

COMMITTEE: GRAMPIAN JOINT POLICE BOARD

DATE: 8 JUNE 2012

TITLE OF REPORT: NEW BUCKIE POLICE OFFICE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request Members of the Grampian Joint Police Board to agree to the purchase and refurbishment of an office at East Cathcart Street, Buckie for the Buckie/Keith Local Policing Team (LPT).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree to the Purchase and refurbishment of accommodation at East Cathcart Street, Buckie.
- 2.2 Subject to the relocation to East Cathcart Street, Buckie, that the existing office at South West Street, Buckie be declared surplus to requirements.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are two costs associated with this development, namely, the ongoing revenue charge (rates, energy and other occupation costs) and the initial Capital outlay in purchasing and refurbishing this facility.
- 3.2 While the office at West Cathcart Street is 540 square metres, compared to 420 square metres at the existing office at South West Street, it is anticipated the revenue running of each property will be broadly similar.
- 3.3 The property at East Cathcart Street has been independently valued and it is proposed to submit an offer of £140,000 for the building. The Force's current Capital Plan will need to be re-profiled to include this purchase price. The estimated further capital cost of £100,000 in refurbishing the property can be met from the existing Minor Works Capital budget for 2012/13.
- 3.4 It is estimated that the that the sale of the existing Buckie office will generate a Capital Receipt in the order of £100,000, most probably for residential redevelopment.
- 3.5 **The Capital funding of this and other property projects(principally the Aberdeen Custody development) are considered in more financial detail in the separate following paper on "Financing the Capital Budget".**

4. SERVICE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 4.1 The relocation to this new accommodation will result in improved modern accommodation for Police Officers and provide an enhanced community centred Police presence in the Buckie community. The new office would have additional capacity to allow for any future realignment of Moray Divisional resources and also offer options for co-locating with Council partners, who it is understood will be reviewing their Buckie offices via a "Designing Better Service Review". The latter option has potential to generate income through rental agreements for office space let to any partners.
- 4.2 The building will provide an easily accessible and high visibility Community Focused policing service in an area with a problem of drug dealing, retail crime and antisocial behaviour. The relocating of the Buckie Police Office to this new location would be well received by the residential and business community alike.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 ICT telephone and data connectivity will be required to the accommodation and a Service request has been submitted to SPSA to provide these links.
- 5.2 The relocation to the new office will enable the existing Buckie office at South West Street to be declared surplus to requirements, thereby generating a capital receipt.

6. REPORT

Background

- 6.1 The existing Buckie Office, South West Street, Buckie was built in the early 1950's and provided the necessary office space as was required at that time. Whilst it has served the Force well, its functionality as a Police Station in the 21st century has decreased markedly.
- 6.2 The building is primarily on one floor with canteen and small locker room on the upper level. It is home to 27 Officers including the area Inspector and three Sergeants. With the centralisation of Custody facilities from Buckie to the primary Moray custodial building at Elgin, the building also has a large redundant former cells facility occupying approximately 1/3 of the building and now used as ad hoc storage. The building also suffers from being extremely fragmented with constrained working areas for staff and no adequate meeting or briefing facilities within the station.
- 6.3 The office is located away from the centre of the town and is not readily visible to those frequenting that area. Buckie and its community is typically focussed in the town centre with the retail and licensed businesses condensed in this small area and it is a natural congregating area for people of all ages and characters throughout the course of a day. Typically, it suffers from incidents of drug dealing, shoplifting and with the largest number of problematic licensed premises, with late opening hours at the weekend and alcohol fuelled antisocial behaviour is more commonplace as a consequence.

- 6.4 As you would expect, the Buckie property has a poor performance score in the Property Asset Management Plan, which identifies that opportunities for sourcing alternative accommodation should be investigated.

Current Situation

- 6.5 In this regard, a large two storey office at East Cathcart, Buckie (a purpose build office completed in 1987 for the HM Inland Revenue as was) is available for sale.
- 6.6 This office is located more centrally within Buckie within the town centre adjacent to heavily used shopping areas and the largest public parking area in the town. It offers improved visibility and accessibility to the Local Policing Team by the Buckie community and those visiting from the outlying catchment area. The location is also on the primary pedestrian route to the south and south east of the town where the largest population numbers reside.
- 6.7 Being more centrally located, it is ideally placed to deter antisocial behaviour and retail crime and offers enhanced reassurance to the residential and business communities. It is therefore an optimum location from which to deliver a high quality policing service.
- 6.8 The property while being in generally good order throughout requires to be refurbished to provide the full range of accommodation needed for an LPT Inspector's office, Sergeants office, muster room, body armour/storage room, canteen, ladies and gents changing/showers/toilets and interview facilities. It also has potential to incorporate meeting and training rooms, expanding divisional capacity in this regard which is currently limited and restricted to Elgin. When engaging with partners, such facilities will undoubtedly present a more professional image of Grampian Police moving to a Single Force.
- 6.9 There is sufficient space to allow for future expansion and relocation of Police resources from neighbouring areas in Moray and also opportunities to enhance working relationships with partners from Moray Council by having key personnel co-located within the building.
- 6.10 Grampian Fire and Rescue Service are located immediately next door to Moray House.
- 6.11 The estimated cost of the refurbishing the to provide the accommodation, as detailed in 6.8. is £100,000.

6. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

Chief Constable
01 June 2012