

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee

**Date of Committee** 26 September 2007

**Report Title** Nuneaton and Bedworth County Highways Area Office and Depot Accommodation

**Summary** The report sets out the current position and actions being taken to establish a permanent County Highways Area Office and Depot within the Nuneaton and Bedworth area.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** Yes/No

**Background Papers** None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** *Details to be specified*

- Other Committees  .....
- Local Member(s)  .....  
(With brief comments, if appropriate)
- Other Elected Members  .....
- Cabinet Member  .....  
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  I Marriott, B Jukes – comments incorporated.
- Finance  .....
- Other Chief Officers  .....

- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION**                      **YES/NO**      *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :**

*Details to be specified*

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

**Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee -  
26 September 2007**

**Nuneaton and Bedworth County Highways Area Office and  
Depot Accommodation**

**Report of the Strategic Director for  
Environment and Economy**

**Recommendation**

That Committee endorses the actions being taken to relocate the Area Office at Junction 3 of the M6, and to develop a works depot at this site.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 At the termination of the Highways Agency Agreement with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) at the end of March 2003 agreements were drawn up with the Borough Council for County Highways to continue using the accommodation that had previously been used. This consisted of office accommodation in the Town Hall, Nuneaton, for use by the Area Team, together with areas of the Borough Council's St Mary's Road Depot, including a compound, salt storage area and vehicle parking areas for operational use.
- 1.2 In April 2006 notice was given by the Borough Council to vacate the office accommodation in the Town Hall by the end of July that year, and the Area Team was moved to Coleshill Depot making use of a meeting room and vacant office space. Whilst the location does enable closer working with the partnering contractors managers, who are based at Coleshill, there are some operational difficulties in having the base for the Area Surveyors remote from the area they serve.
- 1.3 Whilst the current agreement for the use of the areas occupied in the Borough Council's St Mary's Road Depot has provision for 12 months notice of termination, the future of the space at the Borough Council is not guaranteed, although the Borough have said they will keep the County informed of any proposal that may affect the County Highways operations there.
- 1.4 Ideally the best option is for a combined Area Office, Works Depot and winter operation base to be co-located at one site within the Nuneaton and Bedworth area.

## **2. Alternative Locations**

- 2.1 There are a number of important criteria that would be applicable for a suitable site:-
- (i) Access to a primary route that easily links into the highway network throughout the whole area should be available, and as far as reasonably possible should not be restricted by regular traffic congestion.
  - (ii) The size of the site should be sufficient to accommodate all the activities concerned, but at the same time needs to be sufficiently compact for safe and efficient use.
  - (iii) The site is able to be developed to include a covered salt storage area, with all appropriate consents (planning, environmental etc).
  - (iv) Activities such as emergency response and winter gritting can be carried out without any restriction through-out the day or night, i.e. not close to residential properties.
  - (v) A site that is held by the County Council as freehold in order to avoid potential restrictions on usage.

## **3. Suitable Sites**

- 3.1 A number of alternative sites have been explored. Some of these were listed in the confidential briefing to Members in January this year. Since then a further six sites have been investigated.
- 3.2 Of all the sites investigated only one, at Junction 3 of the M6, with the A444, appears likely to meet the criteria. This site has historically been used for highway purposes. Law and Governance are checking that the land is in County Council ownership and whether there are any potential constraints/costs to its use and availability.
- 3.3 In developing the site there are some issues to be resolved. These include:-
- (i) Access arrangements to the site.
  - (ii) Access arrangements for maintaining the motorway structure and drainage.
  - (iii) Ensuring the depot lighting does not impinge on the motorway traffic.
  - (iv) Pollution and amenity protection.
- 3.4 Initial discussions with the Highways Agency indicate that all of their concerns can be satisfied.
- 3.5 As the site has been used as a depot in the past it has the advantage of being well screened by semi-mature and mature vegetation.

3.6 Only minor alterations are expected to be required to the existing access arrangements.

#### **4. Timescales**

4.1 Once a decision is made to develop a site the timescale to obtain all necessary consents (planning, environmental etc), design, build and transfer operations is anticipated to be between 12 – 18 months.

4.2 In view of this length of time, the proposal is to establish the Area Office on site in advance of other development. It is felt that this can be achieved within 3 months of funding approval.

#### **5. Funding**

5.1 The Area Office operation at Coleshill, together with the Works Depot and winter operations at NBBC's St Mary's Road are currently met from the County Highways maintenance revenue budget.

5.2 The development of a permanent, co-located Area Office, works and winter operation would require approval of capital funding.

#### **6. Recommendation**

6.1 That Committee endorses the actions being taken to relocate the Area Office at Junction 3 of the M6, and to develop a works depot at this site.

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19 September 2007