

## **Report of Area Commander, Head of Operations**

### **6. Proposed Co-Location of Police and Fire Service Assets**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To gain approval for Officers to progress to completion arrangements within the capital programme (minor works) for the joint location of Police and Fire Service assets at selected retained fire station locations.
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#### **Recommendation**

***It is recommended that Officers be authorised to progress arrangements with West Mercia and Warwickshire Police and the Fire Authority to share facilities at:***

- ***Bromyard Fire Station***
- ***Peterchurch Fire Station***
- ***Tenbury Wells Fire Station***

***on terms to be agreed with the Treasurer and Head of Legal Services, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Fire Authority.***

#### **Introduction and Background**

2. Opportunities for closer working with West Mercia Police (WMP) and other partners are continually being sought to deliver more efficient and improved ways of working. Police and Fire properties occupied by both organisations across Herefordshire have been examined in order to identify any opportunities to rationalise the public estate by the two organisations co-locating. Further examination of sites in Worcestershire will follow in due course.
3. Following an evaluation of the potential locations in Herefordshire, and subsequent site visits to several selected locations with Police colleagues and Place Partnership Ltd (PPL) representatives, a number of preferred sites have been identified by both organisations.

#### **Current Position**

4. For the Police to operate effectively from a retained fire station in a market town or rural area there needs to be a dedicated office for a small number of WMP personnel with shared communal facilities and parking.

5. Whilst retained fire stations and the facilities currently in place are essential to Fire Service operations, due to the nature of the retained duty system the buildings are not occupied for the vast majority of the time and can be adapted to facilitate the needs of the Police, as a trusted partner.
6. The following locations were examined and deemed suitable for co-location, and are listed in order of preference and feasibility:
  - Peterchurch Fire Station – for WMP employees to operate at this location there would only need to be some minor internal works, at WMP expense.
  - Tenbury Wells Fire Station – although not in Herefordshire, Tenbury Wells has been considered as part of these proposals. As at Peterchurch there would only need to be some minor internal works, to be undertaken at WMP expense, in order for police staff to operate from this fire station.
  - Bromyard Fire Station – for WMP employees to operate at this location there would be a need for a small extension to the rear of the fire station, at WMP expense, for which planning permission would be required. It would be beneficial for some minor additional storage space at the fire station to be included in these works. This would incur some minor capital costs to the Fire Authority.
  - Kington Police Station – the police and fire station sites are in close proximity to each other, and it appears feasible to explore the option to relocate the fire station onto the existing police site. This would facilitate the release of the existing fire station site which would partially fund these works; some additional capital funding may be required. It should be noted this is not part of the current capital build programme and consequently it is only intended to carry out further feasibility works at the present time. The site could then be considered as an addition to the build programme.
7. Three other locations were also considered: Leominster Police Station and Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye Fire stations. It is felt that further research at these locations would be required before recommendations could be made. It does not initially appear that the existing sites held by each organisation in Ross and Ledbury readily lend themselves to being jointly occupied. Leominster Police Station may be a suitable joint site, however further research would be needed to establish the operational suitability of this site as a Fire Station location.
8. In addition to the minor capital works required to facilitate this proposal it would also be necessary to provide the appropriate signage to indicate to the public that the site is now occupied by both organisations.
9. The appropriate legal agreements will also need to be drawn up and approved by the Head of Legal Services.
10. In respect of remuneration for the use of these specific fire stations, the Treasurer will seek only to cover additional costs arising from the joint use at this stage. The use of the Fire Authority properties by Police partners will be brought into consideration when looking at the wider issues of property sharing across the Service area, such as in the potential future move of SHQ to Hindlip.

## Conclusion/Summary

11. This proposal offers further opportunities to strengthen our relationship with West Mercia Police and demonstrates the effective joint use of publicly owned assets and a commitment towards more efficient and effective joint working.
12. At a local level there are direct benefits including site security, building relationships and information sharing with WMP colleagues. In addition the wider benefits should deliver greater efficiencies to both organisations, provide opportunities for improved working practices, as well as potentially freeing up some key sites in certain towns for redevelopment.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (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.
<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 Asset Management Strategy supports 'Our Strategy' on the foundations of 'Buildings and Infrastructure'.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (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.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Consultation will need to be undertaken as part of the planning approval process, as well as locally with appropriate staff.
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No – this will be considered at the appropriate time once plans are finalised.

## Supporting Information

None

## Contact Officer

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