer** - The first option explored for market relocation in 2019, was the former Marks and Spencer Unit within the Pyramids Shopping Centre. This was generally popular with market traders. However, at that time it was ruled out, as the initial capital cost was too great and required surrender of the long lease by Marks and Spencer. Mutually satisfactory terms could not be agreed. Also, the building has significant challenges for refurbishment including asbestos. Since the Pyramids/Grange is now owned by the Council, this option was due to be reviewed. However, Marks and Spencer has recently sublet the unit for a period of two years to an Art Gallery.

- 2.4 **B&M Bargains** - The B & M Bargains site (prior to demolition) was explored due to its position within the town centre. It was deemed as not appropriate as total gross area was too small totalling circa 9,700sq ft. Following consultation with traders the general feedback was that it was not central enough to the Town centre.
- 2.5 **Europa Box Park Model** - This proposal was for a shipping container development similar to one that is in use at Croydon, London, located on Europa Boulevard. It would have housed circa 50 traders. This solution was explored during 2020 and at that time dismissed for various reasons including cost of delivery, relocation of utilities and trader consultation concluded the location was too remote to the town centre.
- 2.6 **St Werburghs Area Temporary Market** - Consideration was given to an outdoor covered market and the use of a vacant shop unit at 1a St Werburghs Square but abandoned at the time due to the size of the temporary proposal and traders concerns about viability of the market and traders.
- 2.7 **Refurbishment of the Existing Market Hall** - The option to refurbish all or part of the current market hall has also been reviewed in the past. This option requires the temporary decant of traders with a significant capital cost and was rejected at the time as no suitable temporary home could be identified for the traders. This option could be re-explored noting that a potential decant to an alternative site would need to be funded by capital and, additional funding would be required to undertake detailed feasibility through a design team and market curator consultancy. Nonetheless, since consideration of this option, the main change is, that the site has been identified as a key part of future regeneration activity in Birkenhead Town Centre and demolition of the site will;
- Be a catalyst for further strategic asset management of the shopping centre, and;
 - Provide an opportunity to continue the development activity aligned to the Birkenhead Commercial District new office buildings.
- 2.8 **Europa Retail Park Former Wilko Site** - This property located to the northwest of the bus station, is owned by the Council and has a number of vacant units which, now includes the former Wilkos store since their recent administration. The site may be considered an appropriate option for a relocation of the market hall although it would require the Council to achieve vacant possession from retailers still in occupation including Mecca Bingo which may require a substantial premium to be paid. The site also forms part of the wider town centre regeneration strategy for residential led mixed use development and has been discounted for those reasons.
- 2.9 **St John's Pavement Retail Units** - Council Officers met with the newly formed Birkenhead Market Traders Association committee on 15th November 2023. The Committee put forward a proposal for a market to be located within existing units at St John's Pavement. Officers have explored this option on a desktop basis, noting that some of the proposed units are subject to existing tenancies and the overall size

footprint both internal and external is challenging due to the exiting design and potential encroachment onto land allocated for wider development within the Birkenhead Commercial District.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The regeneration of Birkenhead has been a long-term priority for the Council, articulated as early as 2010 in the Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study. In the time since the production of that study, the need for regeneration in Birkenhead has not reduced, but the context for town centres has changed significantly. There are unprecedented commercial high street challenges resulting in well reported high street decline with wider impact on the sustainability of communities and the built environment.
- 3.2 There has been a market building in Birkenhead since 1835, firstly on what is now the site of Birkenhead Town Hall and then, as the town grew, from 1845 on a site in Hamilton Street where the University of Chester has its Birkenhead University Centre. Following major fires in 1969 and 1974 the decision was taken to relocate the market to its current home in 1977. In 1993 the Council undertook development to build brick arches and towers to the front of the 1977 building which remain today. In 2019 after 15 years of the market being externally managed, the Council brought the market back under Council management.
- 3.3 A catalyst for driving growth throughout the borough includes delivering a strong and thriving Birkenhead Town Centre and the market has been identified through consultation as a key element of this. In December 2018, full Council approved the acquisition of the long leasehold interest in Birkenhead Market to facilitate its assimilation into the Council's freehold title.
- 3.4 The current Birkenhead Market is of an aged construction with outdated infrastructure which incurs high maintenance liabilities and produces an asset diminishing in value. The building as it currently stands is expensive to operate and/or inappropriate for its current use and not energy efficient. Ongoing repairs and maintenance costs are estimated to grow quite significantly over the next few years in the building's current state. Estimation of these increased costs is set out in paragraph 4.1.
- 3.5 The Market will inevitably continue to face pressures of decline. New traders are unlikely to be secured and will not have the critical mass to change the perception of the area in isolation. This is reflective of the recent financial pressures as the profitability of the market is in deficit.
- 3.6 On 24 March 2020 the Leader of the Council (in the former Cabinet System) resolved (amongst other matters) to approve the re-development of Birkenhead Market on the current Birkenhead market site with the scale of the new market offer to accommodate an approximately 5,000sq. ft scheme. Appropriate authority was given to the Director of Regeneration and Place to progress this option.
- 3.7 In November 2021, Policy and Resources Committee resolved in light of subsequent exploration of a number of alternative options (amongst other matters) to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to:

- *Progress directly to a permanent market;*
- *Award the Wirral Growth Company LLP a development agreement to undertake the design and cost modelling to RIBA Stage 5 for the new permanent market and negotiate terms with WGC in accordance with the outline terms and specification outlined within the report, including any associated infrastructure and demolition works to support the new market facility on the site of the former House of Fraser building, adjacent to St Werburgh's Square; and*
- *Adopt the preferred option, to demolish, design and develop the former House of Fraser site, the cost of which to be met from within the planned Future High Street Fund and Wirral Growth Company Surplus resources allocated.*

3.8 In March 2022 WGC Joint Venture Board approved the development agreement as directed by the Policy and Resources Committee. Subsequently, WGC LLP has prepared designs, undertaken pre-application engagement with the Council as Local Planning Authority, and undertaken consultation with stakeholders and Birkenhead Market Traders to conclude to Royal Institution of British Architects design stage 3 (known as RIBA 3) designs for a new market hall on the former HOF site.

3.9 The RIBA stage 3 design enables a robust review of design and cost as a precursor to the preparation and submission of a detailed planning application. The resultant total cost of development as of July 2023 is £31.6m including design fees and WGC development profit. This assumes that the project commences on site in January 2024. Current inflationary pressure on construction costs would lead to an increase in this figure by 2.5 % if construction commenced in December 2024 or 6.5% if it commenced in December 2025. Any abortive costs would be deducted from the Council's share of the WGC LLP profit.

3.10 The proposal submitted to Policy and Resources Committee in November 2021 assumed a total anticipated cost of £24m. The current proposals far exceed the original cost assumptions and consideration must be given to the economic viability of the project. The Council has entered into a Development Management Agreement with WGC for the development of the HOF site into a new Market Hall. The agreement provides the Council with a 6-month window to accept or reject the development of the new market. This window expires on the 25 April 2024.

Former House of Fraser Site

3.11 As outlined above WGC instructed to bring forward a RIBA stage 3 report for delivery of a new market hall on the HOF site. In July 2023 the work was completed and a total cost of development at £31.6m presented to the Council. This does not include site acquisition costs of £2.0m. The original proposal for the site envisaged a total capital cost of no more than £24m funded in part by £14.6 Future High Street funding, with the funding gap being funded from WGC Birkenhead Commercial District Phase 1 and Council reserves. It is anticipated that the capital cost would increase further based on inflation on build costs, in the event that a formal tender exercise was undertaken to deliver this scheme. As an output, the option as it stands, is unaffordable and other options for the site will be considered for a mixed-use scheme as outlined later in this report.

- 3.12 In addition, the site was purchased with a grant from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority of £2.0m which requires commencement of development of a minimum 89 residential units by 31st March 2025. The current proposal does not include residential development and this presents a risk of grant clawback unless an alternative scheme is proposed that incorporates a residential offer.
- 3.13 The above information illustrates that the Council and its stakeholders have been a long and difficult journey to date, to provide appropriate, up to date, modern accommodation for Birkenhead Market. Birkenhead Market has always, in any of the options considered, been a pivotal part of the Birkenhead Town Centre Regeneration. Recognising the upheaval of the Council's journey to date, it is more important than ever that the Council is clear in its next steps, rationale and delivery for both the community and the market traders.

Former Argos Store – Possible Future Market Option

- 3.14 The Council acquired the Grange and the Pyramids shopping centres in May 2023 and as part of the Policy and Resources Committee approval provided a commitment to strategically asset manage the shopping centre and particularly the void retail units. Post acquisition, a review of vacant units was undertaken to determine if any units of the right size (based on the size of the HOF option) or location could accommodate a market offer that could be delivered at a reduced capital cost.
- 3.15 As an outcome of this review, the Council commissioned an initial feasibility study to consider the best alternative use for the former Argos Store within the Grange Shopping Centre as part of its continuing work as owner of the Grange and Pyramids Shopping Centre to maximise income and minimise void costs. That study concluded that the former Argos store could accommodate between 60 and 70 3x3m market units depending upon the mix of produce, standard stalls and food and beverage stalls. A market delivered on the HOF site, based on the work carried out to date by WGC would provide 58 to 70 3 x3m units for comparison. The current Birkenhead Market Hall has 44 active traders. The initial feasibility study is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.16 Members are being asked to approve design of the Argos option to progress to RIBA stage 3. If agreed this would allow a robust cost design and cost analysis to be completed in parallel with a proactive engagement strategy with the market traders. It would also allow an operational model that defines the future purpose of Birkenhead Market and the potential for it to be located in the Argos unit to be developed. Learning from other market redevelopment initiatives including for example Warrington Market, criteria will be developed building on the work to date with market traders to ensure that traders in scope for the future market are appropriate for the new market offer.

Procurement of Supply Chain

- 3.17 To support development of RIBA stage 3 design it is proposed to appoint a multi-disciplinary design team which will include specialist market consultants via the NHS SBS Framework. This framework is free to access by both the NHS and the wider public sector and includes specialists in estates and facilities. Working through a

pre-approved framework, designed for the public sector will support the need for officers to move quickly to undertake the detailed options study in advance of the 25 April 2024 deadline in the Development Management Agreement with WGC relating to the HOF building.. It is anticipated that the market curator consultant would be a sub-contractor appointment of this design team.

- 3.18 Scope of a commission for a design team and market curator consultancy would include:
1. Engagement strategy with Market Traders and other Stakeholders to review trader needs, options to decant to permanent alternatives, placemaking and development of a sustainable operating model for the long-term success of Birkenhead Market.
 2. Design and Cost analysis to RIBA Stage 3 for the Argos option.
- 3.19 In the event that this committee pursues a wider direction to explore alternative sites it in envisaged the costs would increase accordingly and in proportion to the number of options explored.
- 3.20 Upon the appointment of a Design and market Consultant team, that will enable a RIBA Stage 3 option to be brought back to this Committee in March 2024 for a decision. The market consultancy curator will provide a critical role in understanding the existing requirements of traders and blending that with their experience of designing a market offer, will support the long term needs of Birkenhead and attract residents to Birkenhead town centre.
- 3.21 As part of the strategy to identify, design and model the next phases of regeneration of Birkenhead Town Centre, the Council has secured grant funding from Homes England. The grant funding will be used to appoint CBRE, and a multi-disciplinary architect led team to work with the inhouse Regeneration and Place team to start to prepare a Strategic Regeneration Framework. This will include the site of the current market and the House of Fraser site as priorities. A delivery plan will be prepared to support the Strategic Regeneration Framework. A plan is attached for information at Appendix 2.

Implications for Wirral Growth Company LLP

- 3.22 In November 2021, Policy and Resources Committee approved the indicative WGC LLP stage 2 Site Development Plan for Birkenhead Town Centre. It also agreed to award WGC a development agreement to undertake the design and cost modelling to RIBA Stage 5 for the new permanent market at HOF. The premise of the decision was that the costs of the new market, including the demolition of the House of Fraser site were to be met from the Future High Street Fund and WGC surpluses.
- 3.23 WGC completed the design work for the new market hall in July 2023. The Council and WGC entered into an Agreement to demolish the HOF site and progress with the new market on 25 October 2023. This agreement provides the Council with a 6-month window to consider the design and cost of the new market hall and approve or reject the proposal by April 2024.

- 3.24 As referred to elsewhere in this paper, the new market cost proposed at £31.6m, far exceeds the original cost and is unaffordable from the currently identified sources of funding (Future High Streets Fund and WGC LLP surpluses). Should the decision subsequently be taken not to proceed with the new market under the WGC LLP's role, as developer, the Council would be free to bring forward other options. Those options could be for the Council itself or with other partners (subject to procurement) or seek to work with WGC to consider alternative options.
- 3.25 WGC has completed the first phase of Birkenhead Commercial District and should the market not proceed on the HOF site it will have only one live project (Pasture Road, Moreton) to complete. The sale of the site is likely to be completed by June 2024. Subject to member decisions on the developer for the market, consideration will be given to the future of WGC and a paper brought to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources committee.

Future Options for Former House of Fraser (HOF) Site

- 3.26 The HOF site is a strategic part of the wider regeneration plans for Birkenhead providing a link to the St Werburghs masterplan, Hind Street Urban Village and back to the Town Centre. Mixed use development including residential units to meet the requirements of Brownfield Land grant could create a further catalyst to the wider area and deliver a viable scheme.
- 3.27 Over the Winter 2023/Spring 2024 options for this site will be considered, aligned to the Local Plan as part of the next phases of development for the town centre to provide a cohesive and deliverable development strategy for this site. Mixed use development could incorporate ground floor retail and leisure uses including food and beverage, event space that would complement the wider town centre plans.
- 3.28 Should the Council not proceed with WGC as development partner for the site, a procurement strategy will be agreed, and a development partner procured to deliver as a priority development of the site.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed new market hall on the former HOF site has seen the budget cost increase by over 25% since scheme inception. This coupled with the opportunity under the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot as agreed by Policy and Resources Committee recently to re-allocate funding to other projects leaves a considerable viability gap to be funded by the Council. It is therefore prudent to consider an alternative to the former Argos store and to make a recommendation to a future committee for approval. WGC has procured the design work for the HOF market option and all fees for this work will be funded from WGC surplus.
- 4.2 On 15 February 2023, Policy and Resources Committee considered a report on the capital programme for 2023-2028. This included an indicative cost of up to £28.5m for the market, subject to the agreement of funding it from both development surplus and capital receipts from WGC. The cost of the market has grown to £31.6m and other financial priorities will need to be considered by Policy and Resources Committee if the HOF market option is progressed.

- 4.3 An initial feasibility study for the potential use of the former Argos store has been undertaken at a cost of £24,000 funded through the operational financial management account for the Grange/Pyramids Shopping Centre.
- 4.4 Professional Fees to progress a RIBA stage 3 design proposal will cost no more than £200k including specialist market consultancy. These fees will be funded from Future High Street Grant.
- 4.5 If the existing market were to stay in its current home without refurbishment there will still be a need for considerable investment, in both planned and reactive maintenance costs over the next 5- 10 years. In previous years this has been approximately £40,000 per annum. The age and condition of the existing asset would suggest an annual capital investment of £100,000 - £150,000.
- 4.6 The existing market is currently loss making, running a forecast annual deficit of £464,427 for the current financial year. The deficit is funded by the Council. The total cost of operation on the current site for 2023/24 is estimated at £775,277 with income from traders of £312,850.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that if the HOF option was taken forward based on the capital costs, this would result in higher rents and service charge for market traders.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council's right to hold a market in Birkenhead is contained in the Birkenhead Improvement Act 1833 and the Birkenhead Corporation Act 1881. These rights are often referred to as "Charter Rights" as the original grant of the right to hold a market in Birkenhead was made by Royal Charter in the thirteenth century and these rights were in effect codified by the subsequent legislation. By having the right to hold a market in Birkenhead, case law indicates that this exclusivity extends to 6 2/3 miles from the site of the Birkenhead Market.
- 5.2 The proposed demolition of the former HOF store and development of a new market building on the site must be procured through WGC LLP. Development Services agreements have been entered into, pursuant to which WGC LLP has provided services to the Council. Such services include design services relating to the proposed new market and project management services. When matters have progressed to the point where the development is able to proceed the Council has the option to confirm, whether it wishes to move ahead with the development works. If the Council wishes to proceed with a new market on the HOF site, stage development funding agreements are to be entered into providing for the WGC LLP to procure the development works and the Council to fund these.
- 5.3 The principal terms of the Development Services Agreement are that;
- (1) The Council appoints WGC LLP as developer to perform development services specified in the agreement. The development services include carrying out site surveys; formulating the design of the new market; obtaining planning permission for the development and any necessary statutory consents; advising in relation to the appointment of the building contractor and professional team;

monitoring costs of the development and reporting to the Council on progress of the development.

- (2) WGC LLP agrees not to make any profit or commission from the provision of the development services without WBC's consent other than their agreed fee of 10 percent of the development costs.
- (3) Once the design of the development has progressed to RIBA Stage 3 WGC LLP must submit to the Council an updated development appraisal. the Council is to notify WGC LLP by 25 April 2023 whether it wishes to progress with the development
- (4) If the Council confirms that it does wish to proceed following receipt of the updated development appraisal WGC LLP is to seek to obtain planning permission for the development, satisfy the initial development pre conditions, develop the design to RIBA Stage 4 proceed with a building contract
- (5) WGC LLP is to confirm as soon as reasonably practicable the total maximum costs for carrying out the development. The Council is to notify WGC by 25 April 2024 whether it wishes to proceed with the development based upon those costs.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Council will create a project team and ensure the right technical expertise is commissioned to create a business case for the Argos proposal and for final consideration by Policy and Resources committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Inflation continues to be a critical risk on build costs. As this option progresses through design stages, costs will be assessed and tracked on a regular basis and design adjusted where possible to provide value for money.
- 7.2 The location and condition of the existing market is impacting the marketing strategy for the new Council Offices. If the current market hall is to remain in its current location it is a barrier to the next phases of regeneration particularly aligned to strategic assessment management of the town centre and enabling wider redevelopment of the existing site located in the heart of the town centre.
- 7.3 Continuing the House of Fraser market option would reduce funds available for other initiatives as part of the wider investment plan and significantly impact the Councils budget position.
- 7.4 The regeneration team leading this work will fully assess all risks associated with project delivery and prepare a risk register which will be continually monitored and updated through the Councils Programme Management Office.
- 7.5 Section 5.3 of this reports sets out a timeline of 25 April 2024 to inform WGC LLP of the Councils intentions to progress the HOF market option. This provides limited time for officers to explore the Argos option or indeed any wider options as directed by Committee to inform decision making.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Full engagement with traders is ongoing and will continue as the Argos option feasibility study to RIBA 3 develops. All other options as listed above will also be reviewed and re-consulted with the market traders and other stakeholders.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. An EIA will be undertaken as part of next steps subject to approvals of this committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Making use of an existing asset within the shopping centre may reduce the Council carbon footprint when compared with the development of a new building.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Regeneration of Birkenhead is the backbone of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Local Plan. In this context this project it is part of a wider regeneration programme to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy to benefit local residents and communities.
- 11.2 Community Wealth Building re-organises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities. The principles of the regeneration of Birkenhead Town Centre are to deliver a diversified and mixed-use town centre, with a wider catchment of people living and working in the area and a major transformation of Birkenhead market to make it more appealing, sustainable and fit for modern market trading conditions will support economic, social and health outcomes, the community and many small and medium enterprises.
- 11.3 Within the regeneration programme Council land and assets are being used as a base to build community wealth, revitalising the town centre and maximising opportunities for local people. Future procurement exercises will build the wealth of our local communities where the Council will strive to maximise social value activity through the creation of local employment/training opportunities and local labour/spend to maximise the Wirral pound.

REPORT AUTHOR: Marcus Shaw MRICS
Assistant Director Asset Management
Email: Marcusshaw@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

1. Initial Argos Feasibility study
2. SRF Boundary and priority development

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Wirral Plan 2021-2026
Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee in accordance with Section 4.2 (d), (e), (f) and (g) of its Terms of Reference:

- (d) economic development, including but not limited to infrastructure, enterprise, skills and seeking, securing and managing external funds to achieve that, directly or in partnership with joint ventures and external companies or bodies as well as with the Combined Authority and government bodies;
- (e) the Council's functions and partnerships regarding the promotion of economic growth and the establishment and development of business;
- (f) the promotion and development of the economic factors in the area, such as seeking to ensure sufficient and appropriate employment sites, investment, adult skills, apprenticeship schemes, productivity, development sites and so forth;
- (g) overseeing the progress of major projects (including major building, infrastructure or other projects involving the erection or significant alteration of major permanent structures or landmarks) undertaken by the Council directly or as enabler, funder or joint enterprise partner, including but not limited to the WGC LLP;

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee	08/06/2021
Policy and Resources Committee	10/11/2021
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee	19/10/2022
Policy and Resources Committee	15/02/2023
Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee	08/03/2023