

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	20 OCTOBER 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/083/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DCFO PHIL GARRIGAN	REPORT AUTHOR:	COLIN SCHOFIELD
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STEWART WOODS IAN CUMMINS SARAH BOURNE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROPOSED NEW FIRE STATION AT PRESCOT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	PRESCOT – PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
	APPENDIX B:	CAPITAL COSTS OF THE NEW PRESCOT FIRE STATION – EXEMPT BY VIRTUE OF PARA 3 OF PART 1 OF SCH 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members give the final approval to build a new community fire and rescue station; incorporating a neighbourhood Police station on land at Manchester Road, Prescot, Merseyside.

Recommendation

2. That Members
 - a. approve the building of a new community fire station, including a neighbourhood Police station, on land at Manchester Road, Prescot.
 - b. note the increase in costs from the initial £3.1m (estimated) cost to £5.350m.
 - c. approve the drawdown of an additional £1.550m from the capital investment reserve to fund the increase in the capital cost not covered by partners.

Introduction and Background

3. On 6th May 2014, the Authority considered report CFO/044/14 and 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.

4. Members also resolved that a further report be submitted detailing the outcomes of this consultation, including details of any operational implications of the merger, including details of Section 13/16 mutual aid arrangements with Cheshire FRS for the coverage of Cronton.
5. The outcomes of this public consultation were fully considered by the Authority on 2nd October 2014 in report CFO/094/14 and were noted.
6. The Authority also considered report CFO/095/14 and 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 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council and enter into a lease.
7. On 16th April 2015, Community Safety and Protection Committee considered report CFO/028/15 entitled 'Update on Estates Projects' which provided an update on the progress of the Prescot merger and the appetite from partners (Merseyside Police / North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)) to co-locate at the new site.
8. It was noted in the report that the project had been subject to delay and in order to minimise any future delays Members were asked to grant delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer. As such the Committee resolved that:
 - Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair, to negotiate the purchase of additional land with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council;
 - Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Fire Officer to undertake all actions necessary to minimise delay to the project; and
 - The Chief Fire Officer be directed to bring back a 'go/no go' report as soon as practical with an agreed cost plan, including partner contributions.
9. This report is the requested 'go/no go' report and provides an update on all associated issues.

Emergency Service Partners

10. As indicated in report CFO/028/15, there have been extensive discussions with emergency services partners concerning the possibilities of sharing the site and co-locating services. Because of this, the original pre-planning application which was submitted to Knowsley Borough Council on 26th January 2015 (which was solely for a community fire station on this site) was put on hold.
11. This report has been written in order to update Members on the progress made in this regard.

Merseyside Police

12. The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Merseyside has confirmed she wishes to include a neighbourhood police station within the building and plans have been developed and agreed in principle with officers from Merseyside Police.
13. Individuals from Merseyside Police now sit on the Project Design Team to identify their build requirements and ensure that the building meets their needs with regard to their specific office space (some 154 m²) as well as the communal areas they will share with Fire & Rescue Service colleagues.
14. Merseyside Police officers have also indicated that they wish to utilise the training facilities being designed for this site.
15. Discussions have been ongoing with Police colleagues to produce a formal Agreement which sets out the understanding reached between the Authority and PCC as to how the PCC will be involved in the project. Negotiations as to the content of this document are now nearing conclusion.
16. Once the design works for the project are concluded, the Authority and PCC will enter into a Development Agreement and agreement for lease which will set out the arrangements to complete the project and will contractually require the PCC to enter into a lease on completion of the works.
17. Upon completion the Authority will grant a sub-lease to the PCC for the occupation of both self-contained and shared parts of the building.

NWAS

18. As indicated in report CFO/028/15, NWAS had indicated that they were very keen to develop an operational ambulance station and 'Make Ready' hub at the Prescott site which would provide a base for personnel, ambulances and other vehicles covering the east of Merseyside. They were particularly keen on this site due to its proximity to Whiston hospital.
19. A number of meetings were held with NWAS colleagues, involving MFRS officers, and some also including representatives of the appointed contractor (Wates) and their architects, to develop this concept which included extensive use of the main building, including training rooms and other NWAS-specific facilities. This necessitated a redesign of the building to add a second floor as

well as two additional appliance bays' from which the emergency ambulances could be mobilised.

20. The concept also included a wash-down area and a standalone 'Make Ready' facility to which ambulances and other vehicles could be returned after use, cleaned and restocked ready for collection by paramedics and operational personnel.
21. As a result of these extensive requirements, MFRS officers negotiated and agreed with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, additional areas of land on the same site to accommodate the increased footprint for buildings as well as parking for additional emergency vehicles and catering for a significant increase in private cars for staff and visitors.
22. MFRS officers worked with Wates and Todd & Ledson (the Authority's quantity surveyors and agents) to draw up a detailed cost plan for all the buildings and an apportionment of these buildings between MFRS, Police & NWAS reflecting their respective requirements. Officers also worked with NWAS officers to assist in building up a business case for them to submit to the NHS Trust Board.
23. However, on 18th June 2015, MFRS officers were informed that NWAS no longer wished to go ahead with the development at this site.
24. This decision was received some four months after NWAS had said they wished to be included and consequently MFRS officers and the Authority's contractors have been involved in four months of abortive work. Officers are currently in discussion with NWAS over the payment of the costs directly attributable to their decision to withdraw from the programme.
25. The buildings and site layout subsequently had to be redesigned to reflect the reduced requirement including just MFRS and Merseyside Police. As Members will appreciate, this withdrawal by NWAS has not only incurred increased costs for the Authority, both for abortive works and redesign, it has also considerably delayed the project. It was originally intended to present a 'go/no go' report to the Authority at its meeting on 30th June 2015 but this had to be delayed to today's meeting.

Land at Manchester Road

26. As indicated above, officers negotiated with officers from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council and obtained approval in principle to acquire the whole of the Manchester Road site, rather than just some 50% of this, as was originally planned. Heads of Terms for this acquisition have been agreed.
27. However, recent discussions with officers from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council have resulted in the proposed community fire station building being moved to the northern end of the site to fall in line with developments approved on neighbouring sites and to meet planning requirements. This has meant that the full site is no longer required and it is likely that only some 50% will now be

needed. Consequently the Heads of Terms for the land acquisition will need to be revised but it is thought this exercise can be completed quickly as all the underlying principles have been agreed.

28. The Authority and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council jointly appointed a commercial land and property agency (GVA) to value this site over 12 months ago. However, with the additional land being included, then excluded, and with the passage of time officers have instructed GVA to update the valuation. The updated price is still awaited, due to the recent developments outlined in this report, but GVA have provided an initial figure which is set out in the Financial Implications section below. This figure is subject to reduction for abnormal issues found on site so should represent the maximum cost.
29. Topographical, geotechnical and environmental assessments of this site have been carried out by specialist contractors and their reports and findings taken into account in the design of the site. It has been established that there are disused mineshafts on the site but it can be confirmed that the location of each is known and they have all previously been appropriately capped. In accordance with good practice, no building will be sited above any of the capped mine shafts.
30. As required, the Health and Safety Executive were formally notified (on 2nd September 2015) of the intention to build on this site.
31. Following the NWAS withdrawal, plans and designs were redrawn and an updated pre-planning application was submitted to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council on 24th July. An initial meeting with Council officers was held on 12th August to discuss this and the information required to accompany a full application identified. However, as a result of further discussions with Knowsley officers (and as set out above) the site plans have had to be redrawn to reflect the revised location of the building within the overall site.
32. To give Members an idea of what the building might look like, Appendix A shows the proposed elevation drawings. Due to the recent changes, it has not yet been possible to provide a drawing showing the proposed site layout but it is anticipated that this will be available for Members to examine at the meeting. All drawings are subject to amendment during the planning application process.

Timetable

33. Now that the Project is back on schedule and subject to approval at today's meeting, it is anticipated that the land purchase will be concluded by mid-December 2015. The purchase is conditional upon granting of full planning permission which it is hoped will be received in mid-January 2016. Assuming planning approval is received in January, it is anticipated that work should commence on site in late February 2016 and with a 12 month build period. The new community fire and rescues station and neighbourhood Police station should therefore be operational in March 2017.

Equality and Diversity Implications

34. Members have previously considered the Equality Impact Assessment for the station mergers programme in general and the proposed new Prescot community fire station in particular, in earlier reports. There is no update to the Equality Impact Assessment as a result of this report.

Staff Implications

35. The implications for personnel, involving the net saving of 22 WTE firefighter posts from this merger, have been previously reported to the Authority and the financial savings anticipated have been included in the Budget for the appropriate years.
36. Formal consultation with Representative Bodies has continued throughout this process. Staff from Huyton and Whiston stations, as well as other staff affected, have been consulted over the design of the new facilities.

Legal Implications

37. As stated above, Heads of Terms for the land purchase need to be revised and agreed with Knowsley Borough Council and, subject to approval to proceed, a Building Licence will be prepared by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to allow the building of the new community fire station and neighbourhood police station on this site.
38. Also as stated above, an Agreement which sets out the understanding reached between the Authority and PCC as to how the PCC will be involved in the Project is yet to be concluded. Once the designs for the Project are concluded, the Authority and PCC will enter into a Development Agreement and agreement for lease which will set out the arrangements to complete the Project and will contractually oblige the PCC to enter into a lease on completion of the works. Upon completion the Authority will grant a sub-lease to the PCC for the occupation of both self-contained and shared parts of the building.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

39. The cost of land, net of any reductions for abnormal issues found on site, is anticipated to be in the region of £0.250m.
40. The cost of building works including preliminaries, abnormals, design and pre-construction, substructure and superstructure, internal finishes, services, external works including training facilities, ICT and furniture and fittings is estimated to be some £5.100m. These costs are based upon an indicative cost plan, most of which has been benchmarked against market rates on similar projects, including emergency services accommodation in neighbouring Authorities. Until the final cost plan is agreed, which includes any requirements imposed by the planning process, the completion of all benchmarking and any

other fine tuning required, this is only a budgetary figure. However, it is not anticipated that these costs will increase, therefore approval is sought to revise the budget figure within the capital programme for the Project to £5.350m, an increase of £2.250m.

41. Members will note that the total cost of land and buildings is considerably more than the estimate provided in report CFO/095/14 (£3.100 million). However, as stated in that report, the original figure quoted was based upon the most recent build projects on behalf of MFRS and was subject to revision, following appointment of the main contractor.
42. It was also solely for a community fire station & had no additional land or facilities for partners included. The design now includes provision for a training house, rather than a tower as had originally been planned. Furthermore, building costs are increasing at some 5.5% per annum so this will have increased costs since the estimate was provided.
43. The direct build costs include pre-construction costs which include the abortive and re-design costs for NWAS involvement, detailed above. The costs also include any direct site related costs, which were unknown at the time of the previous report, including remediation of contamination, lowering of services in the pavements and other abnormal costs. They also include a training house, rather than a tower, as was originally envisaged.
44. The capital contribution from Merseyside Police, which is based upon an agreed apportionment of the buildings, is estimated to be some £0.600m. This figure is still subject to final agreement with Merseyside Police.
45. DCLG grant already received for this Project amounts to £1.770m. Capital receipts for the sale of land and buildings at Huyton and Whiston are also anticipated and details are provided in Appendix B.
46. Members have set aside funds in the capital investment reserve to meet any funding shortfall in the capital build cost of the station mergers initiative. Therefore the amount to be met from the capital investment reserve (and not by any additional borrowing) will increase from £0.830m to £2.380m.
47. Appendix B to this report summarises the proposed changes to the capital programme as a result of the information above.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

48. All Health & Safety implications of the new build will be fully risk assessed and mitigated Wates, as the appointed principal contractor.
49. The new building is being designed and will be built to achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating.

50. A new community fire and rescue station will provide an improved working environment for firefighters, included enhanced training facilities. It will also provide improved facilities for community use, compared to what is available at the current Huyton and Whiston stations, which in turn will lead to greater interaction between firefighters and community groups and hence assist in creating safer communities. Sharing the facilities with colleagues from Merseyside Police will lead to closer working relationships.

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

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BREEM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology
MFRS	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
NWAS	North West Ambulance Service
PCC	Police & Crime Commissioner (for Merseyside)
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent