

Report of Head of Asset Management

6. Asset Management Strategy: Provision of Accommodation for West Mercia Police at Service Locations.

Purpose of report

1. In line with the Service's commitment to the national Capital and Asset Pathfinder initiative, to gain approval to provide facilities accommodation for West Mercia Police staff at Fire Service Headquarters (SHQ) in Worcester and at other Service locations.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Head of Asset Management be authorised to enter into:

- i) a lease to West Mercia Police in respect of office accommodation at Service Headquarters (SHQ); and***
- ii) a lease and/or licence arrangement in respect of the use by West Mercia Police of facilities at other fire service locations.***

all on terms to be agreed by the Chief Fire Officer and Head of Legal Services.

Introduction and Background

2. Officers of the Service have worked closely with many partners with the aim of increasing the efficient use of buildings in the public sector. This has been as part of the national Capital and Asset Pathfinder initiative, which aims to identify opportunities that present the potential for joint and collaborated use of public assets. This will create efficiencies by reducing property related costs and releasing capital through the sale of existing property.
3. This approach has resulted in the joint Police and Fire Station in Bromsgrove, which is due to be completed in Spring 2014. In addition, the Police have discussed a number of other potential opportunities where they may wish to vacate their current Police stations and utilise Fire Service accommodation. One of these locations is Fire Service Headquarters (SHQ).

Accommodation at Service Headquarters (SHQ)

4. West Mercia Police wish to move a local policing team into the SHQ building. This will comprise of up to 15 officers and up to around 15 special constables, who will need approximately 14 workstations with access to the usual welfare facilities in the building. It is proposed to provide space on the ground floor in the

SHQ building, where the Media and Communications team currently reside. The Media and Communications team has recently been reduced in size and will be relocated to elsewhere within the SHQ building. Dedicated parking and bicycle storage will also be required.

5. Officers of the Service are currently in negotiations with West Mercia Police's estates management team over lease arrangements to facilitate this proposal. West Mercia Police has a strict timetable to ensure that they can meet the targets of their estates management plan and therefore it is requested, for expediency, that the Policy and Resources Committee approve this proposal in principle subject to the lease arrangements being agreed to the satisfaction of the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

Other Opportunities

6. West Mercia Police has expressed interest in pursuing other opportunities to rationalise their estates portfolio as they restructure their front-line service provision, by using Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) facilities at various locations across the Service area. Generally, this focusses on Retained Duty System (RDS On-call) fire stations, where West Mercia Police staff would have access to welfare, parking and communications facilities on an ad-hoc basis. The requirements vary from location to location and range from very occasional access (for example to just use welfare facilities) to more regular use which may require small alterations at some locations which would be funded by West Mercia Police.
7. The specific locations being investigated are Bewdley, Peterchurch, Tenbury Wells, Kington, Upton, Bromyard and Droitwich. Other locations may be identified in the future. Due to the diverse range of specific requirements at each location, it is requested that the Policy and Resources Committee approve, in principle, the use of FRS facilities by West Mercia Police subject to the lease arrangements being agreed to the satisfaction of the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the FRA.

Conclusion/Summary

8. It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee approve the provision of accommodation for West Mercia Police staff at Service Headquarters (SHQ) in Worcester and at any other appropriate Service locations subject to the lease arrangements being agreed to the satisfaction of the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the FRA.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	This proposal will require changes in property accommodation at SHQ, with other potential minor changes at other Service locations. It will also require a legal arrangement to support the proposal. All costs incurred by the Service will be recovered by an annual charge to West Mercia Police.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	This proposal supports the Services Asset Management Strategy.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Internal communication has been undertaken about providing accommodation in part of the SHQ building. Consultation on some specific locations has been undertaken with station officers.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No. There are no issues arising from this proposal which would impact upon our Equalities statutory duty in a negative way.

Supporting Information

None.

Background papers – None.

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