

RECORD OF DECISION

TITLE: Hereford Police Station Land

Ref: PCC/D/2019/26

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, known as "The Paddocks" has been identified, which combined with the land already acquired on Holmer Road will allow the project to more easily and cost-effectively accommodate the ambitions set out above.

Terms have been agreed, subject to contract and due diligence investigations.

Due diligence searches, preliminary site investigations and enquiries with the local planning authority are required ahead of the proposed purchase. These enquiries will also demonstrate whether the proposal represents value for money.

PROPOSAL

To undertake all appropriate due diligence work ahead of the proposed purchase.

To purchase "The Paddocks" site off 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 Previously HWFRS approached West Mercia Police and proposed a joint community police and fire station. The first site identified on Merton Meadow car park proved to be unsuitable following initial investigations and design considerations.
- 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 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.

2.3 The PCC has already bought land off Holmer Road for the provision of such a facility (DN 2018/21). Whilst it is large enough by itself, the site would be cramped. The opportunity has arisen to purchase a neighbouring site which will provide a more cost-effective way of provide all the facilities required because of reduced build density.

FINANCIAL COMMENTS

A budget of £1,110,500 will be included within the capital programme in 2019/20 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. Provision of £16m has been made in the Medium Term Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 for this scheme. The programme will be re-profiled to fund this purchase in 2019/20.

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 £150k. Whilst land is usually exempt from VAT, the vendor may opt to tax. Once purchased, as the proposal is to build for our own purposes then VAT on construction will be recoverable. Is 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 *Andy Chapman* Date 17th July 2019