



REQUEST FOR DECISION: PCC 2014/ 022

Disposal of Woodstock Police Station

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the disposal of the freehold of the Police Station on the Hensington Road, Woodstock.

The property is identified for disposal and replacement within the Force's 2012 Asset Management Plan, with alternative provision and accommodation for the local neighbourhood policing team within the town. Following consideration by CCMT, and the PCC in December 2013, of the need for and form of replacement public interface facilities for a number of disposal sites, it is the intention to replace the current Tier 2 facility with a volunteer run Public Information Point (PIP) in a more central location in Woodstock if possible.

The property was recently scheduled to be marketed in March 2014 with the expectation of achieving between £1m and £2m, depending upon the type of development scheme proposed by interested parties. However Property Services was asked to participate in a local town partnership, chaired by the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council and including the county, district and town councils, the NHS, Blenheim Estate and 3 local interest groups. The group's objective was to try to ensure the Police Station site was developed in a way that contributed to the wellbeing of the town, notably with provision of a substantial (approximately 675 sqm) NHS GP practice if possible. The current GP building is a third of the size it should be to meet current NHS requirements, and the NHS have been trying for 12 years to secure a larger facility. The Police Station site is seen as the last major site opportunity in central Woodstock to achieve that, and there is therefore a significant local political and community interest in seeing if this is achievable, balanced against the TVP/PCC requirement to achieve best consideration.

Terms have been provisionally agreed for an "off market" disposal of the site at £2.6m to the Blenheim Estate. This would, subject to securing planning permission, provide for a replacement TVP Neighbourhood office on site, the new larger GP surgery and 26 residential flats. While there will always be a risk that the offer may be reduced at a later date, the opportunities for this arising are being restricted. The most significant risk is from a planning requirement for affordable housing provision, but WODC Planning Officers are being reasonably positive (as far as they can be) that Blenheim's proposed scheme might be supported, with the GP practice and TVP facility being argued to be in lieu of affordable housing provision. Strong political support for this proposal will enhance its chances for being delivered.

Valuation advice has confirmed the offer is at a good level that is unlikely to be exceeded through marketing. There are other non financial benefits from selling off market to Blenheim that support the achievement of our statutory obligation to secure "best consideration in the circumstances"

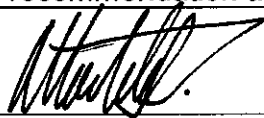
Recommendation:

The PCC is recommended to approve the offer from the Blenheim Estate (Vanbrugh Unit Trust) in the sum of £2.60m in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.5.21.

Police and Crime Commissioner

I hereby approve the recommendation above.

Signature



Date

1/4/14

PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Woodstock is a Sector police station of 633 sqm on a site of 0.3 Hectares (0.75 acres). It is owned by the PCC and has a small LPA Neighbourhood team presence (requiring no more than 75 sqm) and other non local facing occupants and furniture storage. The Economic Crime Unit was a previous significant occupant but they relocated to another building in 2013. The site is shown edged red on the attached title plan adjoining a library, houses, care home and a public car park.
- 1.2 The approved 2012 Asset Management Plan highlighted the site for disposal with local replacement, provisionally programmed for completion during 2016/17. A net revenue saving from this disposal of £27,250 was initially estimated, although the expectation now is closer to £35,000.
- 1.3 The required replacement facilities are a self contained office for the Neighbourhood team, and a separate public interface, preferably more centrally located.
- 1.4 Property Services was approached in August 2013, with the knowledge of the LPA Commander (and subsequently Chief Constable who was approached by a WODC councillor) and asked to become involved in a “partnership” of local organisations interested in the future of the police station site, and how it may best be utilised to enhance public/community services in the town. It was seen by the partnership as the last significant site in Woodstock with potential for this, particularly with its proximity to the town centre, public car park and other facilities.
- 1.5 The wider partnership group comprises the Town Partnership (representatives from two local interest groups), the Town Council, District and County councillors and officers from their Estates and planning teams, the Medical Practitioners (GPs) Partnership with NHS Estates representative, and Blenheim Estates on behalf of the Duke of Marlborough. The group is chaired by Councillor Ian Hudspeth the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council (and local county councillor), and has met on 2 occasions involving TVP and is envisaged to need to meet again in April.
- 1.6 An offer has been received that exceeds valuation advice and meets the requirements of the Force’s approved off market disposal policy. The offer meets the identified requirement for an on-site TVP Neighbourhood office and also meets the partnership aspirations for a larger GP practice. The offer is subject to securing a planning permission for this scheme which also includes residential flats.

2 Review of offer received

- 2.1 See Part 2

3 Issues for consideration

- 3.1 See Part 2

4 Financial comments

4.1 See Part 2

5 Legal comments

5.1 See Part 2

6 Equality comments

6.1 There are no matters of this nature relevant to this proposed transaction

7 Conclusion

7.1 Woodstock Police station is designated for disposal within the force's Asset Management Plan and the required local replacement is being addressed through an on-site re-provision for the Neighbourhood Team by the developer. The public interface solution is being considered and there are options to address that.

7.2 On the basis of the information provided in this report, it is recommended that the negotiated conditional freehold offer be accepted in accordance with Financial regulation 3.5.21.

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| Public access to information Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the website within 1 working day of approval. Any facts and advice that should not be automatically available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead on a separate Part 2 form. Deferment of publication is only applicable where release before that date would compromise the implementation of the decision being approved. |
| Is the publication of this form to be deferred? No |
| Is there a Part 2 form? Yes |

| ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION (as appropriate): | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------|
| | Officer | Date reviewed |
| Name & Role | | |
| Head of Unit | | |
| Legal Advice | | |
| Financial Advice | | |

OFFICER'S APPROVAL

We have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial and legal advice have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

We are satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.


Chief Executive

Date 6/04/2014


Chief Finance Officer

Date 1/4/14