

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: ESTATES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE
DATE: 6TH NOVEMBER 2020
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: CREWE FIRE STATION

Purpose of Report

1. To present an overview of feasibility work concerned with the Crewe Fire Station site. To describe the current position in relation to the restrictive covenants affecting the land and potential impact of HS2. To allow Members to determine whether they wish to recommend to the Fire Authority that additional funding is allocated.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Note the report
- [2] Indicate which option they wish officers to take forward
- [3] Recommend to the Fire Authority that it allocates additional funding

Background

2. In September 2018, Members committed to proceed with a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site. Unfortunately, the feasibility work ultimately led to the conclusion that the facility could not be created without spending well in excess of what was felt to represent value for money. Since that project ended officers have been working with external advisers on various options for the site. Work has also continued to attempt to release an old restrictive covenant affecting the site. More recently, correspondence has been received about HS2.

Information

Options

3. A paper has been prepared by IKG Consulting Limited. It summarises the feasibility work that has been done and assesses the various options that have been considered. The paper describes the options; compares the outline budgets of each of the options; comments on risk; and compares the relevant build programmes for each of the options. The paper also covers some key issues: planning; zero carbon; the retention, or demolition of the community bungalow; and the requirement for a temporary fire station. The paper is going

through final checks before being released and will be supplied to Members on the 3rd November.

Restrictive Covenant

4. The title documentation disclosed a restrictive covenant that restricts the height of any construction on the site. The training tower needs to be higher than the height in the covenant. The covenant appears to have been intended to protect a proposed airport (in the deeds a reference is made to aerodrome) and dates back to the 1930s. It is clearly of no relevance now. Both Cheshire East Council and the Crown have the benefit of the covenant and after some initial difficulties we now have contacts at each organisation and are hopeful of making progress in having the covenant relinquished.

HS2

5. Initial inquiries of Cheshire East Council were encouraging in that the Council did not have any plans to make changes to the roundabout/highways that adjoin the site as a result of HS2. This was a particular concern when the proposed joint fire and police facility was being considered as it would have involved the site being developed to its full extent – ever inch of the land could have been critical.
6. Week commencing 19th October a letter was received from HS2 and this is attached to this report as Appendix 1. Members will see that the letter is rather equivocal and it is not clear what impact, if any, HS2 will have on our site. A request has been lodged with HS2 to attempt to ascertain what the letter means to the Fire Authority.

Financial Implications

7. At this point, the Fire Authority has committed £6m to the project. When Members receive the paper from IKG Consulting Limited they will see that the options that are being considered will cost more than the allocated funding. Therefore, further funding will need to be allocated for the project to progress.

Legal Implications

8. The restrictive covenant will need to be relinquished before the project proceeds. The situation with HS2 will need to be clarified satisfactorily before the project proceeds.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. The project will deliver a building that will take into account equality and diversity requirements.

Environmental Implications

10. The project will deliver a building that will be a considerable improvement over the existing buildings which are not environmentally efficient.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE