

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 014-21
Classification: OFFICIAL
Title of report: Stage 2 Capital Bid – Harwich & Dovercourt Collaboration
Area of County/Stakeholders affected: The District of Tendring
Report by: Patrick Duffy – Head of Estates Date of report: 11 th March 2021 Enquiries to: Patrick.Duffy@essex.police.uk

1. Purpose of report

This Decision Report seeks approval for capital investment into building a new police station on the existing grounds of Dovercourt Fire Station.

2. Recommendations

To proceed with investment of £1,846,300 of capital funding for the design and construction of a new police station.

3. Benefits of Proposal

The collaboration proposal underpins the joint working between all of the parties and provides the foundation for a clear and accountable working relationship, providing the cornerstone for joint working now and laying the foundations and providing scope for further joint working in the future.

The collaboration proposal fulfils the duty on emergency services to collaborate. It gives each organisation an opportunity to maximise interoperability and integration in the future, to maintain and improve service delivery and increase public confidence by working more closely together while recognising the importance of maintaining their individual identity.

The proposed joint Police and Fire Station provides an opportunity to build on the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles, introduced in 2010, as a way “To ensure that the blue light services are trained

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and exercised to work together as effectively as possible at all levels of command in response to major or complex incidents so that as many lives as possible can be saved”.

Co-location at the same site would allow greater use of the existing Dovercourt Fire Station facilities by Essex Police officers and staff, consequently Dovercourt and Harwich community engagement opportunities would be greatly enhanced through collaborative delivery. Under the proposal certain areas of the existing Dovercourt Fire Station would become collaborative use spaces. Primarily the annex building currently underutilised by ECFRS other than for community work and community safety days would become a multi-use space providing the opportunity for a JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme) Silver cell for operational deployments on the peninsula, a collaborative training / briefing space and collaborative community engagement, education and community safety programme delivery area.

The proposal would see the operational policing Local Policing Team and Community Policing Team from Harwich Police Station re-locate to the Dovercourt Fire Station site. Co-location on this site allows for future proofing of organisational growth and allows for increased collaborative use of space and facilities in the future.

The proposal avoids funding back log maintenance at the existing Harwich Police Station of £1,383,671 which will only address building fabric and building services; this would not improve the physical working space for officers.

The proposal would achieve a capital receipt for the existing Harwich Police Station following the re-location of staff and officers to the new police station.

4. Background and proposal

Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service are required to make efficiencies wherever possible to redirect funding into “frontline” services for the public of Essex. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is proactively seeking efficiency opportunities and is committed to increasing collaboration between the two organisations.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on responsibilities for fire and rescue services in their area. As a result, a Local Business Case (LBC) for Joint Governance of Police and Fire & Rescue in Essex was approved by the Home Office, such that the PCC is now the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). Collaboration on the sharing of estate was one of the collaboration initiatives reviewed in the Local Business Case as follows:

“Areas of the operational estate within Essex may be shared. There may be sites where, rather than implementing current plans to refurbish existing police stations, it may be possible to use space in fire stations. This will reduce the total cost of refurbishment, as well as releasing the existing estate for sale. These benefits have not been included in the estimates to date”.

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Harwich Police Station has been identified as being underutilised as well as requiring a significant amount of investment to address the backlog maintenance at the property. Early discussions on the concept of alternative facilities between EP and ECFRS have identified the possibility for both EP and ECFRS sharing accommodation at the existing Dovercourt Fire Station site.

An outline business case was undertaken to explore a number of options to co-locate the policing functions from Harwich Police Station to Dovercourt Fire Station. Following consultation with senior internal stakeholders, the preferred option was developed into a full business case. The full business case was undertaken incorporating a feasibility study into the costs to refurbish and extend an existing vacant building at the site, or to completely demolish the building and construct a new build police station.

The preferred option and recommendation is to demolish the existing property and undertake the construction of a new police station.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

Remain at the current Harwich Police Station site.

- The backlog maintenance investment required at the existing Harwich Police Station is £1,383,671. This does not undertake general internal improvements to the existing working facilities and is principally building fabric and building services investment to keep the building operating.
- The building capacity would remain under utilised due to the modular nature of the layout.

Co-locate within the existing Dovercourt Fire Station.

- The existing size of the fire station is insufficient to re-locate the existing policing functions from Harwich Police Station.
- In order to achieve this option a significant extension would be required. The existing layout of the fire station would not facilitate suitable separation of policing functions to satisfy information security requirements.
- The physical site constraints restrict the option to locate a suitably sized extension without significant disruption to the existing fire station.

Refurbish / extend existing vacant property

- In order to achieve this option a significant extension would be required. The existing layout of the fire station would not facilitate suitable separation of policing functions to satisfy information security requirements.
- The physical site constraints restrict this option to locate a suitably sized extension without significant disruption to the existing fire station.

6. Police and Crime Plan

The building blocks of the plan (prevention and engagement) are directly enhanced by the proposal that enables co-located delivery of preventative safety and community engagement activities.

Within the priorities directly supported by the proposal are local visible and accessible policing (by safeguarding community policing at the heart of the Harwich and Dovercourt community through the move to sustainable accommodation) and improving road safety, the main area of collaborative delivery between ECFRS and Essex Police. The ability to train, incident command and engage and educate the public in this area from a shared site will vastly improve that delivery.

The Estate Strategy underpins delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. Page 20 (Finance and Resources) states that the PFCC will “*Rationalise the police estate, making it fit for purpose for 21st century policing and drive out savings to reinvest back into local policing.*”

7. Police Operational Implications

There are no changes to operational policing activities associated with this decision report. The re-location of policing activities from Harwich Police Station to Dovercourt Fire Station will have no impact on our operational capability.

8. Financial Implications

The recommended proposal is to invest £1,846,300 of capital funding for the design and construction of a new Police Station. The proposal is within the Subject to Approval category of the capital programme with capital funding allocated of £850,000 which was formally approved at the Police, Fire & Crime Panel on 4th February 2021.

The proposal will allow for cost avoidance of £1,383,671 required at the existing Harwich Police Station, as well as anticipated revenue savings of £10,000 per annum, made up of the average planned maintenance expenditure.

9. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from this decision report, although once the required procurement processes have been undertaken to engage with suppliers, formal contracts will be required to be entered into by the PFCC.

Given that the estates of both Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service are in the ownership of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, the PFCC advised at the Strategic Board meeting on 11 March 2021 that he would be taking independent legal advice regarding the optimum means through which to register the transfer of land use. £150,000 of the approved capital spend is dependent on the outcome of this legal advice. It is not available to spend on other items in the development. Once such advice is obtained, this matter will be the subject of a subsequent decision report.

10. Staffing implications

The police officers, staff and PCSOs will be required to re-locate to the new Police Station. Employees have already been engaged with in respect of the proposal. Formal notice periods for change in location for officers will be undertaken in accordance with the Police Regulations and staff and PCSOs will be formally consulted with prior to the re-location in accordance with existing organisational HR policies.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is required for this decision report. The proposal re-locates the existing policing function from the existing Harwich Police Station, Main Road, Harwich to the existing Dovercourt Fire Station, Fronks Road, Dovercourt site less than 1.5 miles away. All existing policing services will continue to be provided from the new location.

12. Risks

The full business case has identified a number of high-level risks. Upon approval of this decision, those risks will be transferred to the force risk register and managed as part of the overall project delivery.

Planning permission may not be obtained to build the new police station.

Mitigation – Early engagement with local planners to ensure their considerations are considered prior to submission of the full planning application.

The capital receipt for the disposal of the former Harwich Police Station once this asset becomes surplus to operational requirements may not be as high as anticipated.

Mitigation – A formal red book valuation has been undertaken of the property. Whilst economic factors may impact on the capital receipt, there is limited mitigation to eliminate this risk.

There may be local objections to the re-location of the policing service from Harwich to Dovercourt and the location of the station.

Mitigation - There is already a draft communications plan to ensure all stakeholders are formally engaged and consulted with on the proposal.

13. Governance Boards

Essex Police Estate Change Board – 26th January 2021

Essex Police Chief Officer Group – 10th February 2021

PFCC Strategic Estate Board – 16th February 2021

Essex Police Chief Officer Group – 24th February 2021

PFCC Strategic Board – 11th March 2021.

14. Background papers

Harwich / Dovercourt FBC – OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

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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: 17 March 2021

Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

Sign:

Print: Julia Berry

Date: 17 March 2021

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (state 'None' if applicable)

However the appendices are not for publication as they have been marked Official – 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

2. Of Appendix

YES

NO

NO

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

The appendices are not for publication as they have been marked Official – Sensitive

Date redaction carried out: 17 March 2021

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

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

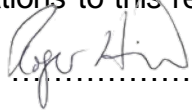
Sign:

Print: Julia Berry

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report;

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 18 March 2021

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because;

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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: