

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. The Fire Authority entered into an agreement for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to deliver our property management functions from 1st April 2021. This agreement is now well established and delivering against our planned property programme.

Budgets

3. Recent reports to the Policy and Resources 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. We will update Members as projects develop, notably Broadway, Redditch and Hereford fire station builds.

Property Update

4. **Broadway Fire Station:** Broadway is a single fire engine on-call station. It has been recognised for some time as being in a very poor state of repair and lacking the facilities necessary for a modern fire station. The existing site is constrained but, following several unsuccessful attempts to identify a suitable alternative location, the Fire Authority gave approval for the redevelopment of a new station on the existing site.
5. A detailed planning application was submitted in May 2021, and planning approval has now been granted by the local authority. The project team advertised the approved plans and detailed designs via the Bluelight procurement portal. Evaluation of tenders and interviews with prospective contractors took place in January, and a preferred contractor has been selected. Detailed costs are currently being reviewed, and a construction programme is being developed.

6. **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.
7. The property update to the Policy and Resources Committee in May 2022 noted that a detailed planning application was submitted on the 17th December 2021 to the local authority, these proposals will be considered by Redditch Borough Council at planning committee on the 8th June 2022. Interviews were completed with four potential contractors in January via a construction procurement framework, and a preferred contractor is currently working with the design team to develop the detailed designs and specifications, as we await a decision on the submitted application. Due to some environmental issues found on the site it is likely this project will be delayed by up to nine months.
8. **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.
9. It was reported to Committee in May that following a tender process architects have been selected, and have commenced the next design stage to enable a detailed planning application to be submitted to the local authority in September 2022. Their work includes consultation with staff, and the appointment of specialist consultants where required.
10. **North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility (STF):** At the last Policy & Resources Committee it was reported that architects have been selected to progress the project feasibility plans. Their work includes consultation with staff and the completion of additional surveys on-site to enable a full planning application submission to the local authority in September for both the STF and proposals to relocate the fire station to the same site.
11. **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. This work will continue throughout this year and we will update the Authority on progress and feasibility options.
12. **Planned and reactive property maintenance:** General maintenance and building works continue across the Service's estate. Notably, refurbishment of Tenbury Wells, Whitchurch and Fownhope fire stations have been completed. Other upgrades to Pershore, Ledbury and Leominster fire stations are on-going. The estates team are currently planning upgrades and refurbishment at Kingsland, Eardisley, Ewyas Harold, and Ross-on-Wye fire stations this year. Architectural designs are progressing for a proposed extension at

Leintwardine fire station, and options are being considered for refurbishment / extension at Bromyard fire station.

13. 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

Windsor Street, Bromsgrove

14. This is the site of the former Bromsgrove Fire Station which has been vacant since the new joint Police/Fire Station was opened in 2014. The site is complex in that the building adjoins the former County Council library and the buildings overlap. We previously reported that a sale with Bromsgrove District Council was being negotiated, and can now confirm that a sale was completed on the 31st March 2022.

Former Bewdley Fire Station

15. Contracts were exchanged in August 2020, subject to planning permission for a mixed retail and residential use. We can now report that the sale was completed in February 2022.

Former Kidderminster Fire Station

16. We previously reported that the Authority has accepted an unconditional cash offer for the site. Despite the purchaser's initial commitment to complete the transaction quickly, contracts have still not yet been exchanged. It now looks unlikely that sale will proceed in its current form and officers are taking further advice with regard to the possible remarketing of the site.

Former Stourport Fire Station

17. The former fire station is adjacent to the County Buildings which are due to become vacant later this year. We previously reported that discussions with the County Council regarding the possibility of them purchasing the site were on-going. We can report that a sale was completed in March 2022, and the site has now been handed over.

Conclusion

18. The Fire Authority entered into an agreement for the PCC to deliver our property management functions from 1st April 2021, this is well established and delivering against our property programme.
19. There are currently four new build schemes being planned / developed, including; Broadway Fire Station, Redditch Fire Station, Hereford Fire Station, and a Strategic Training Facility in north Herefordshire. Planned and reactive property maintenance continues across the Service's estate. Site disposal of the former fire station sites at Windsor Street Bromsgrove, Bewdley, and

Stourport have been completed, and Kidderminster continues to be progressed.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).	Noted increases 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.