

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 19 SEPTEMBER 2018
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: CREATING A JOINT FIRE AND POLICE FACILITY
ON THE CREWE FIRE STATION SITE

Purpose of Report

1 This report:

Provides information about progress with the proposal to create a joint fire and police facility for Cheshire Fire Authority (Fire) and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (the PCC) on the Crewe Fire Station site;

Seeks authority to enter into suitable arrangements with the PCC to progress the project;

Seeks the allocation of the funding to cover Fire's proportion of the cost of the joint fire and police facility;

Seeks authority to commit up to £200k to prepare initial designs, carry out suitable surveys/checks and prepare a cost plan.

Recommended: That Members:

- [1] Note the contents of the report;
- [2] Commit to proceed with a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site;
- [3] Authorise officers to enter into suitable arrangements including written agreements with the PCC to enable the project to be progressed;
- [4] Include the sum of £5m in the capital programme to cover the potential Fire Authority contribution to the cost of creating the joint fire and police facility.
- [5] Note the anticipated cost of progressing the project to create initial designs, carry out suitable surveys/checks and prepare a cost plan and commit the sum of £200k as the Fire contribution.

Background

- 2 When Fire and the PCC embarked upon Blue Light Collaboration it was acknowledged that there may be benefits in working together to rationalise the respective estate assets that they owned. A report at that time prepared by external advisers identified Crewe as one area where there would be sense in working together to create a joint facility.
- 3 The Chief Constable has indicated to the PCC that the existing operational site in Crewe is too large and not fit for purpose. The Chief Constable has also indicated that it would be possible to operate effectively from the current Crewe Fire Station site. Fire is anxious to replace the current Crewe Fire Station and intends to build a new fire station on the site.
- 4 The PCC has explored other opportunities and Fire has previously approached Cheshire East Borough Council in relation to the land immediately behind the current Crewe Fire Station site. However, these pieces of work did not deliver any tangible outcome and Fire and the PCC are now fully committed to working together to deliver a joint fire and police facility on the current Crewe Fire Station Site.
- 5 A feasibility report was prepared in October 2017 and this work has been further developed by officers since. Following some changes to the requirements to be accommodated on the site it has been concluded that it is possible to fit the requirements of Fire and the Chief Constable, on the Crewe Fire Station site, albeit this will be challenging and is obviously subject to planning approval being secured.
- 6 Officers and external advisers have confirmed that Fire and the PCC should achieve savings by building a joint fire and police facility when compared to the costs of two separate buildings. The potential saving will be identified as part of the next stage of project planning work.

Information

Fire and Chief Constable Requirements

- 7 The work described in the Background section has gone a long way to confirming that the requirements of Fire and the Chief Constable should be capable of being satisfactorily accommodated on the current Crewe Fire Station site. However, this will only become certain when the design is further developed and ultimately if planning permission can be secured for a facility that is acceptable to Fire (meeting Fire's requirements and being within the budget allocated) and acceptable to the PCC (meeting the Chief Constable's requirements and being within the budget allocated by the PCC).
- 8 Fire's requirements are expected to be: three bay fire station with drill tower and training facilities, including; watch room, station managers office, watch managers office, fire protection staff office, gym, rest room, kit room, locker room, drying room, kitchen/ dining room, BA workshop and compressor room,

community room, Princes Trust/cadet room and advocates office, with associated stores and toilet/washroom facilities.

- 9 The Chief Constable's requirements are expected to be: a fully operational Local Policing Unit Deployment Base with public helpdesk, including; large open plan office with separate breakout offices, briefing room, individual department offices, kitchen/dining room, helpdesk and office, interview rooms, locker room, taser store, airwaves locker room, CS locker room, property store, external stores including associated stores and toilet/washroom facilities.
- 10 Wherever operationally possible to do so, the intention is to share facilities, for example toilets and kitchen/dining room thus saving overall build and operating costs.

Terms of Relationship

- 11 Fire and the PCC will build upon the existing general collaborative arrangements to produce a suite of legal agreements to regularise all stages of delivering this joint facility from initial feasibility through to long term operational use.
- 12 The paragraphs below summarise the documentation that is envisaged at this stage:
 - Fire and the PCC would enter into a project agreement setting out how they would work together to deliver the project.
 - Fire and the PCC would enter into an agreement for lease (this would set out the conditions associated with the granting of a lease and oblige fire to grant and the police to enter into a lease when the joint facility was completed).
 - Fire would enter into a contract for the design and build of the joint facility. The PCC would benefit from certain warranties from the design and build contractor (and other parties involved in the build).
 - Fire would grant a lease to the PCC upon completion of the build of the joint facility.

Procurement Method

- 13 Fire has used the NW Construction Hub for a number of build projects in recent years and has been satisfied with the process and outcomes. Fire chose this option after a traditional procurement failed to deliver value for money and was brought to an end without contract award. The Hub could be used for the design and build of a joint facility. The Hub process is somewhat different to a traditional tendering arrangement. There are, however, other frameworks like the Hub and an assessment of these is in progress in order to determine the best procurement method. This should be one of the first decisions to be made by Fire and the PCC.

Project Governance and Decision-Making

- 14 A construction project tends to be fairly complex. During the process a number of decisions will be necessary and at times these will need to be made quickly. It will be important for Fire and the PCC to agree project governance which will allow decisions to be made at the right level and when necessary, quickly.
- 15 The Strategic Change team that now supports Fire and Cheshire Constabulary will be able to provide guidance and support around the necessary governance for officers, Fire and the PCC.
- 16 The project governance will be captured in the Project Agreement. This will ensure that certain key decisions are 'reserved' to the respective decision-making bodies (requiring both to agree something before the project is able to progress). The table attached at Appendix 1 contains an outline of the key decisions associated with pursuing the project using the Hub process. Something of this nature would need to be agreed whichever procurement method is used.
- 17 Fire has delegated certain responsibilities to the Estates and Property Committee.

Timescale

- 18 Recent experience shows that from start to finish it normally takes just over two years to complete a fire station. This timescale can be impacted by various factors, e.g. survey results, planning, complexity of design. Some of the stages involved in the process will need to be extended in order to create a joint facility that will satisfy Fire and the PCC. There will also need to be some time built into the programme to secure approvals from Fire and the PCC. Given these issues it would be sensible to accept that the joint facility would be unlikely to be occupied until late in the financial year 2020/21.

Benefits and Risks

- 19 The construction of a joint facility is expected to deliver a significant saving over the cost of building two separate facilities. The saving will be possible for a range of reasons, e.g. the total floor area of the building can be reduced, there will only be one set of service connections and there will only be one construction site management team required. It is also expected that a modern energy efficient building will be cheaper to run compared to the existing buildings. Savings will be shared by Fire and the PCC. The respective proportions will need to take into account various factors, e.g. the share of the project costs and value associated with the granting of a long lease by Fire to the PCC.
- 20 There are both financial and operational benefits of working in a joint facility.

- 21 In a project of this size there will be a number of risk items to be managed. The principle headline risks are, cost escalation, programme extension, dissatisfaction with the quality of the finished product, fitness for purpose, problems gaining external permissions and legal difficulties, e.g. title or boundary issues. A risk register will be maintained throughout the project, as a live document, to capture current and emerging risks, and to identify mitigation strategies for each risk. The headline risks and the management of them will form a key part of the project governance arrangements.
- 22 A project contingency sum would normally be identified to deal with additional costs. This contingency would only be committed through the project governance arrangements.

Financial Implications

- 23 Please see report at Item 11 of the Agenda.

Legal Implications

- 24 Paragraph 12 of this report sets out the legal agreements which will need to be concluded to create and govern the necessary relationship between Fire and the PCC. The project costs will cover the cost of one party, probably Fire, receiving external legal advice.
- 25 Once plans are sufficiently well developed, the PCC/Constabulary will need to conduct and take account of a public consultation exercise because the proposal would involve a change of location in the police public helpdesk facility. Any decision to proceed would be subject to the outcome of this process.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 26 Equality and diversity issues have been taken into account in previous fire station builds and will need to feature in the design development of the joint facility. It is anticipated that the costs associated with equality and diversity will be shared.

Environmental Implications

- 27 The Crewe Fire Station building is reaching the end of its serviceable life. It was designed and constructed at a time when its environmental impact was not considered, or at least not in the depth that it is in modern construction. The same can be said about the life expectancy, design and construction of the current police station building. The two buildings fall far short of modern day construction standards some of which are designed to reduce the environmental impact and CO₂ footprint of new buildings. This means the fire station and police station do not retain or recycle well the energy that is put into them. This inefficiency is multiplied because the current buildings are too large for the required usage.

- 28 The new building would address the issue of wasted space as it would be fit for purpose. It is expected that there will be nearly a 500m² reduction in footprint compared to the existing two sites.
- 29 The new building will comply with all modern building regulations meaning that energy loss from the structure will be minimised. Energy input will be managed through a building management system to ensure maximum efficiency. It will ensure the service installations will recover heat energy from air changes, reduce energy demand by only heating the sections of the building that are occupied, reduce water usage, have low energy LED lighting which is motion controlled, have high efficiency boilers, and make use of natural energy gains through orientation and location of windows.
- 30 The new building will look to achieve a minimum of good on the BREEAM assessment. BREEAM is a sustainability assessment method.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACT FROM PROJECT AGREEMENT

'Reserved' Matters

This list is based on the process followed if using the NW Construction Hub and it is accepted that a different procurement method could be pursued. However, it gives an indication of the kind of decisions that would require consensus.

Procurement method

Allocation of funding

Choice of design and build contractor

Commencement of Stage 1

Consider outputs from Stage 1

Agree indicative proportion of project costs

Agree methodology to determine proportions to be applied at Stage 2

Commencement of Stage 2

Consider outputs from Stage 2

Agree proportion of project costs

Commencement of Stage 3

Note:

Stage 1 Initial Design, Surveys/Checks, Cost Plan

Stage 2 Planning Application, Detailed Design, Final Price

Stage 3 Works on site