

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE : 21st SEPTEMBER 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR : ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: OPTION TO PURCHASE LAND ADJACENT TO
STOCKTON HEATH FIRE STATION

Purpose of Report

1. This report informs Members about an option to purchase a piece of land adjacent to Stockton Heath Fire Station which is available to the Fire Authority.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members determine whether they wish to exercise the option to purchase land adjacent to Stockton Heath Fire Station (authorising the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to complete such documentation as is necessary to effect the purchase).

Background

2. In 1996 Cheshire County Council (CCC) bought land from Warrington Borough Council (WBC) to enable it to construct Stockton Heath Fire Station. The land is shown edged red on the plan attached to this report as Appendix 1. The land (and fire station) now belongs to the Fire Authority.
3. There were a number of provisions in the Conveyance to CCC concerned with users of adjoining land (the option land) coloured blue on the plan attached to this report as Appendix 1. In particular the Conveyance granted an option in favour of CCC in respect of the option land the benefit of which passed to the Fire Authority. The option is expressed to be exercisable in the event that the option land ceases to be used for the purpose of a community centre (which definition was expanded to include a Royal British Legion Club).

Information

4. The option land is no longer used for the purposes mentioned above. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has been approached by WBC to establish whether the Fire Authority wishes to exercise the option to purchase the option land.

5. Officers have obtained a joint valuation (with WBC) from the Valuation Office Agency and the option land has been valued at £130,000. The option land contains a derelict building (a former community centre) which is in poor condition and, due to its age, probably contains some asbestos products.
6. If the Authority were to purchase the option land it would need to demolish the derelict building and effect some landscaping in order to incorporate the option land within the extended boundary of the fire station. The demolition costs would be greater if asbestos was found and there would be ongoing maintenance costs associated with the extended fire station site.
7. There is no operational requirement to extend the fire station site. Accordingly, the purchases of the option land would be purely speculative in nature. The option land would be likely to enhance the options and value associated with the extended fire station site should the Authority decide to sell the fire station site in the future.

Legal Implications

8. The report contains an explanation of the legal basis for the Authority's purchase of the option land.

Financial Implications

9. Should Members agree to purchase the land, then £130k will be included in the Authority's Capital Programme. It is unlikely that demolition and landscaping costs could be treated as capital so these costs would be included in the revenue budgets and, if necessary, funded from reserves.

Equality & Diversity Implications

10. There are no equality and diversity implications.

Environmental Implications

11. Any environmental implications associated with the option land will be handled appropriately on behalf of the Authority.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None