

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority
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Review of Service Headquarters Use (Project P143)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Fire Authority on the review Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is actively undertaking in relation to Service Headquarters located at Hinchingsbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon, PE29 2NA.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Authority is asked to note the content of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 Service Headquarters comprises of a three-storey house with small basement area constructed in 1892. This was extended in 1985 and a further extension to the same block took place in 1995. These buildings sit within a conservation area.
- 3.2 The buildings are made up of various individual and shared office spaces, three meeting rooms, a reception area, kitchen, dining room, toilets and a dedicated access-controlled control suite with its own offices, training room, kitchen area, toilets and dormitories. There is also an ICT plant room which houses ICT infrastructure.
- 3.3 Externally, there are car parking facilities for 90 vehicles inclusive of two electric vehicle charging points and two disabled spaces, which are accessed through an access-controlled barrier. Outside areas are monitored by CCTV and include a smoking shelter (also utilised by the Constabulary), a sheltered area for pedal bike storage, a storage garage and gardens.
- 3.4 All trees on site are the subject of a preservation order.

4. Current Utilisation

- 4.1 There are currently 150 staff members whose contracted base location is Service Headquarters. This figure is made up of staff from 20 different departments.
- 4.2 Service Headquarters has a dedicated reception area, which is operated by the Business Support Group, to welcome visitors. The group also organise post which comes into the building and triage non-emergency calls received from the community.
- 4.3 The control suite is occupied by 26% of the workforce contracted to work from that location; they work in shifts so it can be operated 24/7.
- 4.4 With a section of the building dedicated for use as a control suite, there are measures instructed by the National Protective Security Authority around security, resilience and safety that are currently implemented at Service Headquarters in line with our criticality rating.
- 4.5 The remainder of the buildings on site are utilised during the core working hours of 0800 to 1800, Monday to Friday.
- 4.6 The ICT plant room is appropriate in size for the equipment currently housed there. It also houses the critical control suite infrastructure. This room requires air conditioning and a fire suppression system.
- 4.7 Within the next three years, there is a desire to reduce physical file storage housed on site.
- 4.8 ICT is a shared service between Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. As a result of this, there is a direct link between both organisations datacentres. In the event of failure, each Service is configured to provide business continuity arrangements for the other.
- 4.9 Power capabilities across the site are almost at capacity. If the estate requirements increase any further at the existing site, the circuits will struggle to accommodate such growth and could put other systems in jeopardy.
- 4.10 Service Headquarters also has diversly routed Virgin Media and BT cables to site. These provide the site with resilient lines for incoming 999 calls and a network for ICT use.
- 4.11 Data obtained from our access control system provides an overview of the differing levels of footfall the building experienced pre, during and post pandemic. The data has been extracted from 6 January 2020 to 31 August 2023. These figures indicate that there was a clear drop in individuals working from site during pandemic months however post pandemic there remains a steady use of the site. (Appendix 1 refers).
- 4.12 The site also houses three meeting rooms, one of which is prioritised for use as the Major Incident Command Assist (MICA) when needs arise. These rooms are used on a regular basis by departments based on and off site to conduct

meetings, as well as emergency services colleagues including Police, Ambulance, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.

5. Sustainability

- 5.1 The energy performance operational rating of the site is currently an F (126-150). For a building of the same nature, it is expected to rate between D and E for energy efficiency. To improve this rating, it is anticipated that, at a minimum, boilers would need replacing and carbonisation reduction works should be introduced. The forecasted costs of this can be found in the table at Paragraph 6.4 below.
- 5.2 It has been identified that Service Headquarters is the worst performing property in our estate from a carbon emissions perspective. If there is a clear drive to become net zero, the building would require substantial works to be completed.

6. Financials

- 6.1 The utilities spend on this building for the 2022/23 financial year was £90,421.
- 6.2 Maintaining the site annually (including window cleaning, ground maintenance and the servicing of ICT plant room equipment) is £14,050.
- 6.3 Business rates for the building have been reassessed over the last three years which has led to a reduction on the rateable value however despite this, rates continue to remain high for the building. Business rates for the last three years were;
- 2023/24 - £66,048
 - 2022/23 - £84,432
 - 2021/22 - £84,432
- 6.4 Costs, to enable the addressing of concerns and issues currently identified at the site are as follows;

Category	Detail	Costs
Condition Survey 2019	Capturing aspects like re-decorating, air con, carpet tiles, lighting	£350K
Electrical	Following fixed wire report, various boards and circuits require a substantial amount of work to be compliant	£180K
Boilers	Installed in 2008. Although boilers have a longer life than average by 2028 these would need to be replaced; like for like replacement are approximately £20K each	£60K
Roof Condition	Roof although in overall acceptable condition, due to condition around control and the conference rooms should be replaced; contains asbestos	£312K
Server Room	Number of air con units running 24/7 to try and keep it ventilated	£50K

Fire Alarm	End of life and due a replacement to conform with latest regulations	£20K
Carbon Trust/ Decarbonisation Survey	Reports received by Property Team detailing breakdown of costs	£415K
Trees	Continue to require work completing to maintain the trees. In last 12 months we have spent around £20K maintaining them and conducting surveys, which must be done annually due to the volume	£20K
Asbestos	Various items of asbestos; if we were to stay in the building it would ideally need removing to limit the risk	£15k
Accessibility	Previous project completed to review adding a lift; approximate costs identified	£100K
	TOTAL	£1.522 Million

7. Next Steps

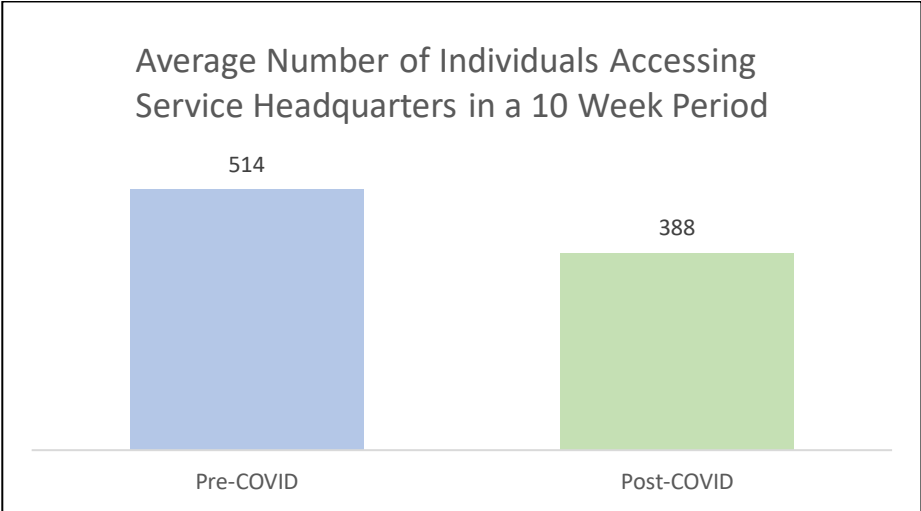
- 7.1 Project next steps will be to co-ordinate conversations, initially with those departments contractually based at Service Headquarters, to understand what their requirements look like for a future building.
- 7.2 The project will then look to understand what other physical options may be available for the Service to utilise for its headquarters requirements; all of this will culminate in the formation of an 'Options Appraisal' for review by the Project Board to decide next steps.
- 7.3 The anticipated timescale to allow for the above work to be undertaken will take us to the end of the 2024/25 financial year. Further updates will be brought to the Authority at the appropriate times.

Source documents

None

OVERVIEW OF FOOTFALL

- 1. The bar chart below shows the average number of people who accessed Service Headquarters on a weekly basis from all the data available pre-COVID (a 10-week period) and the same average for the first 10 weeks of 2023 to reflect the post-COVID average.



- 2. The below graph shows the number of people accessing Service Headquarters by month between the dates.

