

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

25TH JUNE 2007

1. ERDINGTON TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority approves the formulation of a Service Level Agreement with Erdington Town Centre Partnership relating to the use of the Erdington Interactive Centre.
- 1.2 THAT a full time Centre Facilitator be established at Erdington Interactive Centre on a 12 month temporary contract.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to seeking approval to develop a Service Level Agreement with Erdington Town Centre Partnership relating to the use of facilities at the Interactive Centre and to employ a Centre Facilitator on a 12 month temporary contract.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Executive Committee approved a partnership arrangement on 24th July 2006, to provide an 'Interactive Centre' at Erdington Fire Station. This partnership with the Erdington Constituency involved £25K funding from the Local Delivery Group supported by £10K from the Birmingham Fire Reduction Partnership.
- 3.2 Following the opening of the Interactive Centre in December 2006 the facility has become a hub within the constituency for community safety and community engagement. This is creating many opportunities locally for fire service involvement in the nationally agreed Local Area Agreement themes: Safer & Stronger Communities; Children & Young People; Healthier Communities & Older People; Enterprise & Economic Development.

- 3.3 Currently the work associated with the administration of the Interactive Centre is covered by the Station Administration Assistant at Erdington with additional support coming from station personnel during afternoons and evenings. As the centre is now being increasingly utilised, the workload and required level of support has become very demanding.
- 3.4 Preliminary discussions with the Erdington Town Centre Partnership have resulted in a solution to the administrative workload. They are willing to fund a post to run the centre with part of the post being utilised to provide administrative and marketing support to the Town Centre Partnership. This post has undergone a job evaluation and has been determined at Grade 5.
- 3.5 The Erdington Town Centre Partnership was established in 2001 and is responsible for the development of the local district in support of the Governments 'Cleaner Safer Greener' Initiative. They are currently being presented by CLG as an example of best practice in Town Centre Management, have strong ties with a wide range of community partners and have recently secured a successful BID (Business Improvement District) vote. This is a business led initiative where extra revenue through a compulsory levy is generated to improve the local area with the delivery of additional services. This proposal also links directly to the Erdington Town Centre regeneration plan.
- 3.6 The Erdington Town Centre Manager would also use, as part of any agreement, a vacant room in Flat 14 of Erdington Fire Station. The other rooms in this flat are currently used by the National Association of Retired Firefighters (NARF) and the proposal will not impact on them in any way. Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's, Corporate Property Department has been requested to draw up a licence agreement in relation to the above.
- 3.7 The proposals detailed in the report fully support the aims and objectives of West Midlands Fire Service in its work with the community and supporting hard to influence groups. The main Key Priorities within the Corporate Strategy which relate to this initiative are:-
- 1.1 - Educate, inform and target vulnerable groups.
 - 1.5 - Working with partner agencies to achieve our common objectives.
 - 1.6 - Contributing to improvements in local well being.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is required and has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did raise issues which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed. A number of benefits from the proposal have been identified regarding, the ability to reach a wider cross-section of the community, and improvements in the facilities that are provided as a part of the fulfilment of responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

6. **TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

The Representative Bodies have been consulted. Unison and the Fire Brigades' Union support the creation of a facilitator post at Erdington Interactive Centre.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of the Facilitator would be met in full by the Erdington Town Centre Partnership on a 12 monthly basis and managed through the proposed Service Level Agreement.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

West Midlands Fire Service, Corporate Strategy 2007 - 20010 (Ver.1.0)
Report to Executive Committee – 24th July 2006 - External Partnership
Funding - Community Facilities at Erdington Fire Station (Minute No. 38/06
refers).

F.J.E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER