

MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	13 DECEMBER 2018	REPORT NUMBER:	CFO/080/18
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	JANET HENSHAW	REPORT AUTHOR:	STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	COLIN SCHOFIELD – DIRECTOR OF PFI		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SPARE LAND AT BOOTLE & NETHERTON FIRE STATION		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	LAND TRANSFER RED LINE
	APPENDIX B:	NEW ROAD LAYOUT
	APPENDIX C:	MAP OF AREAS
	APPENDIX D:	NEW ACCESS ROAD

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval from members for the transfer of a small section of surplus land at Bootle and Netherton Fire Station site to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to allow highway alterations to Buckley Hill Lane.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. Approve the land transfer as set out in the drawing detailed in Appendix A at zero value, subject to SMBC agreeing to an access easement over the adjoining land owned by SMBC for the benefit of MFRA to access the remaining surplus land in its ownership;
 - b. Approve an option to be offered to SMBC, exercisable within an 18 month period of time, to acquire the whole area of surplus land owned by the MFRA at either a price to be agreed (with provision for a surveyor to arbitrate in case of dispute) or at price agreed now, subject to this price being index linked to Retail Price Index (RPI) increases ;and
 - c. Note that any contract to sell this surplus land would include an overage agreement based on a share of any profit that SMBC make if they sell on the land
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Introduction and Background

3. Planning approval for the new Bootle & Netherton PFI station was successfully obtained in 2007 with construction completed in 2012. The new station was constructed at the side of the old station on a much smaller footprint. Following the completion of the new build, the old station was demolished leaving approximately two acres of surplus land which was landscaped over and is situated outside of the current PFI station boundary.
4. Part of the planning approval for the new fire station in 2007 was that the previous access was closed off. Planning condition 9 stated that the '*development shall not be brought into use until a scheme to close off the existing redundant vehicular access to Buckley Hill Lane ...*' As the previous access has now been closed off there is no assumed right of future access. Strictly speaking therefore, there is no retained access from the previous access point because it has been closed off through the planning application. Any access to the rest of the site adjacent to the fire station would therefore be treated as a new access and would be subject to the highway assessment applied to any new access.
5. SMBC approached MFRA Estates department in September 2018 regarding acquiring part of the surplus land owned by MFRA to carry out road realignment works following a traffic study on Thornton Corridor.
6. The opening of Broom's Cross Road in August 2015 brought changes to traffic and travel patterns in the Thornton area. Since the road opened people have been getting in contact with SMBC about the issues they are experiencing. Some of the issues are long standing issues and some appear to be due to recent changes in travel patterns. SMBC have looked into each of the issues in more detail as part of the Thornton Corridor Study.
7. Driver behaviour means that some motorists are using the traditional Edge Lane and Lydiate Lane route to Formby from the Bootle direction. Buckley Hill is viewed as an under used alternative to gain access onto Broom's Cross Road. By encouraging motorists to use the Buckley Hill Lane linkage this could reduce the traffic volumes on Edge Lane, Lydiate Lane and ultimately on Quarry Road, Park View and possibly Moor Lane.
8. The junction realignments and signing improvements would improve the journey time along the Buckley Hill linkage and promote this as the preferred route to Liverpool and Bootle. This would have the effect of reducing traffic volumes on Edge Lane and Lydiate Lane, thus reducing the amount of traffic using Moor Lane. Appendix B provides further details of the road improvement scheme.
9. The route is included on the Liverpool City Region key route network and a funding application by SMBC to the City Region has already been submitted and approved.

The transfer of part of the surplus MFRA land would prevent any future access onto the remaining surplus land from Buckley Hill Lane and therefore has a potential to land lock and de-value the remaining MFRA land. Appendix C shows the PFI Station boundary (red line), the remaining land (blue line) and the land to be transferred to SMBC (lilac). To overcome this SMBC own the adjoining land and have worked up an indicative junction arrangement that takes account of the visibility requirements for any new access road and are confident that an access can be provided from Almond's Turn into the remaining MFRA land as shown in appendix D.

10. During the discussions between MFRA and SMBC there appears the opportunity for a larger development site to be formed, however to meet the funding commitments the works on the road need to progress this financial year. To facilitate this it is recommended to give SMBC an option exercisable within an 18 month period of time to acquire the whole area of surplus MFRA land at either a price to be agreed (with provision for a surveyor to arbitrate in case of dispute) or at price agreed now, subject to this price being index linked to RPI increases. Any formal contract for the sale of this land would include an overage agreement based on a share of any profit that SMBC make if they sell on the land.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. None identified.

Staff Implications

12. None identified.

Legal Implications

13. The land transfer would be subject to agreeing a suitable legal contract for both the transfer of land and securing access rights to the remaining surplus land.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

14. A larger development site has the potential to increase the land value of the MFRA owned part of the site. A full Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) red book valuation would be required once it is known if SMBC have an interest in acquiring the larger site.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

15. The site is currently open green space and there is a risk of injury and anti-social behaviour to occur on the site.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
RICS	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
RPI	Retail Prices Index
SMBC	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council