



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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Report to: THE BOARD OF THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Report Number: B/FCS/07-15
Date: 26 MARCH 2015
Report By: CHIEF OFFICER

Subject: PROPERTY ESTATE - STRATEGIC INTENT : ABERDEEN OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the options for providing office accommodation in Aberdeen, for both the North Service Delivery Headquarters and the Local Senior Officer (LSO).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is asked to approve the following recommendations:
- That the North Service Delivery HQ is accommodated within Dyce Fire Station,
 - That the Aberdeen City Local Senior Officer and associated staff are accommodated within Central Fire Station,
 - That the building at Mounthooly is made available for sale following the closure of the Control Room, which is currently expected to be late 2016.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Board, at its meetings in September 2013 and January 2014, approved the Service's Property Estate Strategic Intent. At that stage it was envisaged that the current Control building at Mounthooly, Aberdeen would become the North Service Delivery Area Headquarters when it becomes available.
- 3.2 It is currently envisaged that the former Grampian Fire & Rescue Control Room at Mounthooly, Aberdeen will close in late 2016.

4 NORTH SERVICE DELIVERY AREA REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 It is recognised that due to the geography of the North Service Delivery Area (SDA) it will be necessary to retain office accommodation in more than one location to enable the effective management of this area. Most significantly, while the Service Delivery Headquarters will be located in Aberdeen, there will be managerial and support staff located in Inverness, both permanently and on a visiting basis.
- 4.2 Within Aberdeen, accommodation requirements for the following teams have been considered;
- SDA staff,
 - SDA Business partners & locally based staff from HQ Directorates,
 - Administrative Support Pool,
 - LSO Aberdeen City,
 - Aberdeen Fire Investigation Unit,
 - Flexible accommodation for visiting and peripatetic staff.

5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC INTENT PROGRAMME

- 5.1 There has been significant progress in relation to the Strategic Intent Programme over the past year with the Asset Resource Centres at Inverness and Newbridge fully operational, the ICT Data Centre and Control Room at Johnstone equipped to operate in a national capacity, and a new ICT Disaster Recovery Facility up and running in partnership with the Scottish Government at Saughton House in Edinburgh. The Control Room at Dumfries has been successfully merged with Johnstone and plans are well established to vacate the Training Centre at Gullane by the end of the financial year.
- 5.2 Work has also been ongoing to plan the remaining elements of the programme, many of which are interdependent. It is currently anticipated that the closure of the Control Room at Mounthooly, Aberdeen will take place in late 2016.
- 5.3 The developing organisational staffing structure has enabled a clearer understanding of the office accommodation requirements across Scotland.
- 5.4 The management of cashflow is an important aspect of the programme, with income from sales being utilised for new investment. In addition, the Strategic Intent programme is intended to deliver significant sustainable savings in non-employee costs and as such achieving maximum utilisation from our property portfolio is a key objective.

6 OPTIONS FOR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION IN ABERDEEN

- 6.1 During the process of planning the next stage of the programme, an alternative option has come to light which would enable the Service to meet the office accommodation requirements for Aberdeen within 2 existing fire stations and also release the building at Mounthooly, with an overall benefit.
- 6.2 It was originally anticipated that both the SDA Headquarters and the LSO would be accommodated within the former Control building at Mounthooly (Option 1), however this will require investment to adapt it from its existing use. Early cost advice suggests a capital investment of £1.6million. While there is ample space to accommodate the requirements of both SDA and LSO, the building would still be underutilised. It is in a central location in Aberdeen, minimising displacement of existing North Anderson Drive based staff, however would not be available for occupation until the first quarter of 2018. This building has annual running costs of £110,000 and if sold would generate a significant capital receipt.
- 6.2 Alternatively (Option 2), it has been identified that the requirements of the SDA HQ can be met within the fire station at Dyce (currently retained but built as a wholetime station), along with some flexible accommodation for peripatetic and visiting staff. In addition the LSO requirements can be met within Central Fire Station. Dyce Fire Station is on the outskirts of Aberdeen, and Central Fire Station sits across the road from Mounthooly. This option provides separately identifiable points of contact for both the SDA and the LSO in their differing roles. Early cost advice suggests an overall capital investment for this option of £1.9million, however enables the disposal of the building at Mounthooly, generating a significant capital receipt, and annual savings of c.£110,000. This accommodation could be ready for occupation in the first quarter of 2016, contributing to the earlier release of North Anderson Drive, with its associated running costs.
- 6.3 Applying a Net Present Cost (NPC) appraisal to these options, over 10 years, taking account of all financial aspects, Option 1 shows a NPC of £1.5million and Option 2 delivers a small net credit.

7 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is recognised that property rationalisation will have a significant impact on employees. Those who are displaced as a result of the Strategic Intent Programme, and other organisational changes, have access to a range of Change Management policies, supported by a Change Management Team.
- 7.2 Staff have been made aware of these proposals which would be a local variation to the published plan.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The financial implications have been outlined within the report.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 SFRS has statutory authority to buy and sell property however is required to operate within the terms of the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the Strategic Intent process and has been reviewed in consideration of the options presented in this report. There are no new or additional equality considerations arising from the options presented in this report. The initial impact assessment of Strategic Intent identified that where premises were closed and resulted in a relocation of staff there may be an impact on individuals because of altered or increased travel time, distance or location and that this may have a more significant impact on women, people with caring responsibilities or people with a disability. The options presented in this paper do not alter that potential impact.
- 10.2 Both options present limited additional travel distance from North Anderson Drive and both venues are served by public transport. The equality impact, therefore, remains as it was identified in the original impact assessment. The SFRS's change management processes will apply, and the suitability of the premises will be a core feature of the programme of work, regardless of the option adopted by the Board.

11 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 11.1 The Strategic Intent Executive Board, which includes trade union representation, has been advised of these proposals and face to face meetings have been held with affected staff.
- 11.2 Aberdeen City Council has also been advised of the proposals.
- 11.3 Feedback received to date has been supportive, recognising the business requirements of the Service.

12 CORE BRIEF

- 12.1 Within the context of the Property Estate - Strategic Intent Programme, the Director of Finance & Contractual Services advised the Board of the options for providing office accommodation in Aberdeen, for both the North Service Delivery Headquarters and the Local Senior Officer (LSO) and sought approval for the recommendation that the North Service Delivery HQ be accommodated within Dyce Fire Station, the

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Aberdeen City Local Senior Officer and associated staff be accommodated within Central Fire Station, and the building at Mounthooly be made available for sale following the closure of the Control Room, which is currently expected to be late 2016.

**ALASDAIR HAY
CHIEF OFFICER
26 MARCH 2015**