

# NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

23 July 2003

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## HOME OFFICE PREMISES IMPROVEMENT FUND

### Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk, Treasurer and Architect and Technical Advisor

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#### **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Police Authority that Northumbria Police may submit two bids to the Home Office in relation to the Premises Improvement Fund.

#### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In August 2002, the Home Office notified police authorities that a £20 million Premises Improvement Fund had been established with the aim of modernising the Police Estate in order to improve the working conditions of police officers. In October 2002 the Police Authority authorised Northumbria Police to submit two bids to the Home Office for funding from the Premises Improvement Fund (minute 130 refers). Northumbria Police were successful with only one bid (the conversion of non-operational space into office accommodation) and a grant of £500,000 was subsequently received from the Home Office.
- 2.2 In May 2003 the Home Office informed Police Authorities that a second Premises Improvement Fund had been set up and Authorities were again invited to submit up to two bids for a capital grant from this scheme.
- 2.3 Some of the key features of the bidding guidance are:
- Each bid may be for a maximum of £0.5 million.
  - Police Authorities will need to at least match any Premises Improvement Fund grant from their own resources.
  - Each bid may cover one development or a number of smaller initiatives.
  - The primary objective of each bid must be to improve the working conditions of police officers.
  - Expenditure must be committed by the end of 2003/04 and must be spent by 31 March 2005.
- Bids must be submitted by 31 July 2003.

- 2.4 In view of the short timescales of the bid, and the lengthy consultation required, the bidding guidance allows police forces to submit bids on behalf of police authorities, subject to formal approval at the next Police Authority meeting.
- 2.5 The Northumbria Police Estates Strategy previously reported to the Authority (minute 223 refers) is still under review but has been considered in identifying suitable projects for the Premises Improvement Fund bids.

### **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 It is proposed that Northumbria Police will submit two bids to the Home Office for funding from the Premises Improvement Fund. These bids are still under consideration and will be discussed and agreed by the Chief Constable, the Chairman of the Police Authority and the Treasurer.
- 3.2 The two bids presently being finalised for submission are summarised as follows:

#### **Bid 1 - Provision of a new building to accommodate all Crime Teams within one facility.**

- The project will provide a new purpose built facility that will accommodate all three Northumbria Police Crime Teams and will be sited in a central location, close to a major arterial road network.
- The objective of the project is to increase operational efficiency by centralising the Crime Teams and drawing resources together to produce more efficient and better co-ordinated teams whilst also benefiting from greater economies of scale. This will be achieved by providing a facility which will contribute to the modernisation of the Police Estate and which will also improve the working conditions of Police Officers by providing purpose built accommodation, with optimum heating and lighting and, ergonomically designed work stations.
- The centralised facility would be the first building arising from the Northumbria Police Estates Strategy and would result in the freeing up of vital space in other parts of the Estate.

#### **Bid 2 – The provision of shower and changing facilities at six police stations**

- The project will provide refurbished or new locker facilities, showers and Police Support Unit equipment stores and drying rooms at the following police stations: Sunderland City, Newcastle East, Newcastle North, Tynemouth, South Tyneside and Sunderland West.
- The objective of the project is to improve the working conditions of police officers by ensuring that all operational police officers have adequate facilities to store their equipment securely and safely and also to ensure that all operational police officers have access to shower and changing facilities to an appropriate standard of hygiene, comfort and privacy.

### **4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Nil.

## **5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Nil.

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There is no provision within the Police Authority's capital programme for either of these schemes.

6.2 As the content of the bids is still under consideration, the estimated costs have not yet been finalised. This work remains on going in conjunction with the Clerk (Estates) and the Treasurer.

6.3 The Treasurer confirms that there are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Police Authority is requested to:

7.1 Approve that bids may be submitted to the Home Office by 31 July 2003 for funding from the Premises Improvement Fund subject to consultation and agreement with the Chief Constable and appropriate members of the Authority..

7.2 Receive further reports upon the submission of the final bids and once the outcome of the bids are known.

7.3 Note the potential impact on the capital programme if either or both of the bids are successful.