

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 DECEMBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/058/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SALE OF AINTREE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	SUMMARY OF MARKETING CAMPAIGN
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Purpose of Report

1. To request Members note the outcome of the marketing exercise and approve the sale of Aintree Community Fire Station to Best Care Liverpool Ltd.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members approve the sale of Aintree Community Fire Station to Best Care Liverpool Ltd for an unconditional bid of £650,000.

Introduction and Background

3. On the 9th June 2022, the Authority approved the construction of a new multi-pump superstation, Training and Development Academy at Long Lane, Aintree. Members resolved that, the marketing for sale of Croxteth Fire station, Aintree Fire Station and Vesty 5a and 5b and Richie Avenue be instructed with a report brought back to Members for final approval.
4. The construction of the new site is well underway with an anticipated completion date of 29th April 2024. There will be a transition into the new site from May with both Aintree and Croxteth Fire Station being one of the first to transition over, followed by the training academy.
5. Eddisons estate agents were appointed to market and sell Aintree Fire Station following competitive quotations being received.
6. The fire station was placed onto the open market on Monday 4th September 2023, 170 parties expressed an interest in the property and requested the additional information pack, which included plans, energy performance certificates, asbestos report, and Land registry documentation.

7. All parties who made an initial enquiry were offered the opportunity to view the fire station, 7 open viewing days were held in total during September and October with 44 parties attending to view the station.
8. All parties who had expressed an interest were contacted setting a date for formal sealed offers to be received by 5pm on 27th October.
9. 11 bids were received, 10 unconditional and 1 conditional offer subject to securing formal planning approval for the demolition and new construction of 24 apartments with a 12-month completion. Appendix A summarise the marketing campaign and all offers received.
10. The highest of offer was unconditional and made by Best Care Liverpool Ltd for £650,000. They have provided proof of funding via a mixture of cash in bank, remortgaging of an existing unencumbered property and private equity.
11. The following Head of Terms have been drafted to secure the sale but also allow for any potential unforeseen delays to the new Long Lane construction programme.
12. If in the unlikely event that the Fire Service are not able to offer vacant possession on or before Friday 28 June 2024, the parties will enter into a “licence to occupy” for a 3-month period whereby the Fire Service will remain in occupation post completion for a period up to and no later than 30 September 2024. No rent will be paid but the Fire Service will continue to be responsible for all utilities, rate liability, repairs etc.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. No E&D implications have been considered under this report and the main report for the construction of the new site addresses any E & D implications (CFO/031/022).

Staff Implications

14. No staff implications have been identified as part of this report, and report CFO/031/022 contains further detail on the staff implications for the constructions of the new site.

Legal Implications

15. The acceptance of this offer is subject to a contract of sale.
16. 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 be reasonably obtained.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

17. The Authority had assumed a capital receipt of £200k within the financial planning for the new Long Lane site.
18. Further to the fire station being placed on the market the offers received were higher than initially anticipated. The difference will be used to reduce borrowing for the Long Lane site development.
19. The offer is on an unconditional basis.
20. The offer will be subject to the Estate agent fees of 1.25%, £8,125 + Energy performance report £265.
21. Legal conveyancing fees of circa £5,000 will be incurred.
22. A provisional sum of circa £10,000 will be required for removal and disposal costs associated with vacant possession, along with security cost whilst the station is empty.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

23. 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. Officers will mitigate these risks as far as is reasonably practicable between the date of the station closure till completion of the sale.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

24. The sale of Aintree had been assumed to be part of the new Long Lane development.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/031/022 Construction of a new multi-pump superstation, training and development academy / National resilience centre of excellence at Long Lane

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

MFRS Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service