

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2ND APRIL 2007

1. NEW FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS: UPDATE REPORT

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Clerk

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Members note that the planning application for the new Fire Service Headquarters (FSHQ) site was approved by Birmingham City Council (BCC) Planning Committee on the 18th January 2007.
- 1.2 THAT the Committee note that as authorised by the Authority at their meeting of the 27th November 2006, the land acquisition documents transferring the ownership of the site located at Vauxhall Road, Nechells from the Co-Operative Society to the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority were completed on the 2nd March 2007. The cost incurred by the Authority was £3,068,288, and includes land title insurance and land registration fee.
- 1.3 THAT Members note that in addition to the above a further £143,350 has been incurred in relation to stamp duty.
- 1.4 THAT Members note that Ashford Construction Plc, who were appointed by the Authority as the preferred supplier for the Design and Build contract of the new Fire Service Headquarters have now been awarded the contract for the final contract sum of £9,153,667; with work commencing on the site on the 26th March 2007, which was the agreed scheduled start date.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to inform Members of the progress made to date in relation to the acquisition of the land at Vauxhall Road, Nechells, the formal award of the Design and Build contract to Ashford Construction PLC.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members may recall that at their meeting of the 27th November 2006, approval was given to proceed with the purchase of the former Co-Operative Dairy site located at Vauxhall Road, Nechells for the provision of a new FSHQ, subject to securing the necessary planning approvals from Birmingham City Council (BCC) Planning Committee.
- 3.2 A planning application for the new FSHQ was submitted to BCC Planning Committee, which received approval on the 18th January 2007.
- 3.3 In addition to the above, Members also approved the appointment of Ashford Construction PLC as the preferred contractor for the design and build of the new FSHQ; with the proviso that the building specification be refined to establish the final building contract in line with the approved budget provisions.
- 3.4 A series of meetings involving Officers and the appointed advisors were held with Ashford Construction PLC to refine and finalise the specification and confirm the contract sum. The outcome was that a contract for £9,153,667 was confirmed for the new FSHQ. Provision of £200 k exists within the new FSHQ budget for further building related costs to cover issues such as ground conditions, mechanical and electrical issues and design development. Contract drawings and project plans will be made available for Members to view at the meeting.
- 3.5 Following detailed negotiations with the Co-Operative Society representative, the land acquisition documents transferring the ownership of the site located at Vauxhall Road, Nechells from the Co-Operative Society to the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority was completed on the 2nd March 2007.
- 3.6 Ashford Construction PLC has commenced work on the site and has confirmed with the Project Manager that they will complete the shell of the building by the scheduled date (March 2008).
- 3.7 A Ground Breaking ceremony took place at Vauxhall Road on Friday 9th March 2007 at which the Chair, Vice Chair, Chief Fire Officer; along with Members of the Authority and other West Midlands Fire Service staff attended.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did not raise issues at this time which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed. However, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed once the ongoing consultations with staff are completed; which will be no later than December 2007.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Hammonds & Co, who have been appointed by the Authority to act as Legal Advisors on land and building matters relating to the new FSHQ have dealt with all of the legal and contractual issues relating to the areas set out in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 and 3.3 to 3.5 above to ensure that they are compliant with prevailing legislation and to protect the interests of the Fire Authority.
- 5.2 In view of the above, the course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

6. **TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

Consultations about the new FSHQ are taking place and will be maintained throughout the project.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Capital related costs incurred on the land acquisition are summarised below.

	£
Land	3,050,000
Land title insurance (WMFRA portion)	17,588
Land registration fee	700
Totals	3,068,288
Stamp duty	143,350
Grand Total	3,211,638

7.2 The above costs have been accommodated within the overall new FSHQ project budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Executive Committee Meeting - 27th November 2007
Technical Services - Fire Service Headquarters Relocation Project Files
Brigade Programme Office Files - Prince 2 Documentation
Ashford Construction PLC Design & Build Contracts - March 2007
Dearle & Henderson - February 2007
(Final Tender Report & Recommendations)
Schedule of Works – Ashford Construction PLC

F. J. E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

L BATEMAN
TREASURER

S PHELPS
CLERK