

Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Director of Prevention and Assets

Property Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update for Members on the current property programme.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the property update and progress is noted.

Background

2. Due to the number of property projects that are now moving forward and the significant expenditure that will be incurred, the Policy and Resources Committee will be provided with regular updates on progress.

Budgets

3. Recent reports to the Committee have referenced the UK construction tender price index, and the associated inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector. Taking this into account the Treasurer is building in contingency funds in anticipation of our current capital build programme. Members will be updated as the projects develop, with particular regard to the largest projects, notably Redditch and Hereford fire station builds.

Property Update

4. **Broadway Fire Station:** A separate paper concerning Broadway Fire Station has been prepared for Members. A contractor has been selected, and we are now finalising the contract with a view to work commencing on-site in October/November.
5. **Redditch Fire Station:** The replacement of Redditch Fire Station has been part of the Authority's approved capital programme for several years. In collaboration with West Mercia Police, the Service has developed plans to provide a joint Fire and Police facility, building upon the concept of the Bromsgrove joint Fire-Police station.
6. The property update to Policy and Resources Committee Members in May 2022 noted that a detailed planning application was submitted on the 17th December 2021 to the local authority. Interviews were held with four potential contractors in January via a construction procurement framework, and the selected contractor is currently working with the design team to develop the detailed

designs and specifications, and prepare final project costs. Members were briefed at the June Fire Authority meeting that planning permission had been approved on the 8th June 2022 by Redditch Borough Council.

7. **Hereford Fire Station:** Following approval to progress the redevelopment of Hereford Fire Station at St Owen Street, a high-level feasibility options appraisal of the existing fire station site has been completed, along with a number of surveys of the site. The preferred option proposes a new four bay fire station with associated accommodation, improving access and egress from the site and enhancing car parking, rebuilt on the current site.
8. It was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in May that architects had been selected following a tender process, and have commenced the next design stage to enable a planning application to be submitted to the local authority within six months. Final surveys and assessments have been completed during August, and a formal planning application will be submitted in September. Staff at the site have already been extensively consulted and as the planning application progresses staff will continue to be engaged, as well as ensuring that all other appropriate local stakeholders are briefed on the proposals.
9. **North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility:** At the last Policy and Resources Committee it was reported that architects had been selected via a tender process to progress the project to planning. This has included consultation with staff and the completion of additional surveys on-site, together with a full building survey of the existing Police station. The Police and Crime Commissioner has given provisional agreement in writing to permit the use of the site and a legal agreement is currently being developed. Design proposals are progressing, although due to existing site services and discussions with West Mercia Police, the proposed layouts have been amended slightly. The previous update stated that a planning application would be prepared within six months, and the design team are eager to submit in late October.
10. **Relocation of Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station:** The architects who completed the Wyre Forest scheme have visited the existing Training Centre in Droitwich and met with the centre managers to commence initial scoping works, and formulate accommodation schedules for the proposed requirements of a new facility. A number of layout options have been received, and comments returned. The design team are now preparing final spatial layouts for further comment. We will update the Policy and Resources Committee on progress as final options are determined.
11. **Planned and reactive property maintenance:** General maintenance and building works continue across the Service's estate. Notably, the significant refurbishment of Pershore, Ledbury and Leominster fire stations has now been completed. A proposed design for a front extension and refurbishment of Leintwardine Fire Station has been progressed, and consultation with local residents will be carried out in September. The contract for routine repair and maintenance works has recently been re-tendered and has been awarded to CBRE, who are a major property services company.

Site Disposals

Former Kidderminster Fire Station

12. As reported at the last Policy and Resources Committee meeting, the previously agreed sale of the site is no longer proceeding. Officers are now arranging for a ground investigation survey to be undertaken in order to provide greater certainty to prospective purchasers and the site will then be re-marketed.

Conclusion

13. The property, development and maintenance programme is extensive and complex, but is moving at pace. Members will need to be mindful of the volatile and changing construction industry, combined with rapidly increasing costs of materials. Officers are progressing all property related matters as quickly as resources permit in order to mitigate these costs wherever possible.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).	Note reference to the UK construction tender price index, and the associated inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Details underpin a number of key property priorities for the Authority.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).	None.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).	None.