

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**21 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**1. UPDATE ON REBUILD OF COVENTRY AND ASTON FIRE STATIONS**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority notes the update on progress of the following Fire Station development projects:

1.1.1 Coventry Fire Station

1.1.2 Aston Fire Station

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides an update on progress towards delivery of the above projects.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015, approval was given for the recommended options of the rebuilding of both Coventry and Aston Fire Stations. Since that date work has been undertaken in order to move these projects forwards.
- 3.2 In relation to Coventry Fire Station the most significant development has been a reconsideration of the most appropriate way to proceed with the rebuild following discussion with the architect. The architects have suggested that we reconsider implementing option 2 as detailed in the original Authority paper in preference to option 1. This would

provide greater value and flexibility in design options for the provision of both a new Fire Station and hot fire training building. Further details are available in appendix 1. Further scoping is being conducted by the architects for the potential implementation of option 2.

- 3.3 In relation to Aston Fire Station, considerable discussion has taken place to establish whether the listed status of the existing building can be removed to enable demolition and rebuild as recommended in option 1.
- 3.4 The outcome of these discussions are that it is not possible to remove the listing due to the heritage value of the building. For this reason, it is now necessary to proceed with option 2, which is to refurbish the existing building. Further details are available in appendix 2.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The procurement process to be followed for each of the procurement exercises appended to this report is in accordance with the Authority's Procurement Standing Orders.

#### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications remain as identified within the Authority report approved 16 February 2015.

#### 7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The environmental implications remain as identified within the Authority Report approved 16 February 2015.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Authority Report – Aston Fire Station Development – 16 February 2015

Authority Report – Coventry Fire Station Development – 16 February 2015

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PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

## **Appendix 1**

### **Coventry Fire Station Update**



In relation to Coventry Fire Station, Bond Bryan Architects Limited have been appointed and are now working with Officers and partners to develop detailed requirements. Consultation with colleagues working at Coventry Fire Station is underway to ensure that the details reflect their needs.

Coventry Fire Station currently houses several partner organisations in addition to Fire Service Delivery colleagues. These are an Ambulance response standby location, a local West Midlands Ambulance Service Human Resources function, Age UK and the Contact and Connect service. Agreement in principle has been reached to maintain an Ambulance Service location for three Ambulance response assets and we are awaiting an executive decision on the location of the HR function at Coventry. Discussions are ongoing with Age UK and Contact and Connect as to their intentions to co-locate within the new Fire Station.

The initial proposal included consideration of collaboration with West Midlands Police. The Police have been unable to commit to any firm plans for co-location in the new Fire Station due to the ongoing development of their Asset Management Strategy. For that reason, we are progressing plans for Coventry without collaboration with the Police. The Police remain aware of our desire to work together and of the need to provide requirements to our architects in order for this to proceed.

In the Authority paper 16 February 2015 option 1 was recommended for the demolition of the existing fire station and rebuild of a new fire station on the existing site whilst maintaining and enhancing the existing hot fire training facilities.

Option 2 was not recommended for the demolition of the existing fire station, hot fire training facility and rebuild of a new fire station and hot fire training facility on the existing site.

The first design meeting with the architects took place on 14<sup>th</sup> August. During this meeting the architects explained that option 2 in the Authority paper may actually represent the best value option, contrary to the recommended option 1. This is because of the complexity of maintaining the existing fire house when compared against the benefits of demolishing the entire structure and building a complete new facility. The added flexibility that this would enable in terms of gaining the most benefit from the site is considered to represent a considerable benefit. Therefore the architects have been requested to provide proposals for a complete rebuild and provision of suitable temporary accommodation for station personnel during the build within the existing allocated budget.

The next formal meeting with the architects will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> September after which a further update will be provided.

**Aston Fire Station Update**



The approval of the Fire Authority paper on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015 gave two options for Aston Fire Station, which is a listed building with English Heritage: option 1 being to demolish the existing Fire Station and rebuild a new Fire Station on the existing site whilst maintaining community contact and attendance times; and option 2 stating that if planning constraints did not permit the demolition of the existing station then a listed Building Consent application will be submitted to completely refurbish the existing building whilst retaining some of the listed features.

Meetings have been conducted involving members of WMFS and local councillors of the Wards in the Aston area to discuss the options presented within the Authority paper approved 16 February 2015. The local councillors have been supportive of the option 1 proposal.

Discussions have also been ongoing with local Planning and Conservation Officers regarding option 1 and the possibilities of demolishing the existing Fire Station and how the listed status could be removed.

Local Planning and Conservation Officers have now stated that there would be no opportunity to remove the listed status therefore we would need to concentrate on option 2 contained within the Authority Report 16 February 2015.

To support this development at Aston Fire Station, K4 Architects located in Birmingham have been appointed and are now working with officers and partners to develop requirements. A written report from the Heritage Advisor is also being prepared to support the planning application on this listed building.

Discussions with West Midlands Ambulance are continuing who have supplied their requirements and wish to be involved as a partner in the new station. They have indicated what their requirements for the new development are and are subject to Ambulance Executive Board approval which will be confirmed by the end of September 2015.

A number of contacts have been made with West Midlands Police, however no response or requirements have been received and therefore we are moving forward on the assumption that they will not be involved in the new development.