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Our ref
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please ask for
Your ref
Date 1 August 2008
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Dear Matthew,

3MG - Mersey Multimodal Gateway

I have been asked to provide you with the background to the 3MG Masterplan area, and in particular the part of the Masterplan which deals with the playing fields.

The 3MG Masterplan was adopted by the Halton Borough Council in 2004. From the outset the Council understood the value of developing 3MG adjacent to the waterfront and included the playing fields within the area of the Masterplan. In taking forward this approach, the Council has sought to off set any greenspace lost through the provision of a new enhanced replacement playing field within the local vicinity.

The approach taken to relocate the playing fields is also in accordance with the Halton Unitary Development, and in particular policy GE12: Protection of Outdoor Playing space for formal sport and recreation which requires that developers provide a suitable replacement facility, at least equivalent in terms of quantity and quality, and which is in place prior to the existing site being lost.

The former playing field was green space on former scrub land and was offered on a yearly licence to the local amateur rugby league football club known as West Bank Bears. The West Bank Bears installed rugby posts and played on the field during the dryer months. No drainage had been provided specifically for playing field use which meant the field was sodden in the wetter months making playing and training difficult. West Bank Bears always had an aspiration to secure grant for a club house but without a long lease this was not possible. This site was also accessed from a poorly maintained private road.

The Council owned a highly prominent brownfield site less than half a mile away. In discussions with West Bank Bears the Council agreed to remediate this site at a cost of £880,000. A large part of the funding was provided by NWDA and WREN (land fill tax credits) with the explicit condition that the remediation created a community facility. The new site on Hutchinson Street can be accessed from an adopted highway, has two car

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parks, a full size senior pitch and room for an all-weather pitch and club house. West Bank Bears are in the process of formalising a 25 year lease with the Council for the site and have been successful in securing a conditional offer of grant from Sports England for a single storey changing facility and club house.

West Bank Bears have used this new facility since August 2006 and officially vacated the former playing field in March 2008. The playing fields became redundant at this time and no members of the community have used them since. West Bank Bears are very pleased with their new facility which allows them to expand the club, play and train all year round and apply for funding for a club house and other facilities. There has been no adverse reaction to this swap by the local community, the only feedback received by the Council has been positive.

The enclosed plan shows both sites. Site A, approximately 2.97 hectares forms part of 3MG and is earmarked for redevelopment. Site B, approximately is 2.61 hectares is the replacement facility.

Should you wish to find out more about 3MG please visit our web site www.3-mg.co.uk

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 0151 906 4871.

Yours sincerely,



Sally McDonald,
3MG Programme Manager.