

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**TITLE:** Hereford Police Station

Ref: PCC/D/2018/21

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) need to replace their aging facility in the city of Hereford. They proposed a joint emergency service centre with the Police.

This proposed new facility could provide a state-of-the-art policing facility, large enough to accommodate all of Hereford city policing functions, as well as the fire and rescue service's main operating and training facility in the county, into the one site. The facility could continue the efficient delivery of policing and the fire and rescue service in Hereford city for the next 40-50 years.

A site off Holmer Road, Hereford has been identified, which is large enough to accommodate the ambitions set out above. The site is currently for sale.

Due diligence searches, preliminary site investigations and enquiries with the local planning authority have not identified any significant issues that might prevent the development of a new emergency services hub. These enquiries also demonstrate that the proposal represents value for money.


**PROPOSAL**

The PCC purchases the land at Holmer Road, Hereford for the provision of a new joint police and fire and rescue service centre for the city and County of Hereford.

**APPROVAL OF  
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner**

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed



## **PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OR EXEMPTION FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) were pursuing an option to purchase a piece of land on the Merton Meadow car park, Edgar Street, Hereford from Herefordshire County Council. It was intended that the site would be used to build a new fire and rescue facility that would be HWFRS principle operating base in the county. Recognising that the site was larger than they require, HWFRS approached West Mercia Police and proposed a joint community police and fire station on the site.
- 1.2 The opportunity to develop a state of the art county headquarters for both the police and the fire service is a unique one. It builds upon the services' four shared principles, in particular making joint decisions based upon sound financial sense, without seeking to make commercial gain. It would also deliver HM Government ambitions as set out in the September 2015 White paper "Transforming the way the Police, Fire Service and Ambulance Service Work Together." The paper proposes that the three main blue light services work as closely together as possible, in order to deliver effective and efficient services that offer value for money. The underlying requirement of the white paper is to ensure the services provide the best protective and preventative services possible.
- 1.3 This proposed new facility could provide a state-of-the-art policing facility, large enough to accommodate all of Hereford city policing functions, as well as the fire and rescue service's main operating and training facility in the county, into the one site. The facility could continue the efficient delivery of policing and the fire and rescue service in Hereford city for the next 40-50 years.

### **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Herefordshire Local Policing Area Base was originally opened in 1975. It has been upgraded, expanded and converted a number of times in the last forty years. The most recent of these works saw the addition of a new custody facility and front counter suite in 2008/09.
- 2.2 The existing building is in relatively good structural condition, but has limited operational parking capabilities. It can be observed that due to the constraints on the existing site, several aspects of the city and county policing function are spread over other sites across the city. In addition, the building is less efficient than one built to current building regulations. A significant capital investment would be required to bring the existing building up to the relevant current legal, environmental standards, and Home Office custody standards.
- 2.3 Initial thinking suggests that any new facility could accommodate all current Herefordshire Local Policing Area Base requirements. In addition, there would be capacity for the entire PVP Team, MASH, and vehicle workshop facility to be included on the one site. Both the original and proposed sites are large

enough to accommodate all vehicles associated with these teams.

2.4 The following were identified as the potential benefits of this project:

- To improve public safety and value for money through a multi-agency building.
- Developing a collaborative approach to tackling the long term causes of vulnerability, crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To improve customer service through the provision of joint services
- To improve police and fire efficiency through a combined interoperability in the provision of joint services at the location.
- Be able to improve the accessibility and availability of services to diverse communities.
- Developing a joint service that makes a more efficient and co-ordinated use of the voluntary sector.
- Be able to achieve economies of scale through the reduction in our estate footprint in Hereford city, by potentially reducing the running and maintenance costs of these separate facilities.
- Improve county resilience through improved critical and major incident command facilities.
- To be innovative, utilising the latest technology and digital media to improve accessibility / self-servicing to result in an enhanced customer experience and satisfaction.
- By working in partnership, both agencies will be able to deliver 'right service, first time' resulting in reduced demand and increased efficiencies
- Allow for the partners to deliver a cohesive, joint programme of youth intervention and crime prevention.
- Enable the two partners to speak as a single, united voice to other local statutory and voluntary partners thus creating an environment that creates and maintains effective partnerships to deliver protection and prevention activities, thus reducing vulnerability, crime and anti-social behaviour.

2.5 Following due diligence searches and investigations, it has been established that to ensure the Merton Meadow site is fit for use as an emergency services' base would require such flood alleviation works that means the site cannot provide value for money. However, the ambition to provide a joint police and fire and rescue hub for the county remains valid.

2.6 An alternative site off Holmer Road, Hereford has been identified, which is comparable in size to the Merton Meadow site and large enough to accommodate the ambitions set out above. The site is currently for sale.

2.7 Due diligence searches, preliminary site investigations and enquiries with the local planning authority have not identified any significant issues that might prevent the development of a new emergency services hub. These enquiries also demonstrate that the proposal represents value for money.

2.8 It is recommended that the PCC purchases the land at Holmer Road, Hereford for the provision of a new joint police and fire and rescue service centre for the city and County of Hereford.

## FINANCIAL COMMENTS

A budget of £1,110,500 will be included within the capital programme in 2018/19 for the purchase of the new proposed site for Hereford Police Station. This budget will include the actual site purchase, VAT, stamp duty, indemnity insurance, Land Registry fees and other due diligence works. This budget will be financed from the affordability envelope.

The land is expected to at least maintain its value. If for any reason the building project does not proceed, the land can therefore be disposed of with a probable financial benefit.

The VAT amounts to £170k. Whilst land is usually exempt from VAT, the vendor has opted to tax. Once purchased, as the proposal is to build for our own purposes then VAT on construction will be recoverable. If the building is sold within 3 years of construction the sale will attract VAT.

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

By virtue of schedule 11, paragraph 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Police and Crime Commissioners may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of commissioner. That includes: entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not) and acquiring and disposing of property (including land).

## PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the West Mercia Commissioner's website. Any facts and advice that should not be made automatically available on request are not included in Part 1 but instead in a separate Part 2 report.

## OFFICER APPROVAL

### Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial and legal advice have been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the West Mercia Commissioner.

Signature Ade Crayford Date 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018