

CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 24 APRIL 2024
REPORT OF: HEAD OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
AUTHOR: KATIE WHITEHEAD

SUBJECT: SALE OF HOUSES IN STOCKTON HEATH

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the sale of the service houses in Stockton Heath.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members authorise officers to arrange the sale of the houses at Stockton Heath

Background

2. Members recently approved the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28 which provides for the removal of the on-call fire engine from Stockton Heath Fire Station; the fire engine being crewed 4 days out of 8 weekdays by full-time firefighters.
3. The service owns 10 houses in Stockton Heath which were historically used as housing for the day crewed staff prior to the change to on-call. Following the change to on-call the houses were used to accommodate staff providing on-call cover.
4. The CRMP stated the intention to sell the houses in Stockton Heath to contribute the capital programme, e.g. to assist with the cost of replacing the fire station in Ellesmere Port and Warrington.

Information

5. Staff have obviously been kept informed and the occupiers of the service houses in Stockton Heath have been consulted with since last year about the CRMP and were notified of the decision in February. Consultation is continuing.
6. Already three of the service houses are vacant with others due to become vacant over the next 8-12 months. As a result, officers would like to progress the sale of the vacant houses.

7. The houses will only be sold when they become vacant in line with the wider project to cease the on-call cover.
8. Staff are being supported as the station changes are implemented and representative bodies are fully involved in consultation and negotiation.
9. The Joint Estates Team will manage the process of the sale on behalf of the Service as they have done previously when we sold surplus houses at Congleton, Knutsford and Northwich.
10. Each house sale will require the approval of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Head of Finance. This was the governance applied previously allowing swift decisions to be made about offers made by prospective purchasers.

Financial Implications

11. The sale of the houses will raise capital which the Authority can use to fund future capital projects. It is hoped that the sale of all ten houses will raise a total of somewhere between £3-3.5m.
12. Some costs will be incurred in estate agent and legal fees.

Legal Implications

13. The sales will be conducted on the open market with suitable advice from an estate agent. Officers will have in mind the Government land disposal advice which anticipates local authorities selling assets for the 'best consideration reasonably obtainable'.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. There are no equality or diversity implications associated with this paper

Environmental Implications

15. There are no major environmental impacts from this paper

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PLANNING
MANAGER
TEL [01606] 868804
BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**