

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION**

**REPORT TO**            **THE EXECUTIVE**  
**DATE**                 **22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2006**  
**SUBJECT**            **LONDON ROAD FIRE STATION**  
**REPORT OF**         **THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Executive on the outcome of the consultation exercise on the development and regeneration principles for the London Road Fire Station, to report the findings of the structural report commissioned by the building's owners and to update the Executive on the progress in securing the redevelopment of the London Road Fire Station.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. To approve the amended Regeneration and Development Principles;
3. To request a further report from the Chief Executive on progress with securing the redevelopment of the London Road Fire Station.

**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET**

None at present.

**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET**

None at present.

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## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Reports to the Executive, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2006 'London Road Fire Station' and 26<sup>th</sup> July 2006 'London Road Fire Station'.

## **WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards with particular implications for City Centre.

<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR:</b>	<b>ANTI-POVERTY</b>	<b>No</b>
	<b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Executive received a report in July 2006 detailing a set of proposed development and regeneration principles for the London Road Fire Station. It was resolved to issue these draft principles for consultation and a further report was requested from the Chief Executive on the outcome of this exercise and on progress with securing the redevelopment of the Fire Station building.

## **2.0 Development and Regeneration Principles**

- 2.1 The draft principles were issued for consultation to 25 key stakeholders including the building owner, neighbouring landowners, the Piccadilly Partnership and English Heritage amongst others. We received 12 responses, which varied widely in their content.
- 2.2 The respondents were overwhelmingly in support of the Council's desire to secure the sustainable redevelopment of the former Fire Station building. Two themes emerged from the comments. Firstly, there was agreement that the property must be utilised for a mix of uses, however the draft principles stated it would not be advantageous to duplicate or replicate existing uses in the area. A number of respondents felt that this may be too restrictive. The Regeneration and Development Principles have been amended to respond to this point and the need to deliver a commercially viable scheme. Secondly, there was concern that insufficient attention had been given to ensuring quality pedestrian access to the site. Given that any future use will aim to attract more people to the site, the City Council and its partners will make every effort to ensure that the site is more effectively connected to the wider area as development proposals for the Fire Station are progressed.
- 2.3 A revised set of principles are enclosed for the Executive's formal endorsement.

## **3.0 Update on the condition of the building**

- 3.1 The Council now has a more detailed understanding of the condition of the building. Officers believe that a programme of works to waterproof the building and protect it from further deterioration is likely to be necessary in the short term. However no firm view can be formed until a site visit has occurred. A joint site visit is the next critical step in developing a strategy to secure the building in the short term and in ensuring that an appropriate end use is delivered. Officers are now prioritising this as a milestone. Given the importance of this issue the City Council will take every step available to progress this matter.

- 3.2 The building owners have also commissioned a report on the architectural and historical significance of the building and have agreed to provide the Council with a copy of this report once this is completed.

#### **4.0 Partnership Development Update**

- 4.1 The Chief Executive has positively encouraged the Piccadilly Partnership to meet with Britannia Hotels to explore the potential for the two bodies to work together to scrutinise and develop the Piccadilly Partnership's original proposals for the future of the building, reported to the Executive in February 2006.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Piccadilly Partnership has been in dialogue with Britannia Hotels regarding their proposals. Meetings have taken place between the two parties to work through the detail of the Partnership's proposals and business plan and to concentrate on the Events and Music Venue elements. The Chair of the Piccadilly Partnership has informed the Council that he feels these meetings are progressing in a positive manner and that the potential for a strong partnership exists.
- 4.3 The Chief Executive will continue to encourage the Piccadilly Partnership and Britannia Hotels to work together to develop these proposals. A point will inevitably be reached at which both parties will need to make an assessment of whether they are willing to engage in a formal partnership arrangement to jointly develop proposals for the long-term redevelopment of the Fire Station in order to provide clarity to the City Council on the proposed way forward. The Chief Executive will report back to the Executive on progress with these discussions in due course.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The response to the Regeneration and Development Principles was very positive, demonstrating a high level of support for the priority that the Council has placed on securing the comprehensive redevelopment of the former Fire Station building. The comments received have been reviewed and incorporated, where appropriate, into an amended version of the development and regeneration principles for the former Fire Station Building. These provide a strong framework to help inform and shape any proposals for the building, recognising its pivotal position in the Piccadilly area, and its unique architectural and historical heritage.
- 5.2 The Council have asked Britannia Hotels and their planning associates to provide a timetable detailing when works to prevent deterioration will be completed. The Council have also requested an alternative date for the site visit. If these are not forthcoming within a reasonable timescale, the Council will use available powers to gain access to the building and have the necessary works carried out.

5.3 Work continues on securing the redevelopment of the London Road Fire Station and engaging with the building's owner. The Piccadilly Partnership has continued to meet with Britannia Hotels and this has been a positive dialogue, which the Council hopes will continue. The Chief Executive will report on progress with these discussions in due course.

## **6.0 Implications for Key Council Policies**

**6.1 Equal Opportunities:** the redeveloped building should provide barrier free access provision.

**6.3 Environment:** this Grade II\* listed building is in key location opposite Piccadilly Railway Station, which provides visitors with a first impression of the City. The high quality re-development on this building will secure its proper preservation and significantly contribute to raising the profile of the wider Piccadilly area.

**6.4 Employment:** this site offers opportunities for new job creation.