

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 FEBRUARY 2015

1. COVENTRY FIRE STATION REDEVELOPMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority notes the three options for the redevelopment at Coventry Fire Station to deliver its statutory duty.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority approves option 1 to demolish the existing Fire Station and construct a new Fire Station on the existing site and enhance the existing training facility through refurbishment and expansion.
- 1.3 THAT the Authority approves the estimated costs of the recommended option and delegates powers to the Chief Fire Officer to approve the design features of the new Fire Station and training facilities subject to progress updates to Members.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report is submitted to update the Authority of the investigations and research into the available options for the redevelopment of Coventry Fire Station. This has included consideration as to the best option to support service delivery and operational training. These options included the utilisation of the existing site or purchasing a new site, to build a tri-Service building with associated training facilities. This work has involved collaboration with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS), West Midlands Police (WMP) and West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS).
- 2.2 This paper is submitted to seek approval from the Authority to progress the recommended option to redevelop the existing site and provide details of the considerations made in making this recommendation.

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3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Fire Authority meeting on the 25 November 2013 Members considered the options available for the future development of the submitted Building Asset Strategy.
- 3.2 During this meeting Members considered the existing stations essential for response that were identified as suitable for rebuild.
- 3.3 Coventry provides an essential function for emergency response identified through IRM data but the current building is in need of reconstruction and refurbishment.
- 3.4 In determining the suitability for redevelopment of the Fire Station at the existing site, analysis was undertaken by an external modelling company in 2008. This was reviewed in 2011 as part of the Authority's Asset Management Strategy. Coventry Fire Station was recognised as being in a 'good' position in relation to prevention, protection and response activities and supports the risk based targeted 5 minute response time. No evidence was provided to indicate that this station location should be moved.
- 3.5 Coventry Fire Station provides an essential function for emergency response identified through IRM data, being located at the junction of Radford Road with the main City ring road. The site also accommodates a range of training facilities including a hot firehouse and a liquefied petroleum gases (LPG) simulator unit that forms part of the distributed training model.
- 3.6 The building was originally constructed in 1976 as the headquarters of Coventry area and used to include its own vehicle workshops and later, the Recruit Training Centre, together with a Fire Safety Centre. As a result, the building is very extensive and oversized for its current function and incurring heavy running costs both in terms of energy usage and building maintenance and is in need of reconstruction and refurbishment.

- 3.7 The carbon footprint for Coventry station (including integral Command Team offices) is over 3 times the average amount for other stations (excluding vehicle fuel).

4. **COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 A number of options for the sharing of a new Fire Station have been considered in collaboration with WFRS, WMP and WMAS. Agreements in principle have been received from WFRS, WMP and WMAS as part of the Transformation Bid submission.
- 4.2 Members should also note that a transformational funding bid for £7m was submitted to the government for a joint venture between the West Midlands Fire Service, WFRS, WMP and WMAS to build a new Fire Station to accommodate all interested agencies and enhance the existing hot fire training facilities. Unfortunately this bid was unsuccessful.
- 4.3 Following the outcomes of the notification of the Transformation Bid, discussions have continued with WFRS, WMP and WMAS to explore potential collaboration options in sharing proposed development of Coventry Fire Station and associated injects of capital funding. Discussions have included redevelopment of the existing site and the potential purchase of land and development of a tri-Service centre with hot fire training facilities.
- 4.4 Discussions with WFRS are still ongoing with regard to options for collaboration in sharing the fire station and the provision and use of training facilities including hot fire training. WFRS has agreed in principle to the sharing of buildings and has the potential to support redevelopment opportunities with capital funding. Whilst officers of WMFS have continued to proactively seek out opportunities to collaborate with other regional fire services, this has proved to be very challenging due to the political differences in the Region.

- 4.5 However, there has been no formal commitment from WFRS to the sharing of Coventry Fire Station as a Training Centre or the hot fire training facilities. There has also been no formal commitment to provide capital funding to the redevelopment of Coventry Fire Station.
- 4.6 Discussions with WMP have been ongoing and an agreement in principle to the sharing of Coventry Fire Station has been provided. Discussions have mainly focused on the potential of local Neighbourhood Policing Teams sharing Coventry Fire Station. However WMP are currently completing their Asset Management Strategy which will be subject to their relevant consultations and approval.
- 4.7 There has been no formal commitment from WMP to the sharing of Coventry Fire Station or provision of capital funding to the redevelopment of Coventry Fire Station.
- 4.8 WMAS has confirmed that they wish to maintain the same or similar accommodation arrangements that are currently in place at Coventry Fire Station for their localised Human Resource and emergency response functions within the proposed new building. WMAS has indicated that they are currently unable to commit capital funding to the redevelopment.
- 4.9 At this time West Midlands Fire Service is awaiting confirmation of levels of commitment to the redevelopment options and provision of capital funding from WFRS, WMP and WMAS.
- 4.10 In the event that we receive a firm commitment for collaboration in the sharing of a new Fire Station on the existing site by a partner agency their requirements may be considered within the planning and design stages of the project.
- 4.11 Members should note that in the event that a commitment is received from any of the interested partner agencies to collaborate in the proposed redevelopment additional requirements may affect the recommended option within this report.

- 4.12 To meet the business needs of both the West Midlands Fire Service and WMAS it is recommended that we progress with the preferred option of redevelopment of the existing site.

5. **OPTIONS FOR FUTURE COVENTRY FIRE STATION**

- 5.1 A number of options have been considered for Coventry Fire Station in conjunction with WFRS, WMP and WMAS.

- 5.2 The individual options have been fully considered and a summary appraisal of the suitability of each option provided.

5.3 **Option 1 – Recommended**

- 5.3.1 Demolish existing fire station and rebuild new fire station on the existing site maintaining and enhancing existing hot fire training facilities (Appendix 1 and 2 - Site Plans).

- 5.3.2 This option is recommended as the preferred option as it represents a cost effective solution to the provision of a modern and efficient Fire Station when compared with the remaining options. An enhanced modern designed building would improve service delivery to the community including improvements to the risk based 5 minute attendance times. Improvements would be made through enhanced design of the Fire Station to improve reaction and mobilising times of operational crews.

- 5.3.3 A modern building design would maintain and improve community access and engagement including existing youth engagement through the Young Firefighters Association.

- 5.3.4 An improved building design and layout would maintain and improve existing partnership engagement and collaborative working.

- 5.3.5 Enhancement of the existing hot fire training facilities will support the achievement of operational excellence through the distributed training model with reduced disruption during development stages of the new Fire Station.

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- 5.3.6 It would be necessary to provide temporary accommodation for existing operational resources and partner agencies accommodated within the existing Fire Station including WMAS during the demolition and construction stages of the redevelopment. (*Appendix 3 – Option Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis*)

5.4 **Option 2 – Not Recommended**

- 5.4.1 Demolish existing Fire Station and Hot Fire Training Building and rebuild new fire station and hot fire training facility on the existing site (Appendix 1 and 2 - Site Plans).
- 5.4.2 This option is not recommended as the preferred option as it does not represents a cost effective solution to provide a new Fire Station and new hot fire training building when compared with the remaining options.
- 5.4.3 Coventry has been identified as a key location of the distributed training model for breathing apparatus and hot fire training within the Coventry and Solihull Command area.
- 5.4.4 A preliminary survey has been conducted of the condition and life span of the existing hot fire training building and it is deemed to be in good condition. The building is a good asset for the continued delivery of hot fire training within the distributed training model.
- 5.4.5 To demolish and rebuild the hot fire training facility would have a detrimental impact on the continued delivery of hot fire training not only within the Coventry and Solihull Command area but also across the wider brigade as a result of a temporary reduction in the number of hot fire training buildings.

- 5.4.6 This option is reliant on a commitment and provision of capital funding from WFRS to relocate their Training Centre and provide a hot fire training capability. (*Appendix 3 – Option Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis*)

5.5 **Option 3 – Not Recommended**

- 5.5.1 Purchase land adjacent to the existing site (old gas works site) and rebuild a tri-Service centre including hot fire training facilities for West Midlands and WFRS.

The site would also be recognised as the WFRS Service Training Centre (Appendix 1 – Site Plans).

- 5.5.2 This option is not recommended as the preferred option as it does not represent a cost effective solution to provide a new Fire Station and new hot fire training building when compared with the remaining options.
- 5.5.3 This option provides greater scope for redevelopment due to the large footprint than the previous options and could accommodate the requirements of all interested partners.
- 5.5.4 The land is suitably located for all partner agencies but does not have direct access to the City Ring Road that would need consideration during the planning phases.
- 5.5.5 Purchase of the land and redevelopment of the site would enable the existing Fire Station to remain in operation pending completion of the construction of the new tri-Service building.
- 5.5.6 The land available for purchase was formally an old gas works and concerns have been raised during preliminary scoping for development due to potential land contamination and tiered land conditions that could incur additional capital costs.

5.5.7 This option incurs additional capital costs to purchase the land and prepare the site for development and is reliant on a commitment and capital funding from all partner agencies. (*Appendix 3 – Option Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis*)

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out once the approved option has been agreed and a way forward determined.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be a requirement to undertake the normal conveyance of contractual arrangements for development consultancy, building contractors, undertaking Planning Consent and Building Regulation approval. This will take place using professional services and expertise from Sandwell Legal. Contractual agreements will be established to protect the Authority from risk covering site specific details and conditions prior to any purchase or construction being agreed.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The capital cost of the preferred option would be approximately £6.7m. It is anticipated that funding for this would be met from the Authority's 'Fire Station Investment' earmarked reserve. However, consideration will be given to the capital and/or revenue contributions required arising from any shared site arrangements.

9. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be direct environmental impacts though an improvement in our carbon footprint in the creation of a modern and more energy efficient building. Also there will be added benefits of not maintaining the aging building stock of the Fire station.

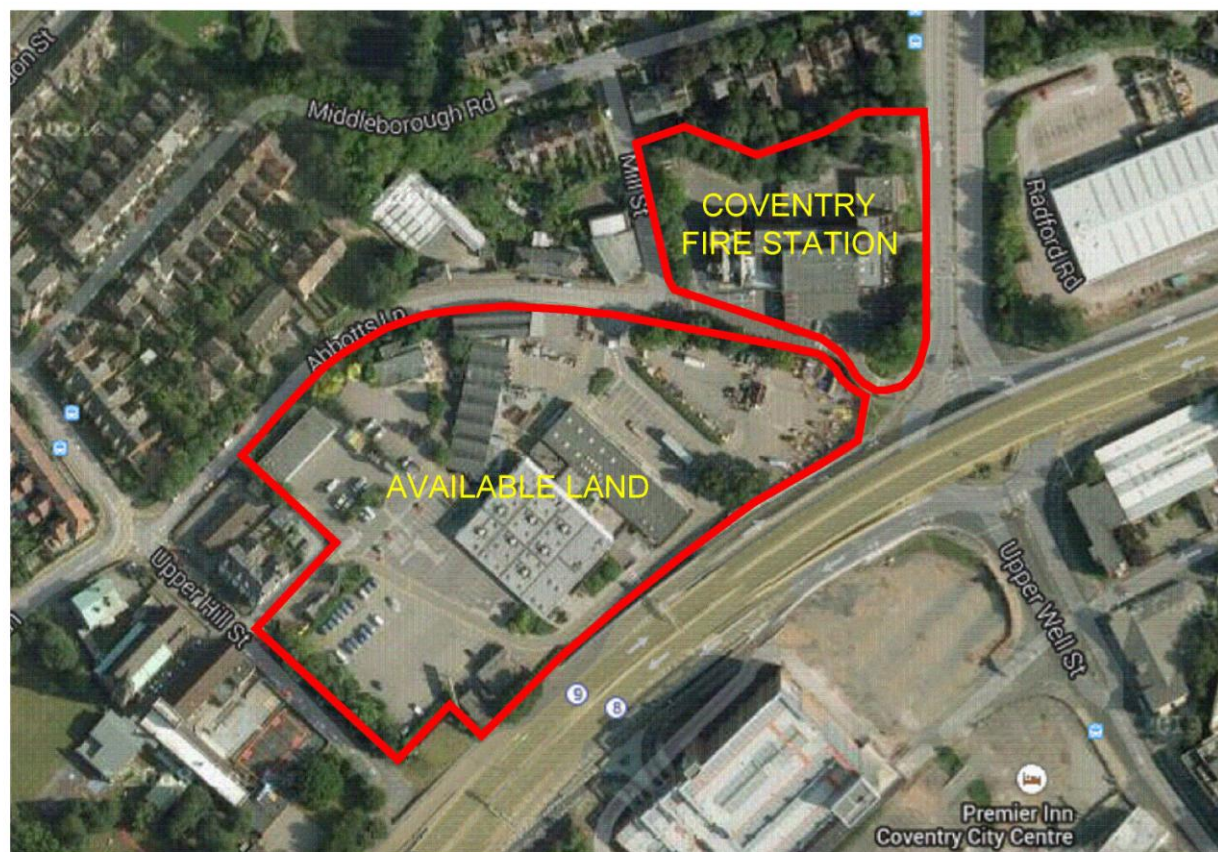
BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Authority on 25th November 2013 – Buildings Asset Strategy

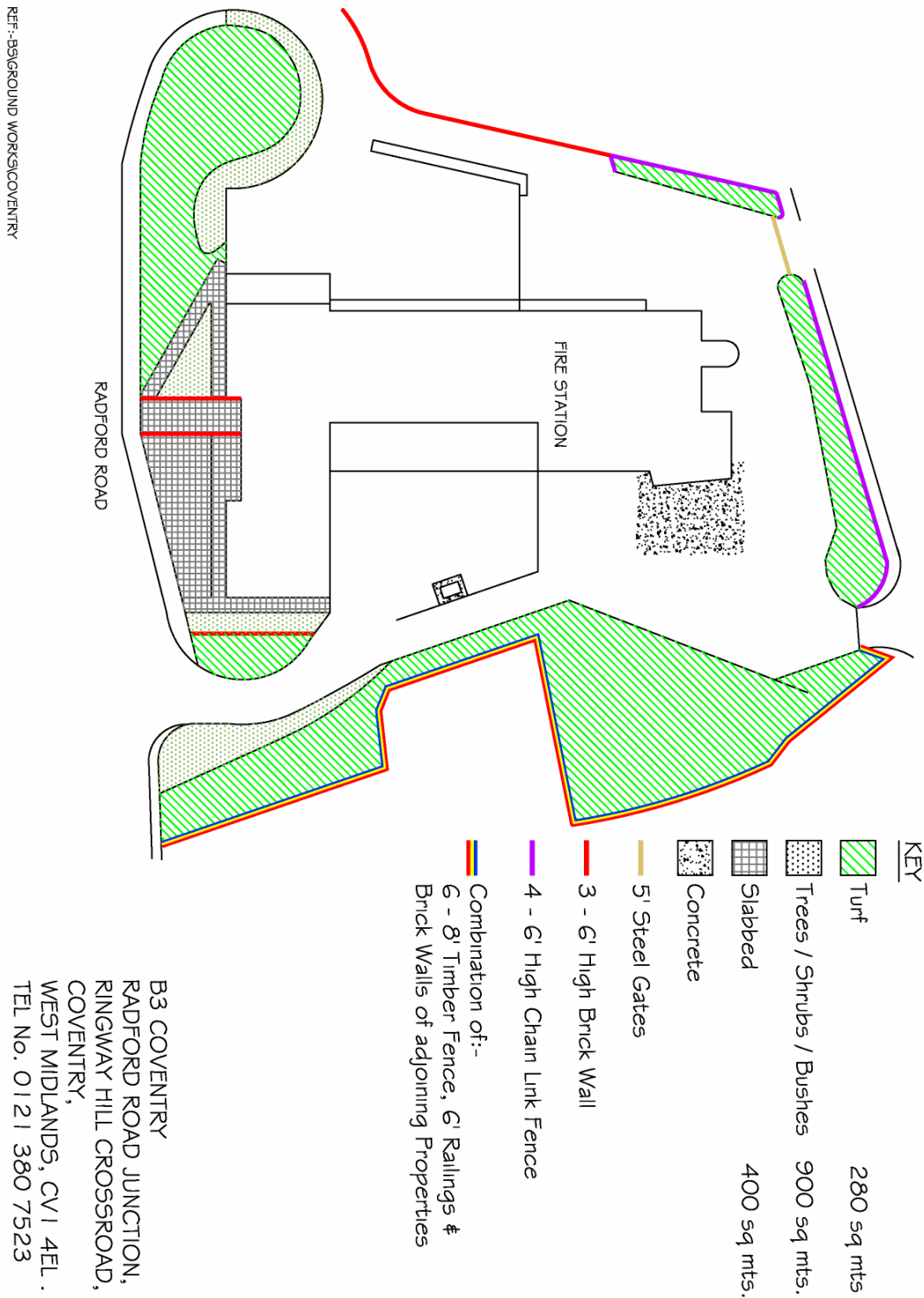
The contact name for this report is Deputy Chief Fire Officer Phil Hales, telephone number 0121 380 6004

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Existing Site Location - Coventry Fire Station and Available Land for Purchase



Coventry Fire Station Site Plan



Appendix 3

Options Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

Option 1

Demolish existing fire station and rebuild new fire station on the existing site maintaining and enhancing existing hot fire training facilities.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WMFS own the land• Site supports redevelopment• Provision of modern building• Provision of enhanced hot fire training facilities• Site location supports Service Delivery Model• Easy access to Coventry Ring Road• Community access• Prominent visible position• Community visibility• Maintain Partnership arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased capital funding requirement• Split level site terrain• Relocation of operational resources• Sourcing suitably located temporary premises• Increased funding requirements• Temporary disruption to YFA• Temporary relocation of partners• Temporary relocation of Ambulance response• Impacts to ambulance response times• Existing hot fire training building in good condition• Disruption to operational training within the command area• Temporary reduced availability of hot fire training facilities

Option 2

Demolish existing Fire Station and Hot Fire Training Building and rebuild new fire station and hot fire training facility on the existing site.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WMFS own the land• Site supports redevelopment• Provision of modern building• Provision of enhanced hot fire training facilities• Site location supports Service Delivery Model• Easy access to Coventry Ring Road• Community access• Prominent visible position• Community visibility• Maintain Partnership arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased capital funding requirement• Split level site terrain• Relocation of operational resources• Sourcing suitably located temporary premises• Increased funding requirements• Temporary disruption to YFA• Temporary relocation of partners• Temporary relocation of Ambulance response• Impacts to ambulance response times• Existing hot fire training building in good condition

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to operational training within the command area • Temporary reduced availability of hot fire training facilities
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Option 3

Purchase land adjacent to the existing site and rebuild a tri-service centre including hot fire training facilities for West Midlands and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services. The site would also be recognised as the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Training Centre.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large footprint • Scope to accommodate partner Site location suitable to meet needs of partner agencies • Raw site ready for development • Scope for future development due to the footprint size • Access to main arterial route • Community access • Prominent visible position • Community Visibility • Provision of modern building • Provision of enhanced hot fire training facilities • Site location supports Service Delivery Model • Maintain Partnership arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost to purchase land • Potential land contamination incur hidden costs • Preparation of land pre construction • Residential area may require a sympathetic build design • Topography of the site (raised tiers) • Development area reduced due to topography • Planning permission or restrictions • No access to ring road planning • Environmental concerns • Partner commitment