

TO: Policy and Resources Committee

FROM: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire

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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.

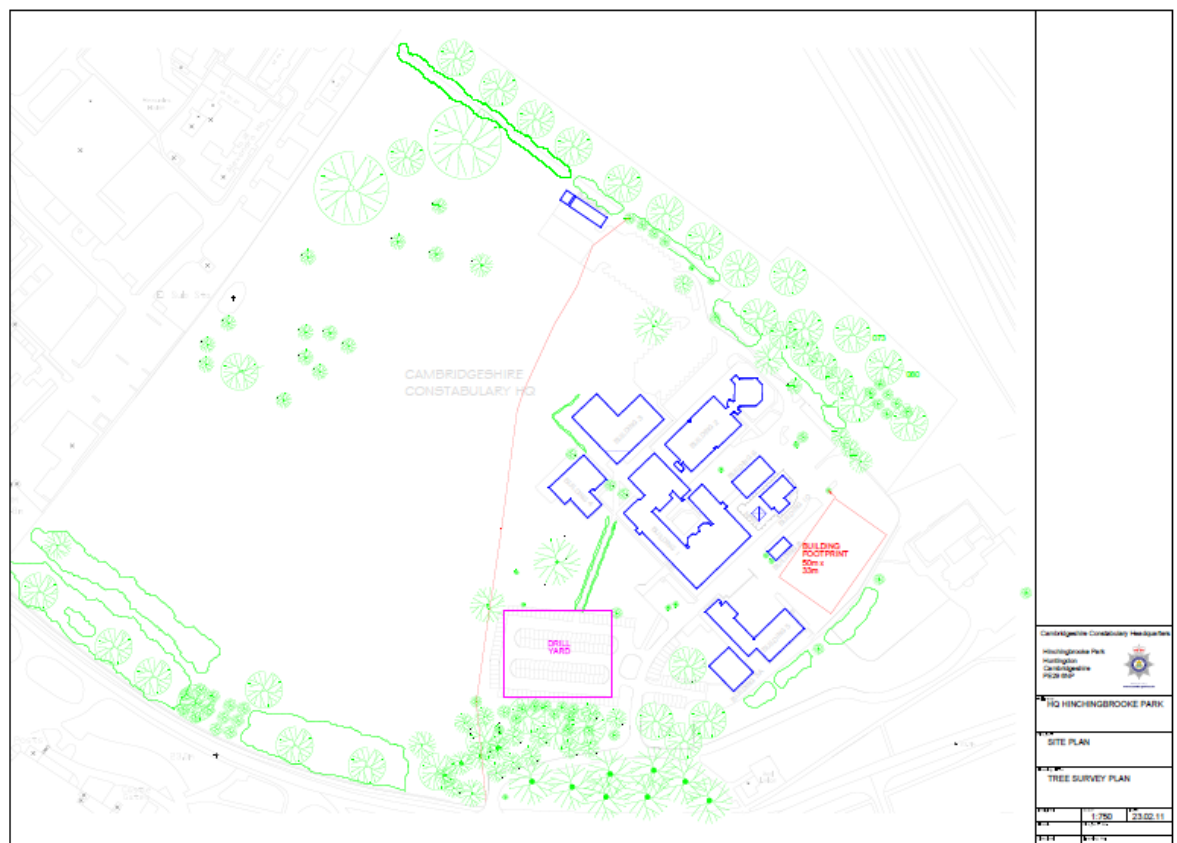
- 3.4 The Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is keen to be an early adopter for changes in governance and collaboration between Policing and Fire. Shortly after his election, the Commissioner wrote to the Fire Authority Chairman on 12 May 2016 seeking a pause to the decision 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

Source Document	Location	Contact Details
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