

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 APRIL 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/028/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	KIERAN TIMMINS, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	KIERAN TIMMINS	REPORT AUTHOR:	KIERAN TIMMINS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
TITLE OF REPORT:	UPDATE ON ESTATES PROJECTS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A	COMBINED TRAINING FACILITY
	APPENDIX B	MAP OF THE PRESCOT SITE

Purpose of Report

1. To update members on progress on the Prescott merger and to ask for appropriate delegated permissions to ensure projects can continue to move forward speedily.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that;
 - i. Members note the contents of this report.
 - ii. Grant delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in consultation with the Chair, to negotiate the purchase of additional land with Knowsley MBC.
 - iii. Grant delegated authority to the CFO to undertake all actions necessary to minimise the delay to the project.
 - iv. Direct the CFO to bring back a 'go/no go' report as soon as practical with an agreed cost plan, including partner contributions.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that they have approved (subject to consultations as appropriate) the following programme of station mergers and closures in order to set a balanced budget;
 - Huyton and Whiston merging at Prescott (approved)
 - Upton and West Kirby merging at Saughall Massie Road (under consultation)

- Eccleston and St Helens merging at St Helens town centre (subject to consultation)
 - The outright closure of Allerton (approved)
4. In developing these proposals there have been extensive and very positive discussions with Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) about the options for working jointly together.
 5. Members will recall that they have received a grant of £1.7m towards joint service working at Prescott and a further £4.5m grant in support of a programme of co-location with blue light colleagues around the other mergers.

Prescot

The following key activities have happened to date;

- Pre-planning application has been submitted to Knowsley BC by Wates/Ryder 26th January 2015.
- Date for meeting with Planning Officer put on hold pending further clarifications over building size, training facilities and available land given the implications of having additional emergency service partners on site.
- Heads of Terms with Knowsley MBC for land purchase/development lease are almost complete (although size of site required may vary - see below - which will require amendments to agreed heads of terms).
- Planned site investigation works were deferred to ensure a contract was in place with Wates and indemnities & collateral warranties apply without the need for separate agreements. These works started on site on 26th March 2015.
- Topographical and nesting bird surveys have now been carried out on site.
- NWAS are keen to develop a 'hub' sites at Prescott. This would probably mean at least two additional bays and the infrastructure to support a 'Make Ready Hub' given the proximity to Whiston hospital.
- Merseyside Police have expressed a desire to co locate at Prescott. Several meetings have been held to discuss their requirements which are for a neighbourhood police station of about 160m2. They also wish to develop the concept of shared training facilities (see Appendix A).
- Meetings have been held with Youth teams to understand their requirements & discuss some sharing of station facilities between PTV and Fire Cadets.

- Prevention & Protection have itemised their requirements.
- 10 The next step for negotiations with partners is to design a building in full with a cost plan.
 - 11 As a result of the positive response from partners it is recognised that additional land may be required at the site and Officers have approached Knowsley MBC to establish if the Authority can purchase the whole site. It is anticipated that the whole site would likely cost some £500k against £200k for the current site. This would allow the extra space needed for all of the partner requirements. It is important to progress with the land acquisition to keep the project on track. A map of the full site is attached as Appendix B.
 - 12 It is requested that delegated Authority be granted to the CFO in consultation with the Chair to negotiate the purchase of additional land with Knowlsey MBC.
 - 13 Since Wates are now engaged as design and build contractors on the project this means that they are incurring costs and that delays to the programme overall should be minimised to reduce these costs. Resources are therefore predominantly focused on this joint project with the aim to develop the legal agreements, ways of working and knowledge to act as a blue print for the other proposed station mergers. Members are asked to grant delegated Authority to the CFO to undertake all actions necessary to minimise the delay to the project.
 - 14 The CFO will bring back a 'go/no go' report as soon as practical with an agreed cost plan including partner contributions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 15 None arising from this report. The station mergers programme is the subject of a full equality impact assessment.

Staff Implications

- 16 None arising immediately from this report. The station mergers is an element of the structural changes proposed to reduce the number of firefighting staff overall to deliver budgetary savings whilst maintaining wholetime crewing.

Legal Implications

- 17 Appropriate agreements will be required with Police and Ambulance once formal decisions have been made that they will join the project. The partner's involvement will need to be managed to ensure that this does not delay the project and/or incur costs under the building contract.

- 18 Project governance and decision making needs to be considered once formal notification from partners is received that they have committed to the project. This will ensure that there is no financial loss to MFRA.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

- 19 The estimated cost of the full plot is £0.5m. Any additional cost can be funded from reserves.
- 20 Negotiations are underway with partners to ensure they pay the appropriate amount to cover their costs in full including land costs.
- 21 A full go/no-go report for the Authority will be prepared once costs and partner contributions are finalised. It is recognised that building costs have increased substantially in recent months as demand has increased across the sector.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

- 22 Procuring the whole plot of land minimises the risks of delay in the project overall
- 23 Legal arrangements will ensure that the Authority is not finally committed to the land purchase until there is certainty around partner involvement and agreed cost contributions.

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

- 24 The station merger programme is the least impactful saving option on operational response.
- 25 The new station will provide much improved firefighter and community facilities.
- 26 Working with Blue light partners improves operational effectiveness.

BACKGROUND PAPERS
