

## Report of Head of Asset Management

### 6. Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) Project

#### Purpose of report

1. To update the Policy and Resources Committee with progress towards supporting the Worcestershire Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) project and to seek agreement to use a small amount of an earmarked reserve to support the work.

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#### Recommendations

##### *It is recommended that:*

- i. the Policy and Resources Committee note progress towards the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Worcestershire Joint Property Vehicle (JPV), including the fully funded secondment of a member of the Service's staff to the project; and*
- ii. consultation with staff and representative bodies may be necessary as part of the development of the FBC; and*
- iii. the Policy and Resources Committee approve the use of up to £30k from the Development Reserve as and if necessary to support the work towards the FBC.*

#### Introduction and Background

2. In March 2014 the Policy and Resources Committee approved the Outline Business Case (OBC) for a Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) involving a number of Worcestershire public sector partners. The Committee further agreed that the project would continue to be supported towards the Final Business Case (FBC) stage at which point the Authority would consider whether to be a core partner in any subsequent partnership. It was also agreed that no financial resources would be committed to the creation of a JPV until the decision to be a core partner in the JPV has been agreed by the Authority following the completion of the FBC.
3. All potential core partners agreed to contribute towards the completion of the FBC and following these approvals the JPV project manager requested a commitment from all partners to provide staff time to ensure the delivery of the next phase of the project. The next stage of the project work will clarify a number of potential issues which were highlighted by H&WFRS at the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage of the process. This paper outlines the commitment required of the Service and the new consideration of a small amount of financial support from the Authority to support the work.

4. An additional and important development in the JPV is the addition of Herefordshire Council to the list of core partners. This obviously widens the project and potentially enhances the chances of success within the project but of equal importance, it also ensures that both of the Authority's constituent authorities are represented and therefore the entire footprint of the Service is now covered by the project.

### **Resources Required to Deliver the FBC**

5. The JPV project has so far operated with one full-time project manager seconded from West Mercia Police. To progress the project to the FBC stage a structure has been proposed which will require further full time support; the project will be led by a Programme Manager but now supported by two Project Managers and one Administrative Support Officer. Following a request by the JPV Programme Manager the Chief Fire Officer has agreed to a fully funded secondment into one of the Project Manager positions – the Service's Head of Asset Management will take this role for a six-month period.
6. In addition the Chief Fire Officer will represent the Service on the Shadow Shareholder Group which will oversee the project through to the FBC stage. There is considerable interest in this project within central government and it is anticipated that the Government Property Unit (GPU) may wish to use the Worcestershire JPV concept to manage their local property requirements in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
7. In addition to the Service's full time secondment and the Chief Fire Officer's involvement, other Service staff will be committing time to progress the project to the FBC stage as they play a full part in the various working groups being formed to deliver the FBC. These groups will cover areas relating to finance, human resources, legal, communications, ICT and governance as well as a number of groups researching additional elements relating to estates management and property. The JPV steering group, which developed the concept of a JPV through to OBC stage, will be maintained to challenge outputs of the working groups and maintain the spirit of the original concept through to FBC stage.
8. Although the full time secondment and some of the time required by Service staff to work on the JPV will be funded from the project, there is a potential for the significant workloads associated with the JPV to create some capacity issues in the Service's support departments. This may necessitate some additional assistance being required in these departments and as such the Chief Fire Officer considers it prudent to consider making available up to £30k of reserves to ensure the Service continues to function effectively whilst playing a full part in the JPV's development. It is suggested that the Development Reserve is utilised for this purpose. It is by no means certain that this additional finance will be needed but this Committee's agreement to access a small amount of reserves is sought to ensure the Chief Fire Officer can act quickly to respond to the Service's needs as necessary.

9. It was agreed at the previous Policy and Resources Committee that there would be no formal consultation with staff or representative bodies until the Authority approved the FBC and committed to the JPV. However, from advice and discussions with other partners it may now be considered necessary to formally consult appropriate Service staff and representative bodies as part of the work towards delivering the FBC. Therefore this Committee's approval is sought to undertake any consultation considered necessary by the Chief Fire Officer.

### Conclusion/Summary

10. The JPV project is a rapidly moving Worcestershire-wide and beyond initiative that has the potential to deliver significant benefits to the Authority. To assist in progressing the project to a position when the Authority is well placed to make a decision as to whether to be part of the ongoing initiative, the Service needs to show a significant commitment and is proposing to do so through a full time secondment to the project and also full participation in a number of working groups by a range of specialist staff. This commitment may also necessitate a small amount of additional finance.

### Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Highlighted in paper (paras 5-8) with any future requirements being highlighted as part of the development of the project as it approaches the Final Business Case approval stage.
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Potential contribution to Authority's budget targets for future years.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	There are currently no significant risks in contributing to the project development.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Consultation with Representative Bodies may need to be undertaken before the Final Business Case approval stage (para 9).
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An Equalities Impact Assessment may need to be undertaken before Final Business Case approval stage.

## **Supporting Information**

None.

Background papers – 26th March 2014, Policy and Resources Committee, 'Outline Business Case for a Joint Property Vehicle'. Joint Property Vehicle Outline Business Case (large document available electronically via H&WFRS Committee Services).

## **Contact Officer**

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