



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY

REQUEST FOR DECISION – PCC 2016/013

**Title: Sale of Gerrards Cross Police Station and Houses, SL9 7AL**

**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding the potential sale of Gerrards Cross Police Station and adjacent houses. The site has been identified for disposal in the Asset Management Plan since 2012; the Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) process in 2015 finally determined that the replacement operational presence required should be in the form of a touch-down office probably within one of our local partner's buildings.

The intention had therefore been to market late summer 2016 with a view to completing disposal by the end of March 2018. However we were approached by South Bucks District Council (who currently lease 6 of the 8 houses on the site to provide emergency accommodation for homeless families) with a proposal to purchase the site prior to it going to the open market.

It was decided that TVP would allow the Council to formulate a bid and it was agreed that a 3 month "window of opportunity", until the end of July, would be acceptable to both parties.

An initial informal offer was tabled by the Council (£3.15m), which was rejected by TVP. Subsequently a formal offer of £4million for the unconditional sale of the site to the Council was submitted. The offer is not subject to planning permission, meaning that there should be no major obstacles to achieving a disposal within a relatively short timetable.

The Council's intention is to redevelop the site to provide 28 new residential units including a significant proportion of Affordable Housing. Linked to the offer is the opportunity for TVP to utilise space at the Council's offices as our touch-down facility for the area.

Having taken external property valuation advice it was determined that the offer is significantly above the anticipated open market value of the site. The unconditional nature of the offer is very attractive given the potential planning constraints on the site. The additional non-financial benefits of proceeding with a sale to the Council ( e.g. delivering Affordable Housing, working with a partner and securing our touch-down facility) supports our statutory obligation to secure "best consideration".

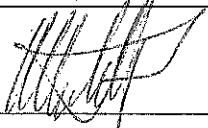
**Recommendation:**

The PCC is recommended to approve the offer from South Bucks District Council in the sum of £4million for the sale of Gerrards Cross Police Station and site.

**Police and Crime Commissioner**

I hereby approve the recommendation above.

**Signature**



**Date** 23.8.16

## **PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Gerrards Cross Police Station is a former sector Police Station, the site consists of the Police Station itself, associated garaging and 8 houses immediately adjacent to the site. In total the site measures approximately 0.7 hectares.
- 1.2 The use of the station has been reduced in recent years with the Front Counter closing in April 2016 and the building used principally by the Neighbourhood Teams in the area.
- 1.3 TVP currently lease 6 of the 8 houses to South Bucks District Council with one of the remaining houses used as single person accommodation, the remaining house is currently unoccupied.
- 1.4 The site was first identified for disposal and replacement in the 2012 Asset Management Plan. Initially the intention was to replace the Police Station with something of a more appropriate size and scale in the town. However finding a suitable replacement proved difficult. As part of the PBB process in 2015 it was resolved that the replacement at Gerrards Cross could be an informal touch-down presence with a partner organisation as opposed to a more substantial “book on-book off” facility. This touchdown presence is being actively progressed and is expected to be delivered at the nearby Council offices. This decision has enabled the potential disposal of the Police Station site (including the adjacent 8 houses) to now move forward.
- 1.5 As stated above since 2014 TVP has leased 6 of the 8 houses at Gerrards Cross PS to South Bucks District Council to provide emergency housing for homeless families. This has provided an important local social housing facility whilst also producing a steady and secure income stream for TVP.
- 1.6 Following discussions with the Council they expressed a strong interest in purchasing the site in its entirety in order to deliver a predominantly affordable housing scheme on the whole site. It was decided to allow the Council a 3 month “window of opportunity” (until the end of July) to formulate an offer to present to TVP for consideration. In the event that an acceptable proposal was not forthcoming, then the intention was to market the property in the late summer.
- 1.7 An informal meeting between TVP and officers of the Council resulted in a verbal offer of £3.15m, on an unconditional basis (therefore not subject to planning) for the purchase of the whole site. The Council also indicated that the offer could include an overage provision in the event that the eventual scheme increased the overall number of units delivered and/or reduced the proportion of affordable housing units on the site.

- 1.8 Following the meeting TVP sought the advice of Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) regarding the merits of the Council's offer, particularly having regard to the value and the unconditional nature of the offer and therefore the ability to dispose of the site and secure a capital receipt within a relatively short timescale.
- 1.9 The informal offer was reported to the Strategic Estates Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016, along with the advice from LSH. Both the Director of Finance and the PCC's Chief Finance Officer, who also attended the meeting, considered that it would be appropriate maintain dialogue and seek an improved offer.
- 1.10 Following further discussions, the Council responded with a formal offer for the purchase of the site on an unconditional (not subject to planning permission) basis in the sum of £4m.
- 1.11 This offer exceeds the Open Market Valuation of the site as advised by LSH and is further supported by a second independent valuation. Therefore along with the additional benefits a sale to the Council would deliver (the delivery of Affordable Housing, the delivery of an appropriate local touch-down facility and the enhanced working relationship with a partner organisation) enables TVP to look favourably upon a disposal to the Council.

## **2 Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 See Part 2

## **3 Financial Comments**

- 3.1 An unconditional offer of £4m has been received, which exceeds LSV's independent valuation of the site. Further information is provided in Part 2.

## **4 Legal Comments**

- 4.1 The disposal of the site should not present any unforeseen issues in relation to the PCC's freehold interest as the title is registered with the Land Registry.

## **5 Equality Comments**

- 5.1 There are no matters of this nature relevant to this proposed transaction.

## **6 Conclusion**



- 6.1 Gerrards Cross Police Station site has been identified for disposal within the Force's Asset Management Plan with a touch-down facility required as its local replacement. Selling the site to the Council on an unconditional basis will generate an appropriate capital receipt within a relatively quick timeframe.

6.2 Additional wider benefits regarding the delivery of Affordable Housing, working closely with a local partner and the delivery of an appropriate touch-down facility would result in TVP demonstrating best consideration for the sale of the site and therefore the Council's unconditional offer in the sum of £4m is recommended for approval.

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<p><b>Is the publication of this form to be deferred? No</b></p>
<p><b>If yes, for what reason?</b></p>
<p><b>Until what date?</b></p>
<p><b>Is there a Part 2 form? Yes</b></p>

<b>ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION (as appropriate):</b>		
	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Date reviewed</b>
<b>Strategic Growth Planner, Property Services</b>	<b>Simon Dackombe</b>	<b>17/08/16</b>
<b>Head of Property Services</b>	<b>David Griffin</b>	<b>17/08/16</b>
<b>Legal Advice</b>	<b>Blake Morgan</b>	<b>June 2016</b>
<b>Financial Advice</b>	<b>Linda Waters</b>	<b>July 2016</b>

**OFFICER'S APPROVAL**

<p>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.</p>	
<p>We are satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.</p>	
<p>  Chief Executive</p>	<p>Date <b>19/08/2016</b></p>
<p>  Chief Finance Officer</p>	<p>Date <b>19/8/16</b></p>