

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

Property Update

Purpose of report

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

Recommendation

It is recommended that the property update and progress of the capital build programme and property maintenance is noted at:

- i) Broadway Fire Station;*
- ii) Redditch Fire Station;*
- iii) Hereford Fire Station;*
- iv) North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility;*
- v) Relocation of Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station; and*
- vi) Planned and reactive property maintenance.*

Background

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

Budgets

3. Previous 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 which are still to be tendered, notably Hereford Fire Station and the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility builds.

Property Update

4. **Broadway Fire Station:** Construction work was completed a month earlier than programme, in late December, and practical completion agreed with the Service. During January 2024 fixtures and fittings, and ICT equipment has been installed, and the fire crew has occupied the new fire station. Officers are now liaising with the local authority to sign-off set planning conditions, and will begin to plan for an official opening later this year.

5. **Redditch Fire Station:** Since the last update in November, construction work is progressing at speed, with the main structure now complete, and internal fit-out well underway. The project is still on target to complete within the scheduled 86-week programme, with a practical completion in late October.
6. **Hereford Fire Station:** It was reported at the Committee meeting in November 2023 that a contractor had been selected and that they were working with the design team to develop the detailed designs and specifications, enabling a final tender sum to be presented. Since the last update additional ground contamination surveys were required, which has delayed the design details being finalised, which are now due in late February.
7. The last update to Committee stated that alternative sites were being identified as potential temporary locations for the fire station during the proposed construction works at St Owen Street, alongside the likely enabling works and associated costs at each. An alternative temporary site has now been agreed, and contracts signed in January for an industrial building at Mortimer Road, Hereford. Designs for temporary accommodation have commenced, and planning advice sought regarding a change of use application, and for the temporary radio antenna requirement at the site.
8. **North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility:** At the last Policy and Resources Committee meeting it was reported that a full planning application was submitted to Herefordshire Council on the 20th December 2022, and was still pending a decision.
9. During the course of the application the Environment Agency requested further information in relation to site flood risk. Following extensive discussions an updated flood risk assessment and additional modelling was submitted to Herefordshire Council. During this period a tender process via a construction procurement framework to identify a suitable contractor to build the training facility was commenced.
10. Since the last update paper formal planning permission has been received, and detailed design work is now progressing to enable final costs to be established for the proposed project.
11. **Relocation of Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station:** The last property update confirmed that a number of proposed layout options had been provided by the architects who completed the previous Wyre Forest fire station development, and these had been reviewed by the DCFO and training centre managers. Meetings are progressing to develop these designs and reports prepared, prior to a planning application being submitted to Wyre Forest District Council.
12. **Planned and reactive property maintenance:** General maintenance and building works continue across the Service's estate.

Site Disposals

13. **Former Kidderminster Fire Station:** As set out in the last property update, Officers arranged for a ground investigation survey to be undertaken in order to provide greater certainty to prospective purchasers. Survey work has been carried out and the issued report has now been reviewed. The report identifies the need for additional intrusive investigation and recommends three options. However, these are being discussed in line with the current marketing strategy, to ensure appropriate information is available aligned to any future site use.

Conclusion

14. The property, development and maintenance programme is extensive and complex, but continues to move at pace. Members should be aware 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 & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics).	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.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).	None.