

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19 FEBRUARY 2024

1. PROPOSED COMMAND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (CDC) SALE

Report of Director of Enabling Services

RECOMMENDED

THAT Members:

- 1.1. Note the rationale for the proposal to sell the Command Development Centre (CDC) site.
- 1.2. Note the anticipated capital receipt and ongoing revenue savings associated with the sale of the CDC.
- 1.3. Note the costs associated with movement of the Command Learning element of CDC - incorporated within the capital programme 2024-26
- 1.4. Approve the associated steps and future sale of CDC the timing of which will be dependent on the requirements for secondary Fire Control.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1. To gain Authority approval for the sale of CDC.
- 2.2. To outline options and timelines for relocating the elements/ functions of the CDC.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. As part of the Fire Authority's Property Management Asset Plan, the Strategic Enabling Team (SET) continuously consider the options to rationalise the Fire Authority's estate as part of the Authority's ongoing aim to improve financial efficiency and environmental sustainability in response to significant budget pressures.

- 3.2. The CDC Building, located in Smethwick, currently hosts the service's Command Learning and Secondary Fire Control (SFC) in addition to providing storage for a range of specialist appliances and equipment.
- 3.3. As part of wider work on training, development, culture and values, SET have been working to create a centre of learning excellence based at Headquarters, including the move of classroom-based elements of the Trainee Firefighter Development Programme (TFDP) to HQ. The next stage of this would be to relocate Command Learning from its current location at CDC to the ground floor of HQ.
- 3.4. As detailed below, SET have also considered options to move or transfer other elements from CDC.
- 3.5. Engagement has been undertaken with representatives from Fire Control and Digital & Data to look at viable options to relocate Secondary Fire Control (SFC) from CDC. It has been identified that there are several key factors that need to be in place before another location can provide the facilities and equipment that CDC currently provides in terms of resilience including back-up generator(s), uninterrupted power supply and the network capacity for dedicated servers and the infrastructure to receive 999 calls. The SFC location will need to be on separate infrastructure network in terms of power, gas, and water supply to offer further resilience if primary Fire Control is closed due to infrastructure issues.
- 3.6. There is currently a separate ongoing project which is considering a new Command and Control system, which would include Secondary Fire Control. Exact timings for this project are currently unknown but will be presented to the Fire Authority at a future date. Given the importance of SFC, the sale of CDC would not take place until the completion of this standalone project. It is however reasonable to assume that the sale of the CDC site would be achievable within 3 years.
- 3.7. Consideration has also been given to the impact and opportunities for improvement for specialist resources currently based at CDC. It is proposed that they relocate to the arches at the rear of HQ. DIM (Detection Identification and Monitoring) was previously located in the arch and responded from HQ to any emergency calls. The

office and some of the facilities are still located in the arch. Ahead of any relocation National Resilience would need to be consulted and an agreement reached prior to the move going ahead. It is anticipated that there would not be an issue with this as the HQ site was previously used, however this needs to be clarified.

- 3.8. There is also a local agreement with the Environment Agency who currently store a vehicle at CDC alongside WMFS (West Midlands Fire Service) water rescue resources. Consideration is being given to alternative locations where these could be stored.

4. BUSINESS CASE

The recommendation to transfer functions from CDC and sell the site will have the following benefits:

- 4.1. Enhance cultural integration across the Service with department moving to HQ.
- 4.2. Enhance learning experience for Command Learning with improved facilities.
- 4.3. Sale of CDC will potentially release capital funds and will reduce the running and maintenance costs (circa £130k per annum) associated with this building.
- 4.4. Provide OLDP staff with working facilities that foster an inclusive and positive work environment which will enable increased collaboration and productivity of individuals and teams based at HQ.
- 4.5. With a view to looking at estate efficiency and enabling HQ to be the centre of excellence for all Learning and Development.
- 4.6. Enhance, embrace, and enable digital, hybrid and face-to-face ways of working in the HQ building.
- 4.7. If Haz Mats and DIM relocate back to HQ this will assist with response times to incidents in Birmingham (in line with risks identified within our CRMP (Community Risk Management Plan)). It would also bring visitors to HQ when National Resilience Training is held.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An initial EIA has been completed for this report the outcomes of this confirm that there is no requirement for a full EIA.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations set out at paragraph 1 of this report align with the Fire Authority's Constitution and the need for the Service to set its Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget setting. The Service will ensure that relevant legal requirements in relation to disposal are complied with to ensure maximal capital receipt.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Estimated income from sale of CDC

Harris Lamb provided a broad market valuation in April 2023 which indicated we would achieve between £1.25m-£1.4m, however, because the market has changed since the original valuation, as of December 2023 Harris Lamb are now suggesting a -10% reduction in the original valuation. There would also be costs incurred for marketing, conveyancing, legal fees etc. that would need to be considered. This figure will continue to fluctuate based on prevailing market conditions at the time of the sale.

	Capital Expenditure	Capital Income	Revenue savings (annual)
Sale of CDC		£1,100,000	£130,000
Transfer of Command Learning	£440,000		
Transfer of DIM and HAZMAT	£131,000		
Secondary Fire Control	These costs are yet to be confirmed as there is a dependency with the		

	Command & Control project which will determine revised requirements		
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8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be required for the sale of this building. Through reducing the ongoing running costs (heating, electric) we will reduce carbon emissions across our estate.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

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