

PFCC Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

| |
|--|
| Report reference number: PFCC/073/20 |
| Classification: OFFICIAL |
| Title of report: Sale of Former Southminster Police Station |
| Area of county / stakeholders affected: District of Maldon |
| Report by: Patrick Duffy – Interim Head of Estates Date of report: 24 th September 2020 Enquiries to: Patrick.Duffy@essex.police.uk |

1. Purpose of the report

This Decision Report is seeking approval for the sale of the former Southminster Police Station and attached former Library, Queenborough Street, Southminster, CM0 7AD. This supersedes decision report PFCC/061/20.

2. Recommendations

To proceed with the unconditional sale of the former Southminster Police Station and Library for the sum of £575,000. The receipt will be split between the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC) and Essex County Council (ECC). This decision is only relevant to the disposal of the PFCC asset. ECC approval will be sought for disposal of its asset.

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| PFCC receipt 80.7% | £464,025 |
| ECC receipt 19.3% | £110,975 |

3. Benefits of the proposal

This proposal disposes of the former Southminster Police Station which is surplus to operational policing requirements and provides a substantial receipt for the capital funds of the Commissioner.

The proposal is for a joint sale with ECC on an unconditional basis, ensuring maximum receipt from the asset disposal.

4. Background and proposal

The former Southminster Police Station comprises a two-storey detached building, together with an adjoined single storey library with a small landscaped area to the front. The property has extensive parking to the rear accessed from both Queenborough Road and Sheepcotes Lane. The building was also included within the draft list of local heritage assets within Southminster.

Southminster front counter closed to members of the public on 2nd March 2016 with the full operational closure at the same time, with all operational functions being relocated to alternative police accommodation.

The property has been marketed on a private treaty basis by Lambert Smith Hampton on behalf of both the PFCC and ECC. The property has been exposed to the market by means such as a For Sale board, newspaper advertising, Property Particulars, direct marketing and internet marketing. This range of marketing is considered to provide wide exposure.

The property had previously been marketed for several weeks with a guide price of offers in the region of £650,000. Following the marketing period, a Best and Final Offers process was undertaken. Five viable Best and Final Offers were received ranging from £455,000 to £650,000. The highest offer received (£650,000) was unconditional on planning and was accepted under decision sheet ref: PFCC/061/20.

Contracts for the asset disposal were exchanged on 10th July 2020 with the completion date set for 10th September 2020. Prior to the completion date the purchasers requested a 10-day extension for completing which was refused. Following their failure to complete on 10th a "completion notice" was served requiring them to complete by Tuesday 29th September.

On 21st September Essex Police and ECC received notice advising that Southminster Police Station and Library had been Grade 2 listed, effective Friday 18th September. This had occurred between exchange and completion. Please see link to the notice on the Historic England website. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1472418>

The listing of the property does make development of the building much harder in terms of both time and cost for the purchaser. In order not to lose the sale negotiations have been ongoing since receipt of the Grade 2 listing notice to agree a mutual way forward with the sale. Through ongoing discussions and negotiation with the buyer the revised offer for completing the sale of the property is £575,000 only on the condition of completion taking place within 24 hours.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

Asset Disposal:

The property is no longer required for the future Estate Strategy and has been declared surplus to operational requirements.

OFFICIAL

Price Negotiation:

Not to agree to the price reduction – Although we would retain the deposit for the property, we would then have to undertake one of the following actions to progress the asset disposal.

a) Re-market the property:

Based on previous offers being primarily conditional, the Grade 2 listing will certainly only attract conditional offers, therefore delaying the disposal for anywhere between 12 and 18 months, allowing for a marketing period, planning applications and agreements with the both the planning authority and Historic England.

b) Seek planning approval ourselves and re-market the property with planning consent:

Essex Police does not have the in-house expertise or resource to undertake a planning application on a Grade 2 listed property for conversion to residential use and this falls outside our core business activity.

6. Police and Crime Plan

The sale meets the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan objective on Finance and Resources, with particular reference to rationalising the police estate.

7. Police operational implications

There are no adverse operational policing implications arising from the sale. Completion of the sale will assist in delivering capital receipts to reinvest as per the Commissioner's capital programme.

8. Financial implications

The financial impact of this decision report is a reduction in capital receipt for the Commissioner of £60,525.

If this sale is not completed the capital programme will need to be funded from elsewhere. If this sale is not undertaken it is likely that the sale process will be more protracted.

A failure to maximise the sale value of the building could place the Commissioner in breach of the fiduciary duty to sell assets for best consideration.

9. Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the sale.

A failure to maximise the sale value of the building could place the Commissioner in breach of the fiduciary duty to sell assets for best consideration.

OFFICIAL

10. Staffing implications

There are no staffing or resource implications as all staff have already been relocated to alternative policing locations.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is required for this particular sale.

12. Risks

There are no operational risks affecting the disposal of this site.

13. Governance Boards

The building was declared surplus to operational requirements at the Estate Change Board on 5th September 2017, with the disposal being agreed at the Strategic Estates Board on 25th September 2017.

14. Background papers

Marketing Brochure



Marketing Info.pdf

Pre-Disposal Advice – OFFICIAL COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE



Pre Disposal Advice
COMMERCIALY SEN

Decision Report PFCC/061/20



PFCC.061.20
Southminster PS Dis

Estate Strategy 2018-2020

<http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/finance-reporting/publications/police-estates-strategy/>

OFFICIAL

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: 

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 25 September 2020

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer

Sign: 

Print: Elizabeth Helm

Date: 25 September 2020

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES
NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

Pre-Disposal Advice is not to be published as it is commercially sensitive

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet? YES NO 2. Of Appendix? YES NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

Pre-Disposal Advice is not to be published as it is commercially sensitive

Date redaction carried out:

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Date signed:

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Roger Hirst

Print:

PFCC

Date signed: 25 September 2020

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

.....
.....
.....

Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: