

# FIRE AUTHORITY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH  
FIRE AUTHORITY**  
*Working together to improve community safety*

**Date: Thursday, 21 July 2016**

**10:30hr**

**Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters  
Hinchingsbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, HUNTINGDON,  
PE29 2NA**

## **AGENDA**

**Open to Public and Press**

- 1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**  
*Guidance on declaring interests is available at*  
<http://tinyurl.com/ccc-dec-of-interests>
- 2. Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 30th June 2016**      **5 - 12**

### **DECISIONS**

- 3. Huntingdon Hub Property Rationalisation - Progress Update**      **13 - 24**

### **INFORMATION AND MONITORING**

- 4. Next Meeting: September (date to be confirmed)**

## 5. Future Meetings:

10.30am 8th December 2016, 10.30am 26th January 2017, 10.30am 6th April 2017

The Fire Authority Policy and Resources Committee comprises the following members:

Councillor Lucy Nethsingha (Chairwoman) Councillor David Over (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Sir Peter Brown Councillor Daniel Divine Councillor Derek Giles Councillor Mervyn Loynes Councillor Paul Sales Councillor Joshua Schumann and Councillor Michael Shellens

*For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact*

Clerk Name: Rob Sanderson

Clerk Telephone: rob.sanderson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Clerk Email: 01223 699181

*The Fire Authority is committed to open government and the public are welcome to attend from 10.00am*

*It supports the principle of transparency and encourages filming, recording and taking photographs at meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens. These arrangements operate in accordance with a protocol which can be accessed via the following link below or made available on request.*

**Public speaking** on the agenda items above is encouraged. Speakers must register their intention to speak by contacting the Democratic Services Officer at least three working days before the meeting.

*Full details of the public speaking scheme for the Fire Authority is available at*





## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – MINUTES**

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Time: 10.30am – 12.10pm

Place: Fire & Rescue Service HQ, Hinchingsbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon

Present: Councillors P Brown, D Divine, D Giles, M Loynes, L Nethsingha (Chairwoman), D Over (Vice-Chairman), J Schumann and M Shellens

Officers: S Ismail, C Strickland, M Warren and D Cave

### **55. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN/WOMAN**

It was resolved to appoint Councillor Nethsingha as Chairwoman of the Policy and Resources Committee for 2016/17.

### **56. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN/WOMAN**

It was resolved to appoint Councillor Over as Vice Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for 2016/17.

### **57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of Councillor Sales.

### **58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

The Chairwoman advised that she had received a late request to speak on item 10 (Huntingdon Hub Property Rationalisation – Progress Update) from Councillor Jason Ablewhite, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In order for Councillor Ablewhite to be permitted to speak, the Committee would need to suspend Standing Orders. She advised that she was inclined to recommend that he be allowed to speak because of the unusual circumstances, but reminded Members that in the past requests to speak at short notice had been turned down.

It was resolved unanimously to suspend Standing Orders.

Councillor Ablewhite thanked Members for letting him speak. He commented that a lot was happening nationally, with changes of legislation proposed which could have a significant impact on the Fire Authority, not least potential legislation to enable Police and Crime Commissioners to become responsible for Fire and Rescue Services. Later in the meeting, Members would be asked to make a decision regarding the new Fire Service Headquarters. Councillor Ablewhite advised strongly that Members defer that decision, to allow further discussion to take place on other opportunities. He explained that he had met with the Fire Authority Chairman and Chief Fire Officer to discuss other opportunities that could save the taxpayer money. This included the potential for the Fire Service to utilise a site adjacent to

the current Police Headquarters, and also the possibility to share the training facility at Monkswood. He suggested that not all options have been fully explored, and the Fire Authority should reconsider the decision to use significant reserves to support the proposal being presented to them today. As planning permission had not yet been sought, and the land not yet acquired, there was still time to consider alternative options.

## **59. MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2016**

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

## **60. FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET POSITION 2015-16 AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

A report was presented setting out the final 2015/16 revenue and capital budget outturn position, and an update on the treasury management position.

Members noted:

- the significant underspend of £162,000 at year end, and the proposal to transfer that sum into the property development reserve;
- the proposed carry forwards;
- committed capital expenditure, including Yaxley Fire Station;
- the healthy General Reserve of £2,348K;
- the Earmarked Revenue reserves position of £1,999K, including a Pension reserve, which was held to offset future costs associated with the capital outlay of a firefighter retiring early on ill health grounds;
- the Capital Reserve of £9,869,000 (property development) to help finance the cost of the new Huntingdon Hub facilities;
- the detail of Capital Programme expenditure, which was primarily spent on vehicles and Land and Buildings (predominantly Yaxley Fire Station, which was due to be completed by the end of August);
- the underspend against the Supplies and Services budget, which related to projects running behind schedule and monies set aside for budget reductions in 2016/17 not being fully spent. It was noted that Uniforms, which were not issued on a personal basis, had been updated;
- the pension liability appeared on the Balance Sheet, but the government currently underwrote this;
- the treasury management position over the last couple of years, to realise a return on investments. There was no rationale for repaying debt at the moment, and it was anticipated that the Service would not be borrowing in the short term.
- the borrowing limits, demonstrating that there was headroom for 2016/17.

Noting comments around the difficulties of recruiting On-Call staff, a Member asked for an update on the pilot for working with the ambulance service in Ramsey and March. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the pilot had started six weeks previously, and call rates had not been as high as expected, and that the call categories were being expanded. Whilst the pilot had been well received at the two stations, demand had been less than expected.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. Note the revenue and capital budget outturn position;
2. Approve the requested budget holder carry forwards;
3. Note the year-end balance sheet position as at 31 March 2016;
4. Note the annual Treasury Management Statement.

## **61. MEDICAL CASH PLAN FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

The Committee received a report which sought approval for the introduction of a bespoke medical cashplan, administered through Private Medical Intermediaries Limited (PMI) Health Group, for all existing Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) employees and dependants up to the age of 24 years.

Officers advised that whilst the Service currently invested in and promoted employee health and wellbeing through an in-house Occupational Health team, and an independent Employee Assistance Programme, further ways of assisting staff were being sought. Most medical insurance schemes were prohibitively expensive, but the proposed option appeared mutually beneficial to employees and the Service, at a cost of £41,500. The proposal was to trial the medical cashplan to see if it was worthwhile. One of the main benefits was that it would reduce the length of time for initial assessment or scan, by up to ten weeks. It was noted that there would be tax implications for the individual. Given cuts to the number of firefighters over recent years, the system no longer had capacity e.g. if one person was off, it potentially impacted on the service provided.

In response to Member questions:

- average costs per week per employee were noted;
- it was noted that the restriction up to the age of 24 related to employees' dependents;
- it was confirmed that staff affected by injuries were sometimes picked up e.g. through physiotherapy claims, but often went unreported.

A number of Members commented that whilst the scheme would appear to offer real benefits, it would be difficult to quantify accurately benefits from the medical cashplan on the Service. Officers acknowledged this, but pointed out that they could monitor changes in sickness rates, physiotherapy claims, benchmarking against other authorities, etc, to get an indication of benefits. It was noted that generally, the sick rate was 2-3 days per year, excluding long term sickness, and that this had reduced significantly over recent years. The company could provide data on a monthly basis about who was claiming. It was anticipated that the scheme would get people back to work more quickly and relieve some pressure on the Service. The scheme had been discussed with staff representatives, and had been well received.

The Chairwoman commented that some of the figures for annual claim limits appeared to be quite low, and it would be interesting to find out after a year how many staff had used up their allowance, and what happened after that. It was agreed it would be useful to have an update whilst the trial was in progress. It was confirmed that the scheme had not been designed specifically for firefighters.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the recommended cashplan attached to the report at Appendix 1.

## **62. CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF BS EN ISO 14001 – 2015 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

Members received a report that sought approval to continue to develop an Environmental Management System (EMS) through external audit certification conducted by the British Standards Institute (BSI).

Members noted the background to the work undertaken to achieve various British Standards and the benefits these confer on the Service. BS 14001 was chosen as it could improve performance and resource management, and the experience to date was that it had delivered more benefits than anticipated. It was therefore proposed to extend the scope of BS 14001 to include other locations and teams.

Arising from the report, Members:

- thanked the Health and Safety Manager for the valuable work he had undertaken on this project to date;
- commented favourably on the benefits this project conferred on both the Service and the environment;
- noted the recycling arrangements for IT equipment, which was taken away free of charge. Office equipment that was damaged or destroyed in incidents (i.e. not Fire Service premises) was an issue for the Environment Agency;
- noted the progress made with installing solar panels, which were routinely installed on new premises. Investigations had previously been undertaken to retro-fit solar panels to all buildings but it was unlikely that this would be cost effective;
- noted the arrangements for disposing of hazardous waste at zero cost. In response to a Member question, it was noted that this excluded tyres, batteries, waste oil and oil filters, which were disposed of through a separate arrangement with ATS, for which there was a charge. It was also confirmed that there was no facility to carry out MOTs in-house.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the work undertaken to date;
2. continue with certification;
3. approve the required spend of £7,000 to do so.

## **63. CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION RESTRUCTURE**

The Committee considered a report on proposed changes to the structure of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), and to seek agreement for the Service to financially support the new arrangements.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that responsibility for Fire Services had moved from the DCLG to the Home Office earlier in the year. The Home Office was keen to establish better lines of communication with Fire Services in relation to operational matters, and welcomed the idea of CFOA reorganising its structure to help this happen. Currently, the CFOA President works part time, and the presidential term was only one year. Funding was required from Fire Services to facilitate a full-time President who was in post longer term and could develop the relationships with the Home Office, and better represent Fire Services.



The indicative cost of the proposed arrangement was noted. It was also noted that individual Fire Services' contributions reflected their relative size.

In response to Member questions, it was confirmed that there was scope for the CFOA to use its reserves, and that a decision needed to be made prior to September, as the CFOA was looking to have the arrangement set up by 01/04/17.

Members noted comments from the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer on a desire for Fire Services to have a more collegiate approach, and that there was a huge amount of work done via CFOA on national operational guidance. The similarities and differences with the Police sector were noted. Members also noted that members the Service worked extensively with other Fire Services on a variety of projects.

In discussion, it was suggested that the required funding could be sourced from cost reductions e.g. reduced CFOA membership owing to reduced senior leadership team numbers. A number of Members expressed strong reservations, and most Members felt that if CFOA wanted a full-time, permanent President, it was up to that organisation to finance it, at least initially, rather than Fire Services collectively providing the up front funding.

Members agreed that whilst they welcomed the CFOA's proposal for a full-time permanent President, it was too early to commit to making a financial contribution. It was agreed that the Chief Fire Officer should continue discussions on this issue and take forward the CFOA restructure funding, subject to there being general support from other Fire Authorities also supporting the proposal. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to bring back an information report on this matter.

The Chairwoman proposed an amended recommendation:

"the authority supports the principle of stronger collaboration arrangements at national level for CFOA, and this Authority reserves its position on how it might contribute to the costs of the proposal, whether through membership cost or directly funding a presidential office."

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

1. support the principle of stronger collaboration arrangements at national level for CFOA;
2. reserve its position on how it might contribute to the costs of the proposal, whether through membership cost or directly funding a presidential office.

#### **64. HUNTINGDON HUB PROPERTY RATIONALISATION – PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report on progress with the Huntingdon Hub property rationalisation project and seeking approval to sign the development agreement for the construction of the new Combined Fire Station, Training Centre, Combined Fire Control and Headquarters building.

Noting the comments of the Police and Crime Commissioner earlier in the meeting, a Member spoke in support of the recommendation as set out on the report. He reminded the Committee that the process of identifying an alternative site for Service Headquarters and Huntingdon Fire Station had been going on for years, and it had been a very open process.

The Member had challenged the proposal for the St John's site when it had originally come forward, and asked officers to make every effort to identify potential partners, which they had done. Whilst noting that there was uncertainty in terms of legislation and the future relationship between the Fire Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner, he did not feel that this justified abandoning or putting on hold the extensive work that had been undertaken to identify a suitable site and develop plans to this stage. Other Members agreed, observing that whilst an alternative site had been suggested by the Police and Crime Commissioner at this late stage, no such option had emerged during other discussions with the Chief Constable and the previous Police and Crime Commissioner.

A Member suggested that, if timescales permitted, a very short pause in proceedings could be taken to examine the suitability of the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed site. It was agreed that an additional meeting should be held on 21<sup>st</sup> July to review the new proposal, and to take a decision whether to explore that proposal further, or the existing option on St John's Business Park. It was pointed out that staff and the public need to know as soon as possible what was happening, and it would not be appropriate to delay the process any further, and to miss the opportunity of progressing with the St John's site if the Police site was unsuitable. It was also noted that if Members decided that the Police site was suitable, this would lead to further slippage in timescales.

Officers confirmed that they had had recent discussions with Police colleagues about the St John's site, including options for sharing training space and office space. One option that had been explored was adding an additional storey to the current Fire Service plans to accommodate other offices, at a cost of approximately £3.5M.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. Note the progress to date with this project;
2. Allow a short period to explore other options prior to an additional meeting on 21 July, before making a decision whether to sign the development agreement for the development of the new site.

## **65. PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME – BUSINESS HUB UPDATE**

A report was presented seeking Members' views on the opportunities presented by further development of the 'Business Hub' concept.

The introduction of the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) in 2009 enabled a scheme whereby one regulator would work closely with a regulated business and provide advice and support to that business on a consistent, national basis. CFRS is the primary authority for six businesses.

The scope of the legislation had recently been expanded on to a more commercial footing. Outlining the proposals, officers explained how there would clearly need to be separation between enforcement and regulatory roles of Authority and the trading arm (the Business Hub). Before exploring these options further, Members' views were sought on whether this was a viable proposition. Members expressed support for the proposed direction, and urged officers to work with all partners in the county e.g. all districts and city councils.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- 1) Note the contents of the report;
- 2) Agree to further development of the "Business Hub".

**53. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee Work Programme and Seminar Programme as updated at the meeting was noted.

**54. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

To be confirmed.

Chairman  
21 July 2016



**TO:** Policy and Resources Committee

**FROM:** Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren

**PRESENTING OFFICER(S):** Matthew Warren

Telephone 01480 444619  
[matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk)

**DATE:** 21 July 2016

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## **HUNTINGDON HUB PROPERTY RATIONALISATION – PROGRESS UPDATE**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To present the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on progress with the Huntingdon Hub property rationalisation project.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to
- i. consider the attached report from the Police and Crime Commissioner and
  - ii. agree a way forward on the development proposal for a new Huntingdon Hub proposal at St John's Park, Huntingdon.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Committee considered a report on progress with the development of the proposed new site in St John's Park. That report is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough spoke at the Committee meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June, urging Members to pause the development of the St John's site, until it had considered all alternative options, including a possible site on Police HQ land.
- 3.3 The Committee agreed to an additional meeting being held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016 to consider additional information from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, including options for a possible site on Police Headquarters land. A report from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office is attached at **Appendix 2**, for Members' consideration.

- 3.4 The Chief Fire Officer has commissioned a study of operational response times from the proposed police site and the findings of that study will be reported at the meeting.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document	Location	Contact Officer
Fire Authority Minutes November 2015  Fire Authority Policy & Resources Committee minutes June 2016	Hinchingsbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	Matthew Warren 01480 444619 <a href="mailto:matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk">matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk</a>

**Agenda Item no. 10**

**TO:** Policy and Resources Committee

**FROM:** Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren

**PRESENTING OFFICER(S):** Matthew Warren

Telephone 01480 444619  
[matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk)

**DATE:** 30 June 2016

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**HUNTINGDON HUB PROPERTY RATIONALISATION – PROGRESS UPDATE**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To present the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on progress with the Huntingdon Hub property rationalisation project and seek approval to sign the development agreement for the construction of the new Combined Fire Station, Training Centre, Combined Fire Control and Headquarters building.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to;
- note the progress to date with this project,
  - approve the signing of the development agreement for the development of the new site.

**3. Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 **Economic** – it will be important for the Service to ensure that the appropriate controls are put in place to ensure the costs associated with the scheme are actively managed thus mitigating the risk of cost overrun.

**4. Background**

- 4.1 In 2009, the Service began looking at its property portfolio in Huntingdon. The original focus was our Headquarters at Hinchbrook Cottage, which houses the Combined Fire Control facility and support functions. Many options have been explored over the last seven years with the final proposal, which the Fire Authority approved in November 2015, being a new site amalgamating the existing Huntingdon Community Fire Station, Training Centre and Headquarters sites.
- 4.2 The primary objective of the new site is to replace buildings that were never designed to accommodate a control centre or specialist training facility. The

Service is seeing a gradual decline in operational activity and is very aware that training facilities will have to fill the void left by this reduction to ensure firefighter preparedness. The new combined facility will ensure training is a key focus.

- 4.3 The Authority approved the option to progress with rationalising the aforementioned Huntingdon properties onto a single site located on St Johns Park in Huntingdon. This site was chosen over that of Alconbury Weald owing to the location relative to operational risk and attendance times; Alconbury Weald saw a worsening of operational performance when compared with St Johns.
- 4.4 The proposal was approved subject to the impact of the latest Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR was announced in December 2015 and as it was very close to the position forecast, the Authority was able to continue with the rationalisation.

## **5. Collaboration**

- 5.1 At its meeting in November 2015, the Authority did request that partners were approached via the Making Assets Count group to gauge appetite to share premises. This communication has led to two expressions of interest currently being explored with a charitable organisation and a public sector partner. At this time, both of these partners are looking at options to locate themselves in close proximity to the St John's site. However both organisations are looking to build their own standalone premises.
- 5.2 In addition, the County Council are reviewing options focussed on potentially relocating from Shire Hall in Cambridge. The Service has responded with the option of adding a third floor to the proposed site, with additional car parking. It is unclear at this stage whether the County Council will be interested in this potential option.
- 5.3 Initial discussions have been held with Cambridgeshire Constabulary around sharing some of the facilities within the new site. Particular areas of interest are the training facility and discussions are on-going around the support accommodation.
- 5.4 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a letter to the Authority from the newly appointed Police and Crime Commissioner seeking a halt to the scheme. This should be considered by the Committee prior to a decision being taken to proceed with the scheme.

## **6. Progress to date**

- 6.1 The Service has met with the developer, Artisan, to discuss the concept drawings. Significant effort and time has been spent on ensuring that the designs will meet the needs of all users of the site. Attached at **Appendix 2**, are the final designs that will be incorporated into the development agreement.



- 6.2 The Service has appointed a Client Advisor to ensure we secure the expertise required at the appropriate time through the contract negotiation and build programme. This expertise was commissioned to build both the Cambourne and the temporary Coldhams Lane facilities and both projects were completed on time and to budget.
- 6.3 A draft development agreement has been written and issued with LGSS Law advising. This development agreement will, if approved by the Committee, need to be signed by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers. The signing of the development agreement will simultaneously trigger the purchase of the land, subject to planning permission being received on the site.
- 6.4 The developer has started to survey the site and is working towards finalising the scheme. These works are a cost to the Authority and have been included within the £7.54 million construction cost quoted. If the Authority decided not to proceed with the scheme it would still be liable for the costs associated with this activity which are £403k.
- 6.5 Should the development agreement be signed by the end of July 2016, the timescales remain consistent with the plan. This will mean that work on the site would start in late 2016 with the new site completed and ready for occupancy by late 2017.
- 6.6 In addition to the new site, the Service will begin marketing the current sites and will be working with professional agents to establish a marketing strategy designed to maximise the return on both sites, thus reducing the financial gap associated with building the new site. The marketing of these sites will not begin until the development agreement is signed.

## **7. Cost Plans and Contingencies**

- 7.1 A year has already passed since the original designs and cost schedule was submitted. The developer is very clear that the original cost envelope remains the target however Artisan has highlighted that there is a risk of increase, owing to inflationary pressures, since they submitted the proposal. Whilst they cannot quantify the exact amount as they will not be going to the market until after the development agreement is signed, they are recommending that we consider setting aside a contingency sum.
- 7.2 The appointment of a Client Advisor will assist the Service in determining what this contingency level will be. It is proposed that, if approved, a separate report be presented to the Committee in September 2016 as the developer will have been out to tender.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

<b>Source Document</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Fire Authority Minutes November 2015	Hinchingbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	Matthew Warren 01480 444619 <a href="mailto:matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk">matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk</a>

**TO:** Policy and Resources Committee

**FROM:** Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire

**PRESENTED BY:** Josie Gowler  
[Josie.Gowler@cambs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Josie.Gowler@cambs.pnn.police.uk)  
0300 333 3456

**DATE:** 21 July 2016

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## **FIRE AND POLICE PROPERTY RATIONALISATION PROPOSAL**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 In making any decision an authority must consider all relevant information. In making their decision regarding the Huntingdon Fire hub the Police and Crime Commissioner is concerned that not all information has been considered. This report provides high level information regarding potential options which need to be explored in more detail before the Authority can make a decision to move forward.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to pause the development of its proposed new Huntingdon Hub site at St Johns' Park in Huntingdon in order to ensure that all relevant information is considered ahead of making a decision.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In November 2015 the Fire Authority approved the recommendation to amalgamate the existing Huntingdon Community Fire Station, Training Centre and Headquarters into one site. As set out within the 'Huntingdon Hub Property Rationalisation – Progress Update' paper, *"the primary objective of the new site is to replace buildings that were never designed to accommodate a control centre or specialist training facility"*.
- 3.2 The location of St Johns' Park in Huntingdon was favoured as a location for a single, amalgamated site over that of Alconbury Weald owing to *"operational risk and attendance times"*.
- 3.3 Since November 2015 when the Fire Authority approved the concept of a new site amalgamating the Huntingdon Community Fire Station, Training Centre and

Headquarters sites, there have been significant changes with the development of a memorandum of understanding between the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, entitled 'Joint Working Opportunities', and the introduction to the House of Commons of the Policing and Crime Bill. With the backdrop of this legislation making its way through Parliament, it is vital that plans for new buildings fully consider the opportunities for closer operational collaboration between policing and fire.

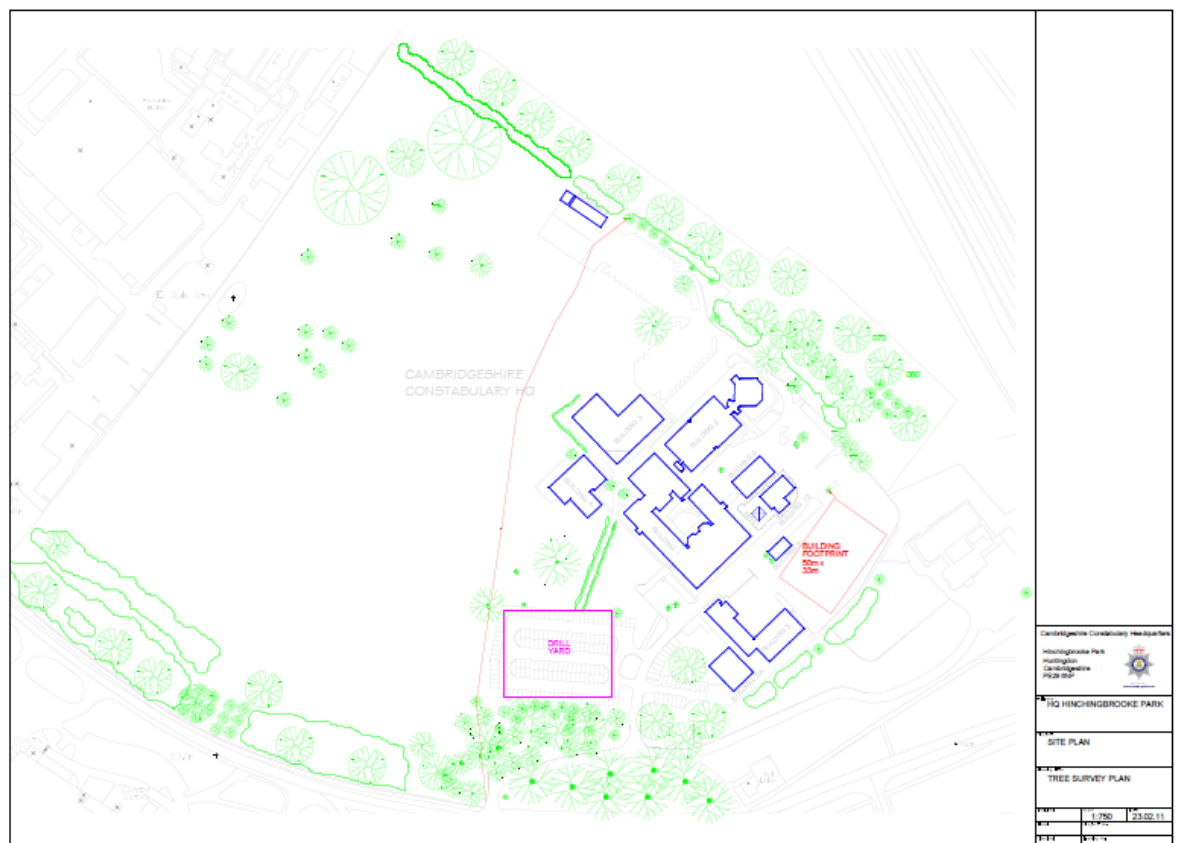
- 3.4 The Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is keen to be an early adopter for changes in governance and collaboration between Policing and Fire. Shortly after his election, the Commissioner wrote to the Fire Authority Chairman on 12 May 2016 seeking a pause to the decision on the Huntingdon Hub.
- 3.5 At a meeting on 20 June 2016 between the Commissioner, the Fire Authority Chairman and the respective senior management teams of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire, a suggestion of alternative land at Police HQ in Hinchbrook was proposed.
- 3.6 The 'Huntingdon Hub Property Rationalisation – Progress Update' was presented to the 30 June 2016 Committee meeting, the purpose being to provide an update on the Huntingdon Hub Property Rationalisation Project and to *"seek approval to sign the development agreement for the construction of the new Combined Fire Station (Training Centre, Combined Fire Control and Headquarters building)"*.
- 3.7 The proposal of siting the development on Police HQ was discussed at the Policy and Resources Committee (the "Committee") meeting on 30 June 2016 at which the Police and Crime Commissioner was grateful for the opportunity to speak. It was agreed that a report should be brought back to Committee meeting on 21 July 2016 setting out the Commissioner's proposals in further detail. The sections below also set out potential options for closer policing and fire collaboration if the Community Fire Station, Training Centre and Headquarters elements are considered separately.

#### **4. HUNTINGDON HUB – POTENTIAL PLACEMENT ON POLICE HQ LAND**

- 4.1 As the proposed Huntingdon Hub is a purpose-built facility, a new build – possibly identical to that being proposed but in the different location of Hinchbrook Park Huntingdon rather than St Johns' Park – could deliver against the primary objectives. The feasibility of placing the proposed Huntingdon Hub in its entirety on police HQ land is explored in principle in this section.
- 4.2 The site to the east of the proposed A14 link road at Force HQ is circa 4.5ha (11 acres) with the adjoining Fire HQ amounting to circa 1.3ha (3.2 acres); the map below gives a high-level view of the site:



- 4.3 An example of a feasible option is to site the Hub and drill yard on the existing Police HQ land as follows:



- 4.4 The red boundary on the left-hand side of the map above marks the proposed edge of the A14 link road.
- 4.5 With this option, a new car parking option for Police and Fire would have to be developed. This proposal is subject to further investigation and planning permission, including the consideration of whether any trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, but demonstrates there are options which have not been considered so far by the authority.

- 4.6 A clear advantage of building on existing Police HQ land is that no land purchase would be required and it facilities closer working between Police and Fire.
- 4.7 An analysis of operational response times from the Police HQ site has been commissioned by the Chief Fire Officer and a report is awaited.

## **5. CONSIDERATION OF OPTIONS FOR EACH FUNCTIONAL AREAS**

- 5.1 In addition to reviewing the Huntingdon Hub building as currently designed, each of the functional areas that the Hub could serve are considered in turn below.

### **Training**

- 5.2 It is recognised that the fire service is seeing a gradual decline in operational activity and is very aware that training facilities will have to fill the void left by this reduction to ensure firefighter preparedness. Training facilities are therefore of paramount importance.
- 5.3 The Huntingdon Hub site contains a ground floor training incident management facility, which is flexible so that as the training incident develops so the space used for command and control expands. Physical training would be provided in the Hub's grounds, including a Road Traffic Accident compound, ditch, tower and buildings with smoke simulation facilities.
- 5.4 The Constabulary has an established training facility at Monks Wood, Peterborough which comprises twelve classrooms, a large conference room, a dojo, six flats (two of which are currently used for role-play purposes, the others for examination-sitting purposes) and a bungalow.
- 5.5 Training provision also takes place at Alconbury and this has been the venue of multi-agency training involving representatives from both the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. With planned work to further embed the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme ("JESIP") so that there is an integrated and standardised approach to the management of incidents, the notion of cross-agency training or the sharing of training facilities, where appropriate and possible, appears both efficient and effective.
- 5.6 It is recognised that in the Fire and Rescue Service, the duty officer would be trained with the rest of the fire crew but may be the first to be called to an actual incident. These officers do not need to be within a certain number of minutes of a fire station, however fire crews would require an operational fire station in the same place that training is provided if they are on duty during training. The siting of training facilities will need to factor in this issue.

### **Operational Fire Station**

- 5.7 The Huntingdon Hub plans include an operational fire station. Bedrooms on the site have been designed into the Hub plans in order to future-proof in the case of a new shift system which involves fire crews remaining on-site.

- 5.8 An analysis of operational response times from the Police HQ site has been commissioned by the Chief Fire Officer and a report is awaited.

### **Contact Management**

- 5.9 The Fire control room area in the Huntingdon Hub plan has eight workstations (plus locker rooms and a rest room); this is a shared control centre with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. A review of the current Police control room facilities shows that a Fire control room could be feasibly co-located; this option has been utilised in the past for emergency cover.

### **Headquarters Functions**

- 5.10 The Huntingdon Hub is planned on the basis of around 100 support staff including HQ, ICT, shared services, training and the operational fire station. Conference rooms and facilities on the first floor of the Hub also include facilities for the Fire Authority. These functions could be shared within the Police HQ at Hinchbrook Park, utilising Police estate at Chord Park in Godmanchester for policing functions that do not need to be co-located with Fire.
- 5.11 The government is clear that the potential to generate efficiencies through collaboration on back-office functions should be sought. The implications of such collaboration will impact on the space requirements of both Police and Fire and should be explored.

### **Conclusion – consideration of functional areas**

- 5.12 It would be prudent to revisit the plans for the Hub as currently designed to ensure that these options are taken into account and any new build is correctly sized to take account of future close working and collaboration between Police and Fire whilst ensuring that specialist Fire Service requirements such as specialist Fire training provision, operational fire appliance facilities and space for storage of specialist equipment is available.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 In the short period of time afforded by the Fire Policy and Resource Committee a number of potential options have been identified which have not been so far considered in detail. The Fire Authority has a duty to consider all relevant information ahead of making a decision. It is recognised that this report does not provide enough information for the Fire Authority to assess the benefits of these new options. However it does provide evidence that there is relevant information which the committee should ensure is explored in detail ahead of making its decision.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 The Fire Policy and Resources Committee is asked to pause the development of its proposed new Huntingdon Hub site at St Johns' Park in Huntingdon in order to ensure that all relevant information is fully considered ahead of making any decision.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

<b>Source Document</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Fire Authority Police & Resources Committee paper 'Huntingdon Hub Property Rationalisation' agenda item 10, 30 June 2016	Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire PO Box 688 Huntingdon PE29 9LA	Jason Ablewhite Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire