

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 22ND JUNE 2022
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: SALE OF SURPLUS LAND TO THE REAR OF
CHESTER FIRE STATION

Purpose of Report

1. To allow Members to determine whether to sell the surplus land to the rear of Chester Fire Station.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] determine whether to approve the sale of the surplus land to the rear of Chester Fire Station to Chester West and Chester Borough Council, in principle, subject to suitable terms and conditions being agreed (with the Director of Governance and Commissioning and Treasurer approving such terms and conditions on behalf of the Fire Authority).

Background

2. When the Authority confirmed its intention to create a new fire station in Chester, it also resolved to market the surplus land to the rear of the site (December 2017). The surplus land is shown hatched and marked 'Residual Site' on the plan attached to this report as Appendix 1.
3. The surplus land could not be marketed until the new fire station had been completed, as it was used for the temporary fire station that was required during demolition and construction. The surplus land became available for sale shortly after the new fire station was completed.
4. Some preparatory work was completed with a view to the surplus land being marketed, but this has not taken place. It is worth pointing out that the surplus land does appear to have some significant limitations in terms of its potential uses and therefore its value, e.g. it is overlooked on all sides by some relatively tall buildings.

Information

5. In the past twenty months officers have been in dialogue with Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (CWACBC) about the potential sale of the surplus land. Initial soundings of some Members of the Fire Authority suggested that they would be amenable to a sale to CWACBC.

6. With the agreement of officers CWACBC commissioned a firm of chartered surveyors to prepare a report and valuation last year. The report has been shared with officers. It contains an appraisal of the market and calculates the residual value of the surplus land taking into account the potential for some kind of mixed apartment/commercial use. The valuation figure quoted in valuation report is contained in the Part 2 report. Officers have discussed the potential sale with the Head of Estates and he has confirmed that he is comfortable with the indicative valuation, although he has suggested that an updated valuation be sought at an appropriate point.
7. CWACBC has stated that it is exploring a range of options for the surplus land and that it would wish to proceed, subject the production of a viable proposal and to planning. Its initial view is that the surplus land would be suitable for affordable one-bedroomed apartments/flats, which would be let to people, through the Housing Register, who are in the greatest housing need, including people who have been made homeless and/or have other priority needs. Alternatively, it may wish to pursue a supported housing scheme.
8. It is acknowledged that Members may take the view that the land should be marketed, as previously agreed by the Fire Authority.

Financial Implications

9. The capital receipt that can be expected from the sale of the surplus land is relatively small. However, it will help to fund the capital programme.

Legal Implications

10. At this stage, there are no legal implications. The sale will be subject to suitable terms and conditions, e.g. it may include a provision about the surplus land being developed within a certain timeframe, failing which it would have to be sold back to the Fire Authority.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

Environmental Implications

12. There are no environmental implications associated this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE