

FIRE AUTHORITY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Date: Thursday, 25 March 2021

14:00hr

COVID-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic Council and Committee meetings will be held virtually for Committee members and for members of the public who wish to participate. These meetings will be held via Zoom and Microsoft Teams (for confidential or exempt items). For more information please contact the clerk for the meeting (details provided below).

AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Policy and Resources Committee Minutes - 17 December 2020 3 - 12**
- 4. Policy and Resources Committee - Action Log 13 - 14**
- 5. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes - 7 January 2021 15 - 22**

DECISIONS

6. Relocation of Huntingdon Fire Station and Training Centre 23 - 28

INFORMATION AND MONITORING

7. Policy and Resources Committee Work Programme 29 - 30

The Fire Authority Policy and Resources Committee comprises the following members:

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact

The Fire Authority is committed to open government and the public are welcome to attend from the start of the meeting.

It supports the principle of transparency and encourages filming, recording and taking photographs at meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens. These arrangements operate in accordance with a protocol which can be accessed via the following link below or made available on request.

Public speaking on the agenda items above is encouraged. Speakers must register their intention to speak by contacting the Democratic Services Officer at least three working days before the meeting.

Full details of the public speaking scheme for the Fire Authority is available at

http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/fireauthority/fa_meetings.php

Councillor Kevin Reynolds (Chairman) Councillor Mohammed Jamil and Councillor David Over Councillor Barbara Ashwood Councillor Simon Bywater Councillor Derek Giles Councillor Bill Hunt Councillor Mike Shellens and Councillor Mandy Smith

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Clerk Name: | Dawn Cave |
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**CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

Date: 17 December 2020

Time: 2pm – 3.50pm

Place: Virtual Meeting

Present: Councillors: S Bywater, W Hunt, M Jamil, D Over (Vice–Chairman), K Reynolds (Chairman), M Shellens and M Smith

Officers: Jon Anderson, Dawn Cave, Amy Jackson, Maurice Moore, Chris Strickland, Deb Thompson, and Matthew Warren

148. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Ashwood.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

150. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 23 JULY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman on the return to the office.

151. ACTION LOG

The Action Log was noted.

152. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES – 16th JULY AND 1ST OCTOBER 2020

It was resolved to note the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 July and 1 October.

A Member queried whether a number of actions had been completed from the July meeting:

Minute 84 – reports relating to the Fleet Management policies and procedures;

Minutes 85 – documents relating to the Governance Internal Audit report to be circulated to the Committee – it was confirmed that these had been circulated;

Minute 86 – documents relating to the Terms of Reference for a Member Led Review of how the Fire Authority had responded to the pandemic, and action relating to maintaining the Fire Authority meeting programme in the event of internet issues.

It was agreed that Democratic Services and Deb Thompson would check to see that all actions had been followed up appropriately. Action required.

153. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW AND DRAFT BUDGET 2021-22

The Committee considered an overview of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the proposed draft budget for 2021/22. Introducing the report, officers advised that the ongoing economic uncertainty caused by the global pandemic made it challenging to forecast with any confidence. It had been confirmed that there would be no cut to the government grant for 2021/22, but the collection rate was a major concern, as many families were struggling to pay their Council Tax as a result of the pandemic. Additionally, the budget usually included a modest assumption on housing growth, but it was unlikely that this would transpire.

Set against this background of uncertainty there were additional cost pressures, which were set out in the appendix. These included continued pandemic related expenditure such as the cleaning contract. The cleaning contract had been due for renewal, but the decision had been taken to bring the service back in house, given that there had been issues with the cleaning contract over recent years, and the additional challenges of keeping all workplaces clean and Covid secure.

It was noted that Healthshield was a quasi private medical cover, which gave members the opportunity to escalate treatment for health issues which may otherwise result in prolonged sickness e.g. musculoskeletal problems, by providing early intervention such as physical therapy.

In line with government announcements, no uplift was expected to public sector pay, with the exception of the Armed Forces.

A Member commented that the public were usually very sympathetic when consulted on the need to increase the Fire Service's budget, but asked if an uplift lower than the proposed 2% had been explored, given that many families were struggling financially. Officers acknowledged this point, and commented that the 2% increase per year would only result in an increase of £1.44 per year for the average family, but this could still be difficult for some families when combined with other pressures. However, it was essential to

set a rate that protected the Fire Service, and no increase would result in the Service having to identify savings of approximately £400K, which would inevitably require staffing cuts. Whilst management were conscious that ultimately they may need to review future staffing structures, this was only at the scenario planning stage currently, and it would not feed into the 2021/22 budgets. However, senior officers were cognisant of the risks to the public sector longer term due to the unprecedented impact of the pandemic and Brexit on the national economy. The Service's overall budget had reduced by the equivalent of £8M since Austerity measures had been introduced in 2010/11. Senior officers were keen to maintain good continuity of service going forward.

With regard to Council Tax collection, a Member asked what happened to the additional Council Tax generated from new homes which became occupied during the municipal year e.g. in May 2021. It was confirmed that when budgets and Council Tax were set, part of the equation was an estimate by authorities of their expectations for housing growth. Whilst some housing growth would come through in 2021/22, the total 1% housing growth estimated for 2020/2021 would not be realised, so zero housing growth was factored into the figures for 2021/22. In reality, there would be some housing growth in the coming year, but this would offset the shortfall in the current year. It was confirmed that if there was housing growth at the end of the municipal year above what had been estimated, precepting authorities received additional funds to meet the additional return.

Discussing Reserves, it was noted that the Fire Service currently had very strong Reserves, but significant sums were ringfenced for major projects, notably property. Reserves were also being used to recruit whole-time firefighters in a planned way, in advance of firefighters who were planning to retire, so that the new recruits had time to become established and experienced ahead of their colleagues' retirement. This was because crewing was already 'lean' so this approach ensured there was no detrimental impact on performance. In terms of minimum Reserve holdings, officers suggested that these should be around 5% of the overall budget, which equated to around £1.5M.

In discussion:

- it was confirmed that the Fire Service was benefitting from the current low cost of fuel;
- A Member suggested that recruitment would be easier going forward. Officers agreed, adding that staff turnover had been very low in the current year;
- In terms of the Minimum Wage, it was confirmed that those on low wages would have their salaries inflated, but very few staff were below the £24.5K threshold;

- One Member cautioned against “stand still” Council Tax demands, i.e. not increasing the precept, which would subsequently take many years to recover from.

It was resolved unanimously:

1. endorse the draft budget for 2021/22 including the provisional precept attached at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. endorse the proposed draft 2% increase in council tax for consultation.

154. PROPERTY UPDATE (INCLUDING COLLABORATION WITH CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY)

The Committee received an update on progress against Police and Fire collaborative property schemes.

The Fire Service was in the first year of a four year Capital Programme for land and buildings, which had been agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2020. The programme linked together a buildings condition survey, the wider strategic planning process, the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and also fed in to the Property and Asset Board. The global pandemic had had a significant impact on the way many facilities were used by staff, and an assessment of the long term impact of those changes needed to be reflected in the Programme going forward.

A number of On-Call stations had been designated “strategic stations”, owing to their location, as roaming appliances used them as bases. The upgrades that these stations had benefitted from were outlined. The importance of the Programme in delivering services and providing the best facilities for staff, whilst recognising budget constraints, was stressed.

One Member commented favourably on the works that had taken place at his local Station, and stressed the importance of delivering a good service and facilities for staff.

It was noted that in addition to the property issues, there was a wider piece of work relating to ICT systems. There were significant differences in the way the Fire Service utilised ICT systems compared to the Police, and to move forward collaboratively with the Police on ICT systems would be challenging both financially and practically.

It was clarified that a reference to high staff turnover related to a wave of operational staff retirements over recent years – few staff voluntarily left the organisation prior to retirement.

There was a discussion about cooperation and collaboration with the Police, and a Member suggested that co-operating with other public sector bodies such as the Police and Ambulance Service should be encouraged, but stressed that this was very different to merging with the Police.

On the issue of broader collaborative projects, officers advised that there had been exploratory work on the appetite for collaboration with the Police, specifically around property group collaboration. However, in discussions with a wide range of stakeholders in both organisations e.g. HR and ICT, it had become apparent that culturally the two organisations were very different in how they use their property functions, particularly with regard to ICT, and examples of these cultural differences were given. Owing to these challenges, both organisations had suggested that an options paper be brought forward in June 2021 to better understand the impact of potential changes.

It was resolved unanimously to

1. note the progress made to date;
2. approve the proposed next steps for collaboration, as set out in paragraph 6.3 of the report.

155. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020-21

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report containing an update on revenue and capital spending as at 30th November 2020.

An error was highlighted in paragraph 4.3 of the report, which should reference "... the main variations to the end of November 2020".

Members noted the following:

- The overspend for Whole Time Firefighters and Control Room Staff, and also Fire Allowances. An additional burden this year was included in Fire Allowances related to operational officers providing cover out of hours, as there had been a number of instances where additional staff have been required to cover the rota due to long term officer sickness;
- In terms of senior managers pay, a significant proportion related to former ACFO Rick Hylton, but this was offset by income;
- Increases due to Covid-19 expenditure. There were also a number of reductions due to Covid-19, due to reduced vehicle movements, energy usage, etc. In addition, BP had kindly paid for fuel at start of year;

Arising from the report:

- A Member asked if problems were still being experienced with parking outside Ely Fire Station, by parents whose children attended the nearby school, as he had contacts who could help. It was confirmed that there were no longer problems with inappropriate parking;
- A Member queried a reference to PPE purchased on behalf of partners. It was confirmed that the PPE had been purchased on behalf of the Local Resilience Forum, with a large proportion going to the NHS. Payment was still awaited for this (approximately £180K) but officers were confident that this would be paid. There was also a large quantity of hand sanitiser that had been purchased which was found not to be suitable, and this was being followed up with the supplier and manufacturer. Again, officers were confident that this would be reimbursed;
- Noting that sadly many companies in the hospitality sector were going out of business, a Member queried the likely impact on Business Rates collection? Officers advised that this was a difficult situation for the collecting authorities, but central government had indicated that they would be underwriting 75% of that lost income, although it was unclear at this stage how this would work in practice;
- A Member queried the final column on Appendix 1, "Variance Percentage". It was confirmed that this was variance against what was expected to be spent or received to date. It was noted that the budget to date needed amending as debt charges do not go through until the end of the year, and officers agreed to amend this schedule for future meetings. Action required.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the position on revenue and capital spending.

156. FIRE AUTHORITY PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT - MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report that provided an update against the Fire Authority Projects for 2020-21.

Members noted the following points relating to the major change programme in the Appendix:

- Major ICT infrastructure: the system was being upgraded to Office 365 which was Cloud based, including a document based system called Sharepoint. It was anticipated that migration would start early in the new year, but timescales were rated Amber as there was some uncertainty on how to move documents from the old into the new system;

- With regard to the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) and Mobilising Solution, the Service was working with Systel to implement a brand new emergency response system. Systel were a French company, providing systems to Fire Services all over Europe including some services in UK. Some delays had inevitably occurred due to the global pandemic and the associated travel restrictions, and currently there were difficulties with the French engineers travelling to the UK. However, the Home Office provided travel exemptions for certain employers. A three month delay was expected, but the project should be complete by July 2021;
- A Member queried the “deviation report” listed against timescales for ICCS. Officers confirmed that this was part of the process to formalise the delay in implementing the system;
- With regard to Project Lead Members it was noted that usually Type 3 projects required a member to participate, and Cllr McGuire had been the lead member for ICCS and Mobilising Solution;
- Noting the statement “revisits required for coverage testing” for P089 ESMCP (Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme), a Member asked if officers were happy they had a suitable system in place in the meantime? Officers confirmed that this was a Home Office project, and the Home Office had recently advised that this project had been delayed for six months. Work was being undertaken with the Police on testing coverage, as they were using the same communications system, and coverage was the critical part of the project. It was confirmed that the main risks of the delay sat with the Home Office, although the cost of Airwave was the Fire Service’s main risk, as the cost was higher than the new system;
- With regard to Project P126 – Huntingdon Station relocation – it was noted that the response on the Planning Application was due on 24/12/20, but since the agenda had been published, it had been confirmed that this would be delayed by around three weeks;
- With regard to P118, Fireground Radios, a Member queried the statement “Unable to Go Live until Breathing Apparatus refresh is complete as the pouches are not compatible with the current Breathing Apparatus sets – awaiting date for this completion to plan deployment of radios”, officers confirmed that they had been aware of this issue, and had taken the decision not to purchase pouches which would become obsolete once the new radios were introduced;

- P122 Training Centre review – options appraisal paper had been due to be completed by 03/12/20 – it was agreed that an update would be circulated. Action required;
- P093 Co-responding – it was confirmed that this related to working with the Ambulance Service in areas where that Service was struggling to meet response times. It was confirmed that this was still a sensitive area in terms of industrial relations, as the national position of the FBU was that firefighters should not be doing this work. However, co-responding continued at two stations, as it could not wait for national negotiations regarding pay to be resolved, and it was judged to be the right thing to do for the communities served;
- P116 Aerial replacement – a Member was pleased to note the good progress being made on this project;
- With regard to project p125 - ICU – it was confirmed that timescales had slipped due to the pandemic. The ACFO agreed to circulate revised dates. Action required;
- P131 - GIS – it was confirmed that the “Social demographic risk modeller” assessed where appliances needed to be located on the basis of demographics.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) and Mobilising System Replacement Project update at Appendix 1 to the report and the Programme Status Report, as at December 2020, attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

157. POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted that the 2021/22 dates, which had been agreed following the last Fire Authority meeting, would be added to the Work Programme. A reminder would be issued regarding the seminar before the full Fire Authority meeting in February. Action required.

A Member raised concerns regarding the Elections scheduled for May 2021, and the impact this would have as it was likely there would be many new Fire Authority Members. Officers reassured Members that there would be a full induction programme for new Members, prioritising the most critical areas.

It was unanimously resolved:

To note the Work Programme

158. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In response to a query, officers advised that whilst much of the content of the reports was not private, the legal advice that would be referred to under this item was confidential.

It was resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the agenda contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

159. PENSION UPDATE

Members considered an update on the Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS) and a recommended position to immediate detriment.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the latest position with regards to immediate detriment,
2. approve the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) Scheme Managers approach to immediate detriment (paragraph 4.6 of the report).

FIRE AUTHORITY
POLICY AND
RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

Minutes - Action Log

This is the updated action log as at 25 March 2021 and captures the actions arising from the most recent Policy and Resources Committee meetings and updates Members on the progress on compliance in delivering the necessary actions.

| MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER COMMITTEE 2020 | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|---|----------|-----------------|
| Minute No. | Report Title | Action to be taken by | Action | Comments | Status |
| 155. | REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020-21 | M Warren | A Member queried the final column on Appendix 1, "Variance Percentage". It was confirmed that this was variance against what was expected to be spent or received to date. It was noted that the budget to date needed amending as debt charges do not go through until the end of the year and Officers agreed to amend this schedule for future meetings. | | Complete |

| MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER COMMITTEE 2020 | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| <u>Minute No.</u> | <u>Report Title</u> | <u>Action to be taken by</u> | <u>Action</u> | <u>Comments</u> | <u>Status</u> |
| 156. | FIRE AUTHORITY PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT - MONITORING REPORT | J Anderson | P122 Training Centre Review – options appraisal paper had been due to be completed by 03/12/20 – it was agreed that an update would be circulated. | Verbal update to be provided at Committee | |
| | | J Anderson | With regard to Project P125 - ICU – it was confirmed that timescales had slipped due to the pandemic. The ACFO agreed to circulate revised dates. | Verbal update to be provided at Committee | |

FIRE AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: MINUTES

Date: Thursday 7 January 2021

Time: 2.00 pm – 3.10pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Present: Cambridgeshire County Councillors: I Gardener (Vice-Chairman), J Gowing, L Harford, S Kindersley, M McGuire (Chairman) and J Scutt

Peterborough City Councillor A Bond

Officers Present: Jon Anderson, Rachel Brittain, Dawn Cave, Daniel Harris, Shahin Ismail, Chris Parker, Deb Thompson, Matthew Warren, Matthew Weller

Welcoming Members, the Chairman paid tribute to Cllr Janet Goodwin, a valued Member of the Fire Authority for many years, who had sadly passed away in December. Councillors Kindersley and Scutt also paid tribute to Cllr Goodwin and passed on their condolences to her family.

98. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

99. Declarations of Interest

None.

100. Minutes – 1st October 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman when next in the office.

101. Action Log

The Action Log was noted.

102. Integrated Risk Management Plan Performance Measures

The Committee received a report setting out performance against the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) targets. The data presented covered the period up to 30th September 2020.

It was noted that performance in most areas had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly attendance times, where there had been improvements due to greater availability of On-Call firefighters and less traffic. Additionally, there had been a reduction in the numbers of both primary and secondary fires, fire casualties, the number of road traffic collisions attended and incidents requiring special services.

With regard to diversity, there had been small increases in both female and black, Asian and minority ethnic applicants and employees, but figures had remained broadly static. The most significant increase had been the increase in the number of female On-Call firefighters, from 12% to 16%.

There had been slight increase in non-domestic fires i.e. fires not in residential dwellings. The reason for this was unclear, but officers agreed to ask the Performance Team to undertake some analysis of these figures. **Action: ACFO.**

The number of Fire Safety Audits during the period had dropped dramatically due to businesses either being closed or having limited access due to the pandemic. However the Service was adapting to doing its work in a different way, giving fire safety advice virtually in most cases.

During discussion Members raised the following points:

- Noting that the reporting period was to the end of September 2020 and that the initial lockdown period effectively ended at the end of June 2020, asked if any changes were discernible in the second quarter compared to the first, when there was a full lockdown, e.g. RTCs? Officers confirmed that RTC figures dropped dramatically when the first lockdown started, and whilst they increased when first lockdown finished, figures remained well below the five year average. Officers also commented that it would be interesting to see the longer term impact e.g. as a result of more people working at home so not commuting;
- It was noted that the latest police accident data for the number of people killed and seriously injured on the county's roads was for the period ending December 2019 and was therefore not relevant to the period under consideration;
- With regard to the diversity of job applicants and employees, a Member noted that the proportion of the workforce in the 17-35 age bracket had increased in all areas except Professional Support. The Member asked what roles Professional Support covered and whether fewer younger people being recruited in this area could be a risk? Officers confirmed that Professional Support related to non-uniformed roles in areas such as human resources and finance. During the period in question, there had been significant recruitment for uniformed staff roles, which tend to be at earlier stages of individuals careers. There had not been the same level of recruitment for Professional Support roles during this period;

- A Member asked how the reduction in Fire Safety Audits impacted on residential care homes, which were a considerable risk area. It was confirmed that due to the pandemic and the vulnerable nature of residents, those audits could not be carried out. However the Service remained in regular contact with care homes and was giving regular advice on fire safety to those settings;

It was resolved unanimously to note the contents of the performance report in Appendix 1 to the report.

103. Independent Review into the Oversight of Local Audit and the Transparency of Local Authority Financial Reporting

Members considered a report on the Independent Review carried out nationally by Sir Tony Redmond and the response to that review by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG) released in December 2020 and its impact on the Fire Authority.

The Independent Review focused on the external audit function in the public sector, specifically the sustainability of the accounting and audit sector, as there have been a number of challenges over the last couple of years, especially in respect of missing the contractual deadline for sign off. The intended outcome of the review was to deliver a new framework for effective local audit and an annual financial statement which enables all stakeholders to hold local authorities to account for their performance together with a robust and effective audit reporting regime.

The following points were noted:

- The difficulties attracting larger firms in market, possibly due to the level of fees offered;
- The issues in terms of oversight: PSAA (Public Sector Audit Appointments) was the body that appoints auditors on authorities' behalf, but it was less clear who should manage and govern those auditors once they were in place;
- The issues around transparency i.e. whether the average member of the public could understand financial accounting statements, and whether attempts should be made to simplify them to make them clearer.

Commenting on the report:

- A Member observed that many of the issues in recent years, in terms of closure of accounts, resulted from recruitment difficulties experienced by auditors. Officers agreed that there was a shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced auditors, and this issue needed to be addressed. They also highlighted that the publication date for final, audited accounts was the same for local authorities as the NHS, which

meant that auditors dealing with the public sector were under a lot of pressure in a short period of time;

- A Member was concerned that the new regulatory body that was proposed might replicate the size and complexity of the Audit Commission and may just present another level of bureaucracy and additional costs. She felt that this would be unfair, especially if the root of the problem was the accounting companies' inability to recruit;
- A Member commented that the market was reducing because local government settlements had become so squeezed, and this was a broader political issue nationally. Whilst the impact of the review may not be felt initially, he feared that longer term it would have a significant impact, especially for those local authorities with complex financial arrangements;
- In terms of timescales, it was noted that it was very unlikely any of the outcomes and actions of the review would be implemented prior to the end of the 2021/22 accounts.

It was resolved unanimously to note the content of the report and in particular the elements that will directly affect the Authority (paragraph 7 of the report).

104. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority – Annual Audit Letter

The Committee received the Annual External Audit Letter for 2019/20.

Members were reminded that they had considered an update on the outcome of the appointed auditors' annual audit and audit completion report at the Fire Authority meeting in October 2020. At that stage, the main outstanding area to be resolved had related to the Pension Fund, as that work was unresolved at that time.

It was noted that the deadline for completion of the 2019/20 Accounts had been deferred until 30th November 2020 by government, due to the pandemic. Whilst the Accounts had been ready at that date, due to administrative issues, they were not actually signed until 1st December 2020, as there had been a number of adjustments to be agreed by managers.

It was noted that there was a proposed amendment to fees for the 2019/20 Audit, and this would be negotiated with the Deputy Chief Executive. This increase would comprise two elements reflecting increased workload, some of which was for this audit only i.e. a one-off, and part which would be included in an annual uplift. This would also need to be agreed by the PSAA. The final proposed amendment to fees would be reported to Committee Members.

Action: DCEO.

During the course of discussion, Members:

- Thanked the Auditors and officers for all the work undertaken;
- Observed that in terms of transparency, whilst materiality was judged to be above 2% of gross expenditure, this did mean that many items below this threshold were deemed “not material”, but were huge in layman’s terms;
- Noted that “CIES” denoted “Consolidated Income and Expenditure Statement”.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the Annual Audit Letter.

105. Managing Risks in a Changing Environment – Analysis of Fire Risk Registers

Members considered a report from the Fire Authority’s External Auditors, BDO, regarding risk management by fire and rescue services (FRSs). The report identified some persistent challenges, together with some new and emerging risk areas, particularly in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic, IT and the external environment.

The Risk Registers of 16 FRSs were included in this exercise, with 264 individual risks examined in total within those Risk Registers. Each risk was then categorised by key theme to understand those areas of greatest concern. As well as the risks highlighted, services needed to be alert to opportunities for development and service enhancement. Those officers managing the Risk Register needed to be aware of this report and determine whether the Service’s Risk Register needed to be updated in any way.

Arising from the report:

- A Member queried whether there would be any adverse impact resulting from the delay of implementation of the ESN (Emergency Services Network). Responding, Daniel Harris advised that he attended a number of police and fire service Audit Committees and this was a common concern. It was clear that the main issue was the availability and robustness of the existing system (Airwave). There were certain pieces of equipment that support the existing system that were becoming more difficult to source and this would become more of an issue the longer the delay went on. It was also noted that the costs of the ESN system had practically doubled over the last 3-4 years, so there was also a financial risk;
- A Member raised an issue about employee engagement and mental health. Given that the Service was regarded as an exemplar, he felt it was important to lead on this area and explore issues that were not standard practice at the moment. The problems in recruiting to the new mental

health and wellbeing post were a concern but he was also concerned about the longer term impact of the pandemic, both in terms of PTSD for existing employees, but also the suite of issues that might arise from the pandemic in the long term, e.g. issues with home working, and the problems faced by school children and school leavers who would be the Service's future employees. Responding, officers commented that there was value in the Service evaluating what has been done to date with regard to the pandemic, especially in terms of mental health and wellbeing. They agreed that it was vital to prepare for the future, in terms of future employees, and be cognisant of the longer term impacts of the pandemic. Some other Members supported these comments, and suggested that issues such as torpor in emergency settings could have really serious consequences;

- A Member raised the issue of succession planning: whilst acknowledging that the Service currently benefitted from outstanding leadership, this could be at risk if appropriate succession planning measures were not put in place;
- A Member queried the reference to “de-collaboration – where intended efficiency outcomes or public safety objectives are not realised” under the section on “areas of potential efficiency gains”. Daniel Harris advised that this related to some criticism by HMICFRS on some collaborations, especially with the police. It was confirmed that there had been no criticism of any Cambridgeshire collaborations with either the police or neighbouring fire services;
- A Member asked the extent of local collaboration with partners at the County Council, Environment Agency and police for flooding events, as it was vital that the fire service was joined up with partners for these events. Officers outlined the regular group meetings with partners that take place during events such as the recent flooding, and confirmed that there would be debriefing to review what had happened and what lessons could be learned to ensure that the Service was better prepared for future incidents;
- A Member observed that there had been issues during the current pandemic, especially in health settings, with PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) not fitting some individuals, especially smaller women, and she asked if that issue had been reviewed. Officers outlined the proactive measures that had been taken by the Service with regard to PPE and there had been no reports of PPE not fitting correctly. PPE provided to operational staff was supplied to fit the size and shape of each individual.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the report .

106. Key Financial Controls

The Committee received a report that focused on the key controls in Ledger Access, Policies and Reporting, Accounts Payable, Cash and Treasury Management, and Asset Management.

In terms of progress year to date, the auditor anticipated issuing an unqualified opinion at year end.

A correction was noted to the second sentence of the last paragraph of page 6 of the report, which should read “the one outstanding medium priority action related to having not documented who *has* authority to improve investments had been delegated”.

It was resolved unanimously to note the report.

107. Internal Audit Progress Report January 2021

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Progress plan for 2020/21.

Since the agenda had been published, the Deputy Chief Executive had been in touch with the auditors to defer the People Strategy Review, as that team was not fully resourced, due to the impact of both the pandemic and HMICFRS activity.

It was resolved unanimously to note the Internal Audit Progress Report.

108. Member-led Review of Best Practice Consultation with Representative Bodies – Terms of Reference.

The Committee received the Terms of Reference for the Member-led review regarding best practice consultation with representative bodies.

Presenting the report, Members noted that the Terms of Reference for this review had previously been considered by Committee, but for many reasons, the review had not started.

Members confirmed that they were happy with the Terms of Reference and for Cllr McGuire to lead the Review, with Councillor Gowing assisting. One Member suggested that it was important in terms of public perspective to identify the Committee Chairman as leading this review. It was anticipated that this work should be completed in time for the Committee meeting in April.

It was resolved to approve the Terms of Reference.

109. Member-led Review of Approach to Recruitment

The Committee received an oral update regarding the Member-led review of approach to recruitment. Again, it was noted that this review had been deferred, partly due to the events 2020 but also because Members had wanted to analyse the BAME data on previous firefighter recruitment campaigns, which was only now available.

Members acknowledged that there were some very different issues to consider as a result of the changes over the last year but agreed that as the Service was now at the beginning of another firefighter recruitment campaign, it was appropriate to work towards concluding the review in time for presentation to the Committee in April.

It was resolved to note the update.

110. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Considering the updated work programme, Members noted that virtual meetings would continue for the foreseeable future.

It was resolved to note the work programme.

Chairman

TO: Policy and Resources Committee

FROM: Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren

PRESENTING OFFICER(S): Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Matthew Warren

Telephone 01480 444619
matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk

DATE: 25 March 2021

RELOCATION OF HUNTINGDON FIRE STATION AND TRAINING CENTRE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Policy and Resources Committee on the relocation of the current fire station and training centre site based in Huntingdon to a new site at St Johns Business Park, also in Huntingdon. The report also seeks to gain approval to proceed with specific options for the site that have materialised through the planning process and the development of detailed plans for the training centre.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to;
- a) approve the proposal to invest in additional training equipment and renewable energy, noting the assumed payback period for both;
 - b) approve the additional cost for drainage on the site associated with the planning consent;
 - c) approve the investment in a commercial sprinkler system;
 - d) approve the revised plans as attached;
 - e) approve the revised budget and funding proposal for the additional cost items.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Economic** – the costs have increased from the original sum of £10.080m to £10.714m if all options suggested within the report are taken. The additional funding shortfall will be financed through borrowing not applied against the current year capital programme.

- 3.2 **Environmental** – the site is to be constructed to a good BREEAM standard. However there are cost options within the report that highlight options for additional renewable energy that will require upfront financing.

4. Background

- 4.1 In 2015, the Service presented the Authority with a proposal to relocate Service Headquarters, Huntingdon fire station and the training centre onto an alternative site at St Johns Business Park, Huntingdon. The basis for moving at the time was around rationalisation of the estate whilst also enhancing the operational training facility.
- 4.2 Subsequent to this decision and just prior to exchange of contacts with Artisan (the Developer) and St Johns in June 2016, the then Police and Crime Commissioner offered the Authority a number of potential sites on police owned land. One of the options was land at the police training facility in Monkwood. On the advice of Officers, the Authority accepted this offer in good faith and instructed them to look into the feasibility of locating a training centre on the site.
- 4.3 The Service, after initial consultation with the police around where such a facility could be located at Monkwood, proceeded through a design phase to understand if all of the organisational needs could be accommodated on the site. The Service achieved a successful planning application for this in early 2019.
- 4.4 Subsequent to this planning consent, the Constabulary presented a report to its Business Co-ordination Board on 26 March 2020 highlighting the need for the Monkwood facility to be a police only training facility.
- 4.5 On confirmation of the revised position from the Constabulary, the Chairman of the Fire Authority, in consultation with the full Fire Authority membership approved the Service Business Case to proceed with developing a new fire station and training centre on land at St John's Business Park in Huntingdon, with an approved budget of £10.080 million.

5. Progress to Date

- 5.1 Subsequent to the approval, much effort has been made in achieving a positive planning consent. The Service, through Artisan, submitted a detailed planning application in September 2020. The planning consent was expected by the end of December 2020, but was delayed until the end of January 2021, when a positive consent was received.
- 5.2 On receipt of this planning consent, the Service completed the purchase of the land which was finalised in February.
- 5.3 The project team and Developer have been working hard to ensure all conditions of planning are met and revised prices have been sought to ensure the budget reflects planning conditions and the latest operational training requirements. Revised plans are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

- 5.4 The finalised scheme was accepted by the Planning Officers week commencing 9 March 2021. This finalised scheme does come at an additional cost as itemised in the table below; an explanation for each of the items is also provided in paragraphs 5.5 to 5.9 below.

| Item | Budget £'000 | Final Contract Sum £'000 | Variance £'000 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | |
| Building and Groundworks | 6,250 | 6,600 | 350 |
| Developer / Consultant Fees | 1,266 | 1,266 | 0 |
| Land Cost | 1,214 | 1,186 | (28) |
| Training Facilities | 1,100 | 1,450 | 350 |
| Fixture and Fittings | 250 | 212 | (38) |
| | | | |
| Totals | 10,080 | 10,714 | 634 |

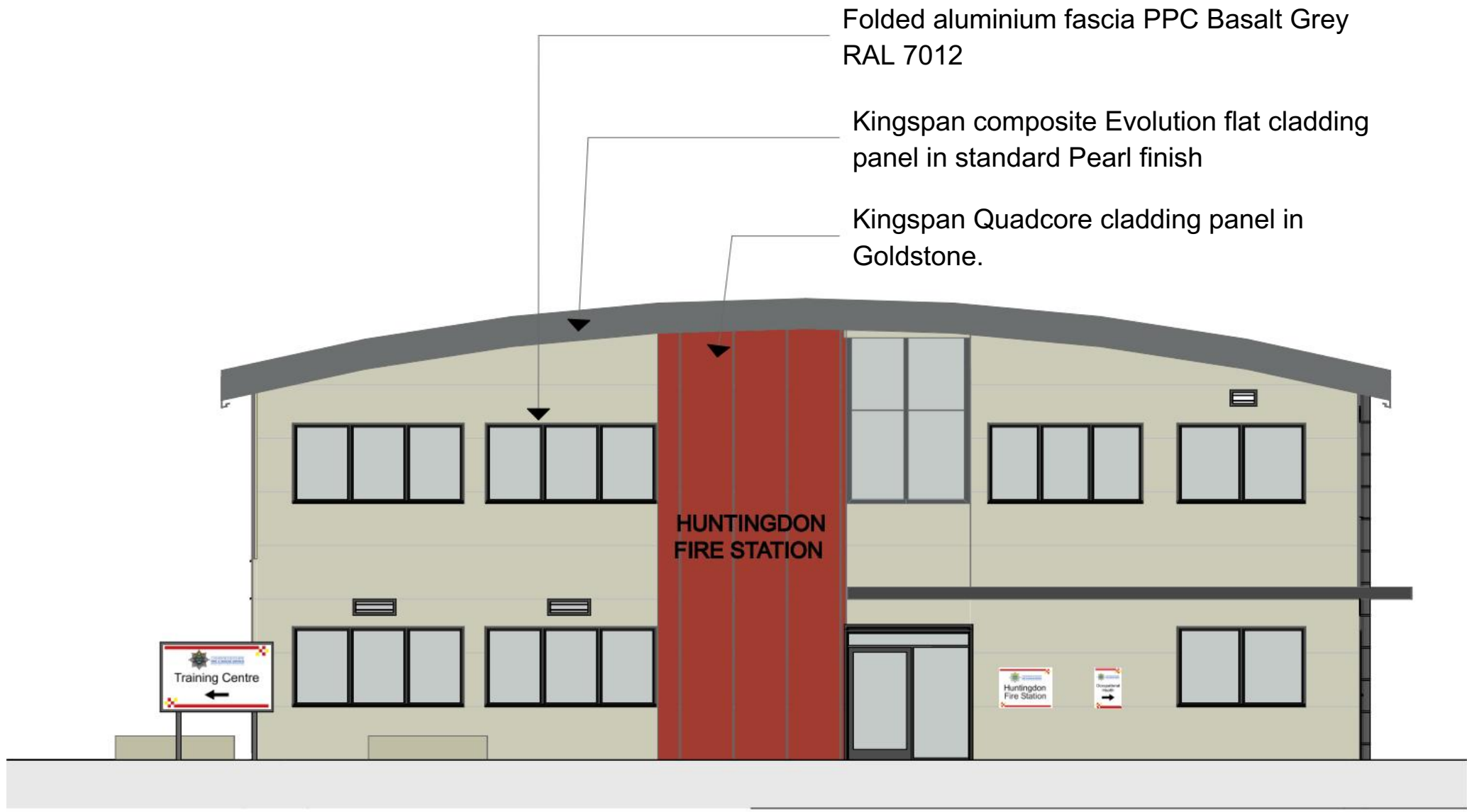
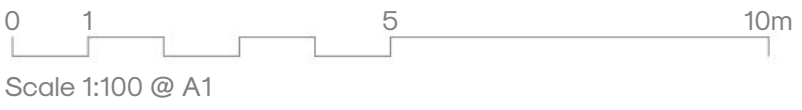
- 5.5 Building and Groundworks costs have been impacted upon by planning conditions along with cost pressures relating to building materials. The planning consent has a condition for significant drainage to be included for within the site that includes substantial holding tanks to regulate flow into the main drainage systems. The additional cost for the drainage is £260k, with an additional £51k pressure on material costs.
- 5.6 Also included within the building budget is an optional sprinkler system which is £160k. The inclusion of this is in line with the Service sprinkler strategy but not a requirement for the building from a planning perspective.
- 5.7 All of the costs have been subject to a competitive tender process and independent review by a cost consultant. The cost consultant also suggested £171k of value engineering to reduce the costs, which have all been accepted and included in the final contract sum by the Developer.
- 5.8 The main building is being constructed to a good BREEAM standard. There is the option to enhance the number of solar panels. This would cost approximately £56k, with a payback of between 5 and 9 years, dependent upon consumption. This cost is not currently included within the budget.
- 5.9 The major increase in cost relates to the fire training building. To maximise its effectiveness and provide multiple operational scenarios the building is slightly larger than originally specified and is fitted with additional liquid petroleum gas fire units. Whilst the additional equipment could be fitted after the main construction, it is recommended that it is installed as part of the original project. The additional cost is £350k. At present, we are paying £75k per annum to train our firefighters at out of county facilities. This money will be saved from the revenue budget when the site is operational.

6. Funding

- 6.1 The original budget funding was split between using the Property Development Reserve and borrowing. The 2020/21 capital programme is expected to underspend. This underspend is a result of expenditure on service vehicles being frozen in the short term to allow a full review of vehicle use that has materialised as a result of revised working practices during the (ongoing) COVID-19 pandemic. It is proposed that the additional investment required is taken from budget already agreed in 2020/21, therefore not increasing the capital financing requirement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

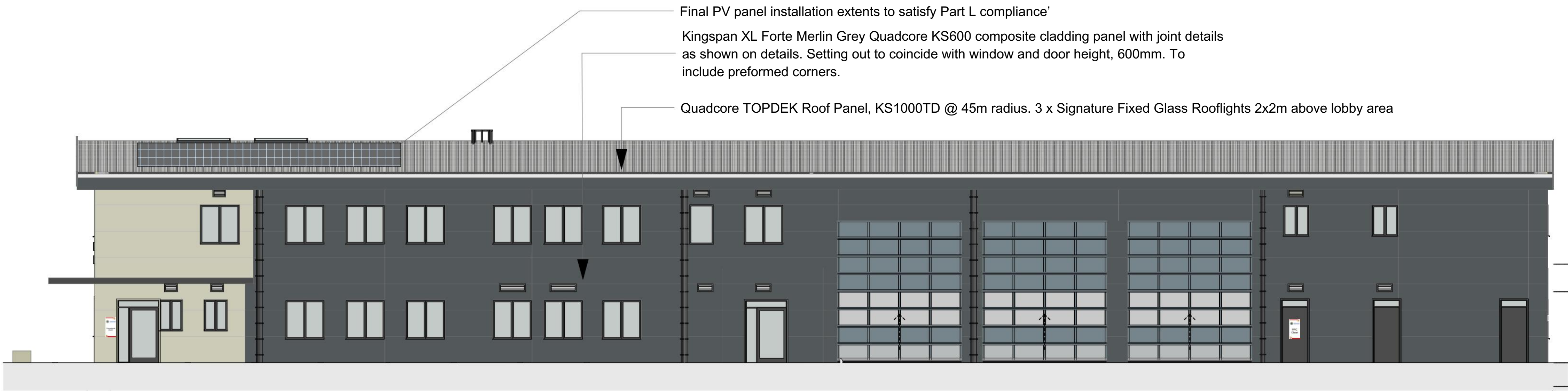
| Source Document | Location | Contact Officer |
|--|--|--|
| Appendix 1 – Proposed Fire Station Plans | Fire Service HQ Hinchingsbrooke Cottage Huntingdon | Matthew Warren 01480 444619 matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk |



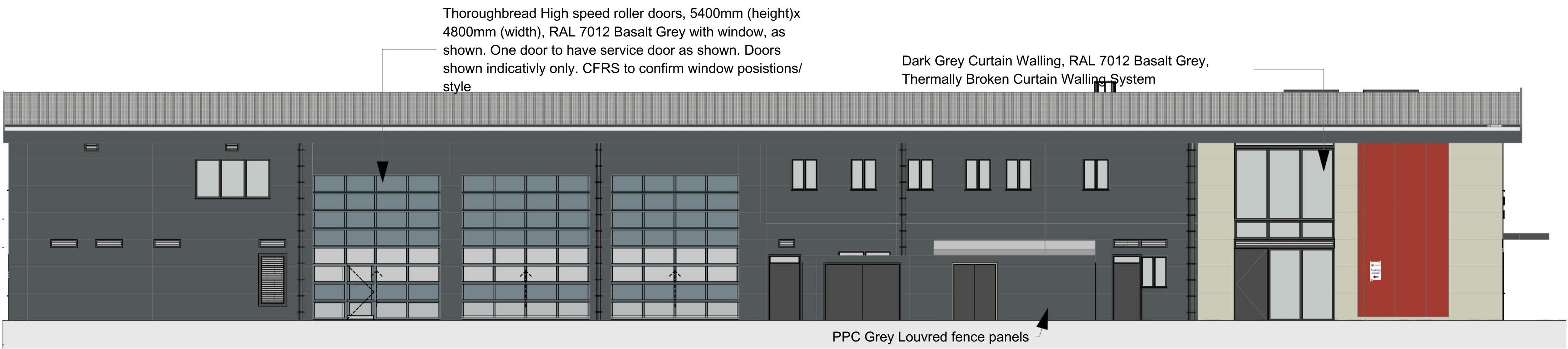
WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------|----------|
| P03C | Training Centre Sign added. | 01.02.21 |
| P03b | Draft Issue for comment | 27.01.21 |
| P03a | Draft Issue for comment | 22.01.21 |
| P02 | Planning Issue | 09.09.20 |
| P01 | Planning Issue | 13.08.20 |

| revision | note | date |
|----------|------|------|
|----------|------|------|

client
Artisan (UK) Developments Ltd

project title
Cambridgeshire Fire + Rescue + Training
St John's Park, Huntingdon
drawing title
Elevations as Proposed

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------|
| drawing status | | |
| For Comment | | |
| scale | date | |
| 1:100 @ A1 | September 2020 | |
| project number | drawing number | revision |
| 2187 | AB0801 | P03c |



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

MEETINGS 2021/22

| Date | Time | Venue |
|----------------------|------------|---------|
| 2021 | | |
| Thursday 25 March | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| Thursday 16 June | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| Thursday 15 July | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| Thursday 28 October | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| Thursday 15 December | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| 2022 | | |
| Thursday 26 January | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| Thursday 28 April | 1400 hours | Virtual |
| Thursday 23 June | 1400 hours | Virtual |

WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

| Thursday 25 March 2021 | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|----------|
| Time | Agenda Item | Member/Officer | Comments |
| 1030 | Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee Meeting 28 January 2021 | Tamar Oviatt-Ham | |
| | Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting 7 January 2021 | Tamar Oviatt-Ham | |
| | Decision Relocation of Huntingdon Fire Station and Training Centre | Deputy Chief Executive | |
| | Work Programme 2021/22 | | |
| Thursday 16 June 2021 | | | |
| Time | Agenda Item | Member/Officer | Comments |
| 1030 | Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee Meeting 25 March 2021 | Dawn Cave | |
| | Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting 15 April 2021 | Dawn Cave | |
| | Decision Election of Chairman | | |
| | Work Programme 2021/22 | | |
| | Information and Monitoring Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22 | Deputy Chief Executive | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | Strategic Risk and Opportunity Management Register – Monitoring Report | Service Transformation Manager | |
| | Fire Authority Programme Management - Monitoring Report | Service Transformation Manager | |