

## **Joint Report of the Head of Legal Services and Head of Asset Management**

### **12. Development at Evesham**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To seek approval of the terms negotiated with Wychavon District Council and authorise Officers to conclude an agreement for the sale of the current Evesham fire station site and the provision of a new fire station and training facility, which was approved in principle by the Policy and Resources Committee in March this year.

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#### **Recommendations**

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

***The Chief Fire Officer be authorised to enter into an agreement for the sale of the existing Evesham fire station on terms whereby:***

- i. the fire station and training facility are first relocated to the proposed new site off Abbey Road, Evesham;***
- ii. freehold ownership of the new site is transferred to the Fire Authority;***
- iii. the Fire Authority contribute £150,000 towards the cost of developing the new fire station and training facility but all other costs are met by Wychavon District Council; and***
- iv. such other detailed terms to give effect to the above as may be agreed by the Chief Fire Officer, Head of Legal Services and Treasurer.***

#### **Introduction and Background**

2. The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 27 March gave approval in principle to a proposal from Wychavon District Council to purchase the existing Evesham Fire Station at Merstow Green, Evesham in exchange for providing the Fire Authority with a new fire station and training facility a short distance away on land off Abbey Road, Evesham. The relocation of the fire station would facilitate a redevelopment proposal in Evesham which the Council believes will bring increased prosperity to the town and thus encourage sustainable growth in the area.

3. The Authority has recently invested £562,000 in the construction of a new training facility at Evesham Fire Station. However, the current fire station will require further capital investment at some point in the future. The provision of a new fire station would provide up-to-date facilities in keeping with the current requirements of a modern Fire and Rescue Service.
4. Officers are satisfied that the proposed new site is in an appropriate location to provide effective fire cover.

### **Detailed Proposal**

5. The previous approval by the Policy and Resources Committee was on the basis that further terms would be the subject of negotiation with Wychavon District Council and would then be reported back for Member approval. Officers have met with Wychavon District Council on several occasions, including the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer being involved in meetings with the Council's Leader and Chief Executive.
6. Following those negotiations, the following high level terms have been agreed and are now recommended to Members for approval.
  - a) Any agreement will be conditional upon:
    - (i) planning permission for the new fire station and for the proposed redevelopment of the existing fire station site;
    - (ii) satisfactory outcome of site investigation surveys on the proposed new fire station site, including confirmation that there are no on-going issues relating to ground contamination or underground services and resolution of any highway issues; and
    - (iii) agreement between Wychavon and the eventual end-user of the new development.
  - b) All pre-development costs (site investigations, planning applications) will be paid by the Developer.
  - c) The cost of building the new fire station and training facility is estimated at approximately £2.9m. Subject to (d) below, Wychavon will pay the full cost of developing the new fire station and training facility (including all professional fees, site remediation, off-site works and any s.106/s.278 costs).
  - d) The Fire Authority will contribute £150,000 towards the cost of the new fire station to reflect the benefit to us of a new building. This can be funded from existing capital budgets.

- e) The construction contract will be let by competitive tender and will be managed by the Fire Authority. Additional resources will be needed to manage this project in addition to the existing capital fire station replacement programme and these costs will be included as part of the overall agreement with Wychavon District Council.
  - f) In the event of any underspend on the construction contract, this will accrue to Wychavon District Council.
  - g) Any overspend on the cost of the construction contract will be paid by Wychavon.
  - h) Wychavon will transfer the new site to the Fire Authority and following completion of the new fire station, we will then transfer the existing fire station site to Wychavon District Council; both transfers will be at no net cost to either party.
7. If the above terms are approved then further detailed discussions will take place to determine how best to structure the transaction having regard to issues such as stamp duty land tax. The project timetable currently envisages agreements being completed by the end of August 2013 and hence the reason for bringing the item to this meeting instead of the Policy and Resources Committee in September.

### **Conclusion/Summary**

- 8. Relocating the fire station would release land close to the town centre of Evesham which the District Council are keen to redevelop in the interests of economic prosperity.
- 9. There are a number of hurdles still to be overcome (see paragraph 6a above) but if the proposal comes to fruition it will benefit the Fire Authority through the provision of a new fire station in Evesham and provide up-to-date facilities which are more in keeping with the current requirements of a modern Fire and Rescue Service.

### **Corporate Considerations**

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Whole document
<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).	Asset Management Strategy

<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	No
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	No
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No equalities issues identified

### Supporting Information

Report - Policy & Resources Committee 27/3/13

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