

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 FEBRUARY 2018	REPORT NO:	CFO/010/18
PRESENTING OFFICER:	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	PAUL MURPHY	REPORT AUTHOR:	STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	JANET HENSHAW, SOLICITOR TO THE AUTHORITY COLIN SCHOFIELD, REGIONAL PROJECT DIRECTOR IAN CUMMINS, TREASURER		
TITLE OF REPORT:	DISPOSAL OF HUYTON FIRE STATION		

APPENDICES:	
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Purpose of Report

1. To request that members approve the sale of Huyton fire station to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC).

Recommendation

2. That Members approve the sale of Huyton fire station for a value of £335,000 to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Introduction and Background

3. On 6th May 2014, the Authority resolved that the merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at a new site in Manchester Road, Prescot be approved, subject to a 12 week period of public consultation to commence from 7th May 2014. Members also requested that a further report be submitted detailing the outcomes of this consultation, including details of any operational implications of the merger, including details of the Section 13/16 mutual aid arrangements with Cheshire FRS for the coverage of Cronton.
4. The outcomes of this public consultation were fully considered by the Authority on 2nd October 2014 who resolved that:
 - The merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at a site in Manchester Road, Prescot be approved;
 - The change in crewing of the Whiston fire appliance from wholetime to wholetime retained be approved;
 - The capital programme be amended to incorporate the £3.1 million Prescot fire station scheme;

- The Chief Fire Officer be given delegated authority to continue discussions with partners, including Merseyside Police, with a view to sharing the building; and
 - The Chief Fire Officer be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, the Clerk to the Authority and the Chair of the Authority, to agree appropriate lease terms with KMBC and enter into a lease.
5. On 20th October 2015, the Authority considered report CFO/083/15 (the requested 'go/no go' report) and resolved that:
- The building of a new community fire station, including a neighbourhood Police station, on land at Manchester Road, Prescot be approved;
 - The increase in costs from the initial £3.1m (estimated) cost to £5.350m, be noted;
 - The drawdown of an additional £1.550m from the capital investment reserve to fund the increase in the capital cost not covered by partners be approved.
6. On 14th April 2016, the Authority considered report CFO/028/16 which updated Members on the (then) current position in relation to the Prescot merger, particularly with regard to the anticipated increase in costs associated with the building of a new community fire and police station at the Manchester Road site. Members also received a verbal update at the meeting from the Chief Fire Officer on further developments at the site. The Authority resolved that:
- The current position in relation to the Prescot merger be noted;
 - The resolution of 6th May 2014 will stand and Officers are instructed to continue with the planned mergers of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at a new site in Manchester Road, Prescot; and
 - Delegated authority for the Chief Fire Officer to proceed in consultation with the Chair in further negotiations as required, be given.
7. On 15th December 2016, members considered Prescot update report CFO/087/16 and resolved that:
- The content of the report be noted
 - The increase in drawdown from the capital investment reserve by £145,000 to the amount approved in report CFO/028/16.

Current Situation

8. The new Prescot fire and police station is scheduled for completion on 22nd January 2018, and will become operational from 24th January 2018. Huyton fire station will cease to function as an operational fire station from this date.

9. Discussions have taken place between KMBC, North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and officers of this Authority as part of the Government's 'one public estate' initiative for all public sector bodies, local authorities and blue light services to make efficient and productive use of their shared estates.
10. The Huyton fire station is adjacent to the NWAS station site on the corner of Lathom Road. This site was identified within the Knowsley Huyton Village Masterplan, (supplementary planning document 2016-2018) as an important gateway development opportunity. The junction between Lathom Road and Archway Road was highlighted as a key gateway to the village.
11. An independent valuation of the site was jointly commissioned by the Authority, NWAS and KMBC and completed in September 2017 by Keppie Massie.
12. The report provides the market values of both the freehold interest of the fire station site on an individual basis subject to its current / commercial use along with a market value for redevelopment of the fire station as part of a combined development site. The market values shown in the valuation report are :

• Individual basis subject to its current / commercial use	£215,000
• Combined redevelopment site	£335,000
13. The Authority had assumed a capital receipt of £250,000 as part of the financial assessment carried out for the construction of the Prescott fire station.
14. Given the importance of the fire station site in relation to the redevelopment of Huyton village as identified above, KBC have agreed, to secure the fire station site at the redevelopment market value (£335,000) independent of the NWAS site on an unconditional basis.
15. The following Heads of Terms have been agreed between officers of the Authority and KBC,
 - **Offer:** (expressed in pounds sterling): £335,000
 - **Tenure:** The property is held freehold.
 - **Legal Costs:** Each party to pay their own legal costs.
 - **Local Authority Rates:** The purchaser will be responsible for payment of all Local Authority rates and other costs in respect of the subject property, with effect from completion.
 - **Conditions:** The above terms are subject to the following:-
 Contract
 Local Authority Delegated Approval
 Merseyside Fire Authority Approval

16. There are numerous risks associated with unoccupied properties. Officers will mitigate these as far as is reasonably practicable if the station is left unoccupied for a period of time.
17. It is anticipated, subject to Authority approval today, that legal contracts will be exchanged between parties within 30 days.

Equality and Diversity Implications

18. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report

Staff Implications

19. There are no specific staff implications arising from this report

Legal Implications

20. The acceptance of this offer is still subject to a contract of sale.
21. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Authority to dispose of land so long as the land is disposed of at the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

22. The Authority had assumed a capital receipt of £250,000 within the budget planning for the new Prescot fire station.
23. The offer of £335,000 from KBC, is £85,000 higher than initially anticipated. This difference will be used to offset some of the draw down from the capital reserve associated with the Prescot capital scheme.
24. The offer is on an unconditional basis. No marketing costs have been incurred (other than the independent valuation carried out by Keppie Massie on behalf of both parties) and no additional holding costs are expected if this offer is accepted.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

25. Risks associated with unauthorised access to properties such as theft and arson are greater in unoccupied buildings. Until the fire station is sold MFRA have a duty to maintain, secure and insure the building.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

26. The sale of Huyton Fire station has always been assumed to be part of the overall operational savings option regarding the Knowsley station mergers project.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/044/14	Proposed Station Merger of Huyton and Whiston
CFO/094/14	Knowsley Station Mergers Consultation Outcome
CFO/095/14	Proposed Station Merger of Huyton and Whiston
CFO/028/15	Update on Estates Projects
CFO/083/15	Proposed New Fire Station at Prescott
CFO/028/16	Proposed Prescott Fire Station – Additional Costs
CFO/087/16	Proposed Prescott Fire Station- update.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

KBC **Knowsley Borough Council.**

NWAS **North West Ambulance Service.**