

Report of Area Commander, Head of Operations

10. Proposed New Hereford Fire Station

Purpose of report

1. To report progress regarding the provision of a new joint fire and police station in Edgar Street, Hereford, and obtain authorisation to further develop this project.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i) Officers of the Service be authorised to enter into further negotiations between Herefordshire Council, West Mercia and Warwickshire Police and the Fire Authority to provide a new fire station in Hereford at a proposed site on Edgar Street; and***
- ii) the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority and the Treasurer be authorised to spend up to £75,000 on further work to take the project to planning approval stage;***
- iii) a further paper, including a detailed cost feasibility be brought to Policy and Resources Committee for final approval before entering into a contract for the acquisition of the site and any disposal of land.***

Introduction and Background

2. The Policy and Resources Committee previously requested regular updates on activity being undertaken by Officers of the Service to provide a replacement fire station in Hereford. At the last Policy and Resources Committee on 25 March 2015 it was reported that a preferred site had been identified and that the potential of this option was now being explored in full.
3. This paper provides further information about this option, how it has progressed, and the potential for further collaboration with public sector partners.

Current Position

4. The new preferred location along Edgar Street is currently used for parking and is due to be reconfigured at the same time as a proposed new link road, which commenced in spring 2015. The site is currently owned by Herefordshire Council and has sufficient capacity not only for a fire station, but also for other partners to be co-located on the same site.

5. At this stage West Mercia Police are seeking permission from the Police and Crime Commissioner, through the Chief Constable, to develop a proposal for this site to become a new joint police and fire station for Hereford City.
6. At the last Policy and Resources Committee, it was reported that discussions were on going between HWFRS officers and Herefordshire Council and these have progressed well. The Fire Authority, along with Police partners, are now in a position to enter into more structured discussions with Herefordshire Council in order to formalise any future land purchase, as well as the disposal of both existing sites.
7. A project lead has been appointed (Area Commander Jon Pryce) and the Treasurer and Head of Legal Services are now in a position to begin developing agreements between West Mercia Police regarding the potential governance, ownership and cost apportionment of this joint project, the details of which will be brought back to the Committee for approval.
8. Following meetings with the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Herefordshire Fire Authority Members, and the Leader of Herefordshire Council, there appears to be political support for the proposal.
9. Following these meetings an application for outline planning permission has now been submitted to Herefordshire Council. Should outline planning permission be granted, further work will need to be undertaken to submit a detailed planning application once the details of the proposal have been finalised.
10. To progress the scheme to a stage where it can be considered to be viable and to take the project up to a full planning approval stage may cost up to an additional £75,000. This work will need to be undertaken 'at risk' in the event that the scheme did not ultimately proceed.
11. Due to the complexity of this project and the proposed new road network in this area of Hereford City, which is due to be completed towards the end of 2016, the timeline for the project is yet to be determined. Early indications suggest that building may not commence until 2017 to avoid conflict with the proposed road network alteration programme.

Conclusion/Summary

12. At the last Policy and Resources Committee meeting in March, members were made aware that a preferred option had been identified and that the potential of this option is being explored in full. This paper illustrates that tangible progress has been made and that officers of the Service, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Council are now in a position to progress this proposal from the exploratory phase, and into the developmental stage.
13. It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee approve the recommendations in this paper and note the content.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Whole document relates to property. Proposals will require legal and financial input at the appropriate time.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The Asset Management Strategy supports 'Our Strategy' on the foundations of 'Buildings and Infrastructure'.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	All capital projects are managed within the appropriate Health and Safety legislation and best practice.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Consultation is undertaken as part of the planning approval process.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No – this will be considered at the appropriate time.

Supporting Information

None

Background Papers

Policy and Resources Committee: 26 March 2014
Policy and Resources Committee: 19 November 2014
Policy and Resources Committee: 27 January 2015
Policy and Resources Committee: 25 March 2015

Contact Officer

Jon Pryce, Head of Operations
(01905 368237)
Email: jpryce@hwfire.org.uk