

RECORD OF DECISION

**TITLE: Compulsory purchase compensation for Essex Arms playing field,
Hereford**

Ref: PCC/D/2021/16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A compulsory purchase order was undertaken by Herefordshire Council in 2015 to develop the City Link Road, part of which involved the purchase of land held by West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner that was better known as the Essex Arms playing field. This land was compulsorily purchased, with negotiations about the value of the land held with BNP Paribas on behalf of the PCC.

The land was initially thought capable of being developed for a number of commercial businesses and even possibly some residential housing. However, the land is very liable to flooding due to the Widemarsh Brook that runs alongside the new road and criss-crosses over part of the land, with a further brook to the south of the site which has flooded at least once in the last five years. This makes this land less valuable than first thought and therefore approval of the figure of £127,697 negotiated with Herefordshire Council is ought.

Legal fees will be paid for both parties by the purchaser. There are still costs incurred by the agent acting on behalf of the PCC.

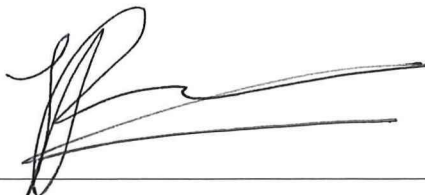
PROPOSAL

That compensation of £127,697.33 less agency costs is accepted for the compulsory purchase of Essex Arms playing field.

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

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed



PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL/EXEMPT FACTS AND FIGURES

SUPPORTING REPORT

The City Link Road is being built as part of the Hereford City Centre transport package. The new road will enable regeneration of the city by opening up land for redevelopment that was previously inaccessible or had poor access. This will also help release the traffic on Blueschool Street and Newmarket street. This will enable the streets and commercial road to be upgraded to make walking and cycling to the city centre more accessible and pleasurable. The provision of a new transport hub at the train station is also planned to complement these proposals.

The land at Essex Arms playing field was compulsorily purchased by Herefordshire Council to allow for the development of a new relief link road that ran over this land. Agents had been appointed, BNP Paribas, to discuss the compensation that is owed to us for the loss of this land.

Originally the land had been considered as a prime site for development and original negotiations had considered that the figure of the compensation could have been considerable. However, after investigations were undertaken it was identified that most of the Essex Arms playing field was liable to flooding and indeed such an event has occurred within the last five years. Any development on the land would have to involve significant mitigation schemes and the type of development would have to be designed in a way that allowed for flooding events to occur. Therefore, the land itself diminished in value considerably. The land itself was calculated at that of little more than Grade I agricultural land – £20,000 an acre – the total area of land was 4.76 acres, resulting in a figure of £95,200.

Additional costs are included such as occupiers' loss of the use of the land as well as the basic loss of the land for the landlord. These costs equate to just over another £30,000, hence the compensation figure of £127,697.

The land had, at one point, been reviewed as a possible new Hereford Hub police station/blue light services facility, but the risk of flooding and the actual occurrence of flooding would have actually made this site less desirable due to the increased costs associated with mitigating flooding.

BNP Paribas state that the figures achieved appear to be what would be deemed reasonable for land that, while once viewed as possible residential development, is now viewed as community land with some commercial development probable.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

This decision supports the following element(s) of the Safer West Mercia Plan.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Putting Victims and Survivors First | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building a More Secure West Mercia |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reforming West Mercia | <input type="checkbox"/> Reassuring West Mercia's Communities |

The decision supports this/ these objective(s) through the following:

- The disposal of this land is a significant infrastructure upgrade benefiting local residents as well as West Mercia Police officers in terms of getting around the city contributing to Building a more Secure West Mercia.
- The capital receipt will be used to contribute to the reformation of the police estate, contributing to Reforming West Mercia

FINANCIAL COMMENTS

Once there is a Compulsory Purchase Order placed on the land that you hold, it is impossible to get this removed and, therefore, the best option is to try and achieve best value for that land that was formerly held. The capital receipt of £127,697.33 less agency costs will be used to contribute to the funding of the capital programme including the reformation of the police estate

TREASURER COMMENTS

The value of the land has been assessed by an independent valuer, BNP Paribas A summary of the valuer's assessment is set out above. The capital receipt less agency costs will be used to fund the capital programme including the reformation of the police estate

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

By virtue of schedule 11, paragraph 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Police and Crime Commissioner 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



Signature

Date 30th June 2021