

OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

TITLE: Usk Police Station and use of Sessions House, Usk, Monmouthshire

DATE: 5th November 2013

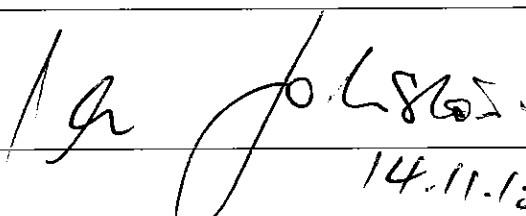
TIMING: Routine

PURPOSE: For decision

1.	<p><u>RECOMMENDATION</u></p> <p>That the Commissioner agrees to remove Usk Police Station from the list of buildings to be sold and notes the use to be made by the Neighbourhood team of accommodation at Sessions House, Usk , Monmouthshire.</p>
2.	<p><u>INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND</u></p> <p>The Police Authority Estates Strategy was developed during 2009 as part of the Staying Ahead Programme which aimed to re align the police service to meet the needs of communities in Gwent.</p> <p>Between 2010-2012 the estate was reviewed and recommendations made for disposal/re provisioning of a number of sites.</p> <p>Usk Police Station was considered in Tranche 4, it provided a base for two police officers and two CSO's and did not open to the public. In January 2011 the Police Authority agreed to the disposal of the Usk Police Station and the service provision being provided from Sessions House.</p> <p>The Police and Crime Commissioner raised concerns emanating from members and representatives of the community regarding the future of the Usk Police Station when he came into office. The concerns related the fact that the station is situated at the heart of the community and is a centrepiece with the bridge. The building is thought to be iconic within the community and the move to Sessions House was seen as a withdrawal of the service from the town centre.</p>
3.	<p><u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u></p> <p>Usk Police Station is one of the most iconic buildings in the Force, largely due to its position on one of the main access routes into Gwent from the East. Following an announcement that this station was to be sold, the decision became the subject of much debate. Since he took up office last year, the Commissioner has received many calls from the public, elected officials and partners to review the original decision of the Police Authority. Over the past few months he, along with the Local Policing Unit Commander (LPUC), has consulted a range of stakeholders and it has become evident that the decision to sell Usk Police Station has had a major effect on public confidence in the police service in Monmouthshire.</p>

4.	<p><u>NEXT STEPS</u></p> <p>Having regard to the priorities contained in the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17, the Commissioner has committed to improving public confidence in the police service. He has therefore decided to remove Usk Police Station from the list of properties to be sold. While Usk Police Station has not been open to the public for a while, the LPUC is now putting together a plan to increase public contact and raise the profile of this Station in consultation with local partners.</p> <p>In addition, the Force will also be taking up an offer from Usk Town Council to utilise the Sessions House building (close to Usk Prison) for an exciting range of new partnership activities that will offer the public greater visibility of our staff and policing services.</p>
5.	<p><u>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>The capital costs that may have been recovered for the sale of the station could have been in the region of £180,000, however, the capital receipt were not included in the medium term financial plans. The annual running costs of the station are £5,800. The costs preparing Sessions House are £7,500 and annual running costs will be £7,700.</p>
6.	<p><u>PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>There are no additional personnel considerations in relation to the proposal in the report as the staffing requirements will be met from existing resources.</p>
7.	<p><u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>There are no specific legal issues arising from the proposals in this report.</p>
8.	<p><u>EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>This proposal has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 in preparing this report.</p> <p>It is not intended that the station be open to the general public, although the 'if we are in, we are open' approach will be taken to deal with anyone calling at the station who have not previously booked an appointment. Where appropriate use will be made of the Sessions House accommodation to address any potential DDA requirements.</p>
9.	<p><u>RISK</u></p> <p>The financial risk lies in the loss of capital receipt and the increase in running costs with two buildings in Usk. However, the proposal falls in line with the Police and Crime priority in relation to improving public confidence and the Force savings targets will be amended to reflect this position.</p>

	There could be potential challenge under the DDA legislation if the station is said to be open to the public. As other alternative arrangements can be made to accommodate this eventuality the risk is one that the Commissioner is prepared to manage.
10.	<u>PUBLIC INTEREST</u> This document is suitable to be placed on the OPCC website.
11.	<u>CONTACT OFFICER</u> Shelley Bosson, Chief Executive
12.	<u>ANNEXES</u> None

Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent	
I confirm that I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct.	
Any such interests are recorded below.	
The above request has my approval.	
Signature:	
Date:	14.11.13

