

The Sail - West Kirby Development Brief



Prepared by Corporate Services and Education & Cultural Services
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Situated in the North West of England, the peninsula of Wirral is regarded as one of the country's best kept secrets. Located between the Mersey and the Dee, with spectacular views of the Liverpool Waterfront and North Wales, Wirral boasts 60 square miles of extraordinary landscape, covered in a rich tapestry of historic events, people and buildings.

The town of West Kirby sits on the north west of the peninsula, with the proposed "Sail" site located alongside the busy marine lake. In close proximity to the busy local shopping centre, its promenade offers unobstructed views and spectacular sunsets across the Dee Estuary, against the background of the Welsh Hills.

The Metropolitan Borough of Wirral is seeking a development partner that has the vision, matched with the ability, to deliver a design of building that fully matches the promise of the location and will help facilitate the vision to firmly establish West Kirby as:

“an outstanding place to live and to visit, widely known for the quality and variety of the recreational facilities on offer and the quality of the built and natural environment”



location, location, location



The proposals for the high quality improvements to West Kirby forms part of a broader strategy for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby, building upon the recommendations from the Hoylake and West Kirby Masterplan (Building Design Partnership - November 2004). The tenyear Masterplan provides the strategic context for Wirral to capitalise on the immediate opportunity and the high profile of the area arising from the 2006 Open Golf Championships at Royal Liverpool Golf Club.

Whilst the Masterplan is not a blueprint, it sets down a vision for both towns, the key principles for development and identifies a number of significant opportunities for investment. Moreover it will provide a framework to deliver the sustainable regeneration of the towns, both now and in future years.

In spatial terms, the vision has three distinct components:

- **Town Centres** - improving the public realm and making them more pedestrian friendly, as a means of attracting private sector investment;
- **Seafronts** - improving the quality of recreational facilities;
- **The Golf Resort** - the aspiration to deliver a top of the range golf resort and spa development.



the development challenge

The location on the corner of Dee Lane and South Parade places the "Sail" site in a focal point for pedestrian and vehicular movement in the area. South Parade is a popular "promenading" route for both vehicles and pedestrians. As such, "The Sail" marks the starting point of a journey along the landside of the Marine Lake, which continues south to the West Kirby Sailing Club site.

Visibility on the approach down Dee Lane must therefore be a key element of the design. In addition, it sits at an important crossroads in the coastal pedestrian routes. The "boardwalk" route from the Red Rocks area rejoins the highway here and the main pedestrian route to Hilbre Island starts and finishes at the same point. It is therefore located at the interface of a busy vehicular route and "get away from it all" walking routes for those with the time to spare. Consequently, "The Sails" potential as an iconic "marker point" in both the local townscape and the Wirral coastal route is hard to overstate.

The West Kirby Marine Lake is an important facility for both dinghy sailing and windsurfing. In fact, in the appropriate wind conditions, it is one of the most outstanding, and easily accessible locations within the North West. However, the existing facilities available to

visiting sports users are not judged to be adequate. A key functional element of the design will therefore be the re-provision of changing, showering and operational facilities for users of the Marine Lake, including the sail training school. A related constraint that will have to be very carefully dealt with is the avoidance of any significant "wind shadowing" effect on the Marine Lake, which could detract from the Marine Lake's "raison d'etre".

It is recognised that the scheme will require substantial commercial elements to produce a viable development. The existing facility has retail elements in the form of a ship's chandlery and an ice cream sales kiosk and subject to planning permission, could be expanded to include a specialist "outdoor" shop and restaurant type facilities to increase the range of uses within the site. However, due to the proximity of residential properties in Dee Lane, it is envisaged that any development of the site towards a pub, nightclub or similar establishment would not be acceptable.

West Kirby Marine Lake:
Sailing and walking in front of the
stunning Welsh peninsular





scheme philosophy

West Kirby is promoted as a high quality local resort with excellent eating and entertainment facilities for day-trippers and visitors from the surrounding area. However, it is recognised that the facilities available to visitors are now somewhat dated, in need of improvement. The Open Golf Championship is to be held at the Royal Liverpool Golf course in nearby Hoylake in 2006. This provides a major incentive for investment in facilities for visitors to Hoylake and West Kirby. This site could play a lead role in helping to deliver improvements in West Kirby and its environs.

The fifty-two acre Marine Lake is used extensively for dinghy sailing, windsurfing and canoeing and is host to a number of sailing clubs, schools and events. It is used for such prestigious events as the Wilson Trophy, held in May of each year. It is considered to be one of the most outstanding and specialised locations in the country for windsurfing in particular. The site currently houses a sailing school, boat storage facilities, together with toilets and changing rooms for windsurfers, dinghy sailors, canoeists and other users of the lake.

The provision of high quality facilities for the purpose of encouragement and development of water sports, including windsurfing, dinghy sailing and canoeing, is a key driver and must form an integral part of any development. The Hoylake & West Kirby Masterplan in particular draws attention to the key need for improved recreation facilities to develop the regional and national potential of the Marine Lake for users and visitors.

In the light of the above, the existing Council owned facilities on the site, although appearing to be in reasonable physical condition, are clearly in need of modernisation and renewal to meet the expectations of the present day. It is recognised that there is an opportunity for a commercial development, and it is expected that this will be the catalyst to facilitate further improvements and investment in the town.

The site adjoins the main pedestrian access route to Hilbre Island - accessible only at certain stages of the tide. The development will be expected to contribute to the enhancement of this route, through the provision of eating and drinking facilities, appropriate retail uses, and innovative interpretive facilities and visitor amenities.

The existing site is of limited size. If prospective developers feel that there is insufficient space for the commercial elements required to deliver a development of the type and quality required, a special case would have to be put for any additional expansion. Given the sensitive location of the site, any such case could be expected to attract the highest degree of scrutiny within the planning appraisal process. Developers are advised therefore to consult with and seek the advice of the Planning Department (Development Control) before any firm proposals are submitted.



re-provision of facilities

The existing facilities for the sailing school, offices and changing facilities are as shown on the attached plan. They briefly comprise; male and female public toilets, male and female changing rooms, training room and "wet" lecture room and a Tourist Information Office. Externally facilities include children's "wet" changing rooms and a drying room housed within Portakabin style accommodation. In addition there is a separate boat storage building that is let in multiple use. (A schedule of tenancies is available upon request).

Within any proposed development, Wirral are looking for a substantial improvement to the operational facilities for the sailing school and its users. This might encompass the refurbishment of the existing facility or its demolition and the construction of new build. Any complementary development on the council owned car park opposite would also be considered subject to any planning issues. Ideally we would be seeking to incorporate the following into the design:

- Theatre style teaching room for 50 pupils
- 2 x seminar rooms leading off above, seating 10-15 boardroom style
- Separate changing rooms for lake users & general public
- Separate communal changing rooms
- "Wet" teaching space
- Restroom/canteen area for lake users

- Staff Room and restroom for up to 12 instructors (Summer peak time)
- Drying facilities
- Open boat storage compound
- Office space and customer services area. (One office has to overlook the lake, so that the Centre Manager can visually supervise the lake and landing areas).
- Office and store for Beach Lifeguards, Beach Wardens and Park Rangers. (These facilities could be separately provided, if that is a more economical solution).
- Observation platform and visitor interpretation area
- New public toilets

COMMERCIAL

Subject to Planning, the following commercial elements are recommended:

Ground level

1. Ships chandlery/outdoor wear and "beach" retail shop
2. Ice cream/refreshments kiosk outlet
3. Café

Upper Floor Level

1. High quality restaurant to take advantage of views across the Lake/River Dee Estuary.
2. Other facilities to be considered on their merits.



An aerial view of "the Sail"



planning & environmental issues

Within the current Unitary Development Plan, the site is designated as within the coastal zone of Wirral, immediately adjoining the boundary of the key town centre shopping area of West Kirby. Applicants are referred to section 20 of the Unitary Development Plan, Policy COA1 and Policy COI "Development within the Developed Coastal Zone" for guidance. As indicated above, some ancillary retail development related to the other activities on site, is likely to be acceptable in planning terms. Given the location of the site, the Council will be looking for an exceptional standard of design and given the site's coastal location and exposure to the elements, particular attention will need to be given to the choice of building materials and fittings.

The Dee Estuary (including the foreshore), right up to the boundary of

the Marine Lake, is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site) and is also a potential Special Area of Conservation. English Nature would be consulted on any planning application and an appropriate assessment may need to be prepared, particularly if any land-take from the foreshore is envisaged.

The site understood to be classified as having a moderate flood risk by the Environment Agency, but interested parties should make their own inquiries (<http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/mapController> and search under 'West Kirby' for details). Potential developers are recommended to undertake their own flood risk assessment, and a survey of the current ground conditions prior to design.

The beautiful surroundings of Hilbre Island - only accessible when the tide is low

the selection process

The process will be in 2 stages. At the first stage you are asked to provide sketch drawings and an outline description and costings together with proposed funding of your proposals. This will be used to assess suitability and progress to the second stage.

At the second stage you will be asked to submit a formal bid with full scheme description, outline business plan and sources of funding identified with a view to the selection of preferred developer status.

Please provide a summary of the following information in your submission:

- Details of previous experience in high quality developments
- An outline of your organisation's financial standing
- A summary of your design and/or build technical capacity

The extent to which other organisations external to your own company will be used in order to deliver this proposal.

What to do ?

If you are interested in being considered for this proposal please submit your ideas to the Authority by the date and time indicated in the accompanying letter and to the address indicated.

Appointment Process

The appointment will be made through the competitive tendering process and subject to the Authority's regulations. Final selection may be subject to a short interview process and officers will be guided in any shortlisting by best value principles, quality of proposal and adherence to the brief on offer. It is expected that local elected Members will have an input into the selection process.



contacts

Should you have any questions in regard to the administrative process involved in this tendering exercise then please contact Ray Jinkinson, Procurement Officer on: 0151 606 2338.

If you have any questions or need clarification in relation to any aspect of the tender itself then please contact the following:

Wirral MBC,
Corporate Services Department
Town Hall,
Brighton Street,
Wallasey
CH44 8ED

Property Management

Alisdair McNicol, Principal Valuer
0151 691 8410

Forward Planning

Andrew Fraser, Senior Planning Officer
0151 691 8218

Special Initiatives

Howard Mortimer, Team Leader
0151 691 8139

Education & Cultural Services Department,
Hamilton Building,
Conway Street,
Birkenhead
CH41 4FD

Jim Lester, Head of Branch, Culture & Leisure Services
0151 666 4331/4293

Technical Services Department,
Cheshire Lines Building,
Canning Street,
Birkenhead
CH41 1ND

Planning (Development Control)

Daniel Owen, Senior Planning Officer
0151 606 2503

Highways (Adoptions)

Jayne Harris, Senior Principal Assistant Engineer
0151 606 2196

Statutory Undertakers:

Electricity

Scottish Power MANWEB,
Prenton,
Birkenhead
0845 272 36 36

Water

United Utilities,
Dawson House,
Great Sankey,
Warrington
WA3 3LW
01925 237 000

Sewage

United Utilities

Gas

National Grid Transco,
Spa Road,
Bolton,
Lancs
BL1 4SR
01204 545 076

Reference Papers/Further Information:

Wirral Unitary Development Plan
(adopted February 2000 – and currently subject to review) – www.wirral.gov.uk/udp/

Local Development Framework –
www.wirral.gov.uk/ldf/

Regeneration Masterplan for Hoylake and West Kirby, prepared by Building Design Partnership – November 2004) – www.wirral.gov.uk/so/hwkmp/

