

## Report of Head of Legal Services

### Replacement of Hereford Fire Station

#### Purpose of report

1. To seek approval for delivery of a replacement for Hereford Fire Station at an alternative location to that previously identified and for funding to allow for detailed design of the project to be approved from the existing project budget allocation.
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#### Recommendations

***It is RECOMMENDED that Officers be authorised to proceed with a redevelopment of Hereford Fire Station at a new site being secured by West Mercia Police, and that:***

- (i) interest in the Herefordshire Council owned Merton Meadow site is withdrawn;***
- (ii) funding for detailed design for the project to the sum of £250,000 is approved; and***
- (iii) Subject to the cost to this Authority not exceeding the provision within the existing capital programme, the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Treasurer, Head of Legal Services and Chairman of the Authority be authorised to enter into an agreement with the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia (and/or others) to:***
  - (a) development a multi-agency facility including new Fire Station, on land at Holmer Road, Hereford;***
  - (b) the apportionment of all costs and fees; and***
  - (c) determining the future ownership structure***

#### Introduction and Background

2. The Authority's approved capital includes the replacement of the existing Hereford Fire Station and it is intended this will be part of a proposed new public service 'hub'. This new development would provide for the colocation of Police, Fire Service and potentially other public sector partners on a single site, with both existing Police and Fire stations being disposed of with the potential to provide housing, potential University accommodation, or other developments that would benefit Hereford. This project has taken time to develop as an alternative site to the existing locations has proved difficult to

secure, with the option of building a new facility at the existing fire station location being not practical or financially viable.

3. The Authority secured One Public Estate (OPE) funding to explore an option to deliver the hub on a site owned by Herefordshire Council, known as Merton Meadow. The OPE funding allowed for feasibility work and an assessment of the Merton Meadow site to explore the viability of delivering the proposed hub and specifically funded an assessment of any potential flood risk at the site. The flood risk assessment informed the design feasibility and highlighted that to deliver a fire station that could provide an acceptable operational response would require significant mitigation factors as part of the design; these mitigation factors are cost prohibitive and would require significant additional financial resources to deliver a solution at the Merton Meadow site. Moreover, this assessment highlighted that even with the mitigation factors in place, the flood risk may impact on operational response from the site if there was a significant flood event in Hereford. For these reasons, it is recommended that there is no further consideration of the Merton Meadow site as an option to deliver the facility that the Fire Service require.
4. In collaboration with West Mercia Police, a new potential site has been identified off Holmer Road in Hereford. This site has been considered using the previously determined design criteria for the project and an initial site investigation assessment has indicated that the potential for mitigation requirements as part of the design for this site are low. An operational response assessment has indicated that the site is viable for both Police and Fire response purposes, with no significant impact on Fire Service operational response. With a limited window of opportunity to secure this new site, West Mercia Police are proceeding with the purchase of this site and initial design feasibilities indicate that the site will be able to provide a joint Police and Fire Station, although at this stage there may be constraints at the site that limit the potential for other public sector partners to be accommodated at the site.
5. With this alternative location secured, Officers request that the Authority's interest in the Merton Meadow site is formally withdrawn and that the Policy and Resources Committee support delivery of this project at the Holmer Road site, in collaboration with West Mercia Police. This will allow Herefordshire Council to explore alternative options for the Merton Meadow site and it is expected that the Merton Meadow site will provide development opportunities that will benefit Hereford from an OPE perspective.

## **Finance**

6. It is expected that costs to deliver a facility will be within the original budget allowed for this scheme and a further report will be brought back to Committee for approval once more detailed costs are known. To progress the project, the scheme will move from feasibility design into detailed design, which will require funding from the project budget. It is estimated at this stage that £250,000 will be required to undertake this stage and approval is requested for this amount.

## Summary

7. Options for potential sites to replace Hereford Fire Station are very limited and collaboration with west Mercia Police has identified a viable site for a joint Police and Fire station. It is recommended that this option is pursued and that interest in the Merton Meadow site is withdrawn. It is requested that the Committee approve funding to the value of £250,000 from the project budget to allow for detailed design and a further paper will be brought to the committee to inform any project cost implications and potentially authority to proceed with planning approval for the scheme.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Costs of the detailed design stage can be funded from the existing project budget.
<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).	The proposal is in accordance with the property strategy which identifies Hereford Fire Station as being in need of replacement.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The proposal to construct a new fire station will improve the conditions for the staff at that station.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	None

## Supporting Information

None

## Contact Officer

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