



Cambridgeshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 25 March 2014

PAPWORTH POLICE STATION SITE

1. Purpose

1.1 To seek approval to the freehold disposal of Papworth Police Station site.

2. Background

2.1 This property has been vacant since September 2010 when the beat office relocated to Cambourne Police Station. It was originally considered that the site would lend itself to residential use given the location and surrounding uses.

2.2 Finance and Resources Committee formally approved the proposed sale of the site on 22nd September 2011 following consultation with County, Parish and District Councillors.

2.3 Local estate agents and planning consultants were subsequently instructed to draw up a residential scheme for the site which was submitted to SCDC for full planning consent with a view to releasing the best value of the site on eventual sale.

2.4 The application is as yet undetermined and has a protracted history due to a combination of issues including affordable housing, access/highways and design.

2.5 The design element has been satisfactorily altered but the other issues remain unresolved.

2.6 To reconfigure the traffic calming and access arrangements to satisfy the planning process would involve significant expenditure (estimated at a minimum of £10,000). For the affordable housing element, SCDCs required adjustments to our viability report which could impact significantly on the potential capital receipt.

2.7 The unencumbered residential site value was originally estimated at around £200,000. In addition, in order to test our viability appraisal, SCDC commissioned a

report which estimated the current residential site value at £120,000. This is considered to be a very modest valuation.

- 2.8 Given the difficulties with the planning application, an independent valuation report was sought by Estates on alternative commercial use for the site. This concluded that the best alternative use is for a small convenience store supporting a site value of around £165,000.
- 2.9 Estates are in receipt of 2 offers (subject to contract) from the Abbey Group (Cambridgeshire) Ltd who are interested in the acquisition of the site for a convenience store. These are summarised as follows:
- The first offer is unconditional and not subject to any planning permission. This offer is £220,000 (two hundred and twenty thousand pounds).
 - The second offer is conditional upon receiving planning permission for a convenience store. This offer is £250,000 (two hundred and fifty thousand pounds).
- 2.10 It should be noted that the average annual revenue costs associated with holding this vacant site is in the region of around £6,000.
- 2.11 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that Local Authorities are not permitted to dispose of land or grant leases in excess of 7 years for a consideration which is less than the best which is reasonably obtainable, unless they obtain consent from the Secretary of State or comply with the 2003 dispensations. The valuation evidence demonstrates that the offers from the Abbey Group achieve best consideration and that there are no compliance issues.

3. Summary

- 3.1 Following approval to dispose of the site in September 2011 planning options have been considered and evaluated and an offer to purchase the freehold received.
- 3.2 The conditional offer of £250,000 carries significant uncertainty over timescales for the purchaser to secure planning consent for a convenience store (given the protracted nature of the existing application for residential use).
- 3.3 The unconditional offer of £220,000 represents best value for the site as it removes planning and highway uncertainties and allows the sale to proceed without delay. It also removes the liability of on-going revenue costs and the potential problems associated with the ownership of vacant property. In addition, the resolution and cost of highways/access requirements would fall to the purchaser. This option presents a freehold disposal compliant with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended to proceed with the unconditional offer of £220,000 from the Abbey Group.

Bibliography

Source Document(s)	Contact Officer	Location
Estate Management – Property Files	Colin Luscombe (Head of Estates & FM) or Elly McKee(Estates Management Surveyor)	Cambridgeshire Constabulary