

TO: Policy and Resources Committee

FROM: Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) - Matthew Warren

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Property Update (including Collaboration with Cambridgeshire Constabulary)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on progress against the Capital Programme and the related collaboration between the Service and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to;
- note the progress made to date,
 - approve the proposed next steps for collaboration (paragraph 6.3).

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Political – there is now a requirement for emergency services to collaborate. The sharing of land and property assets have been identified as a key aspect of fulfilling this requirement by both the Service and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- 3.2 Economic – all improvements have been achieved within the cost envelope set by the Fire Authority. Future plans will be determined as part of the budget planning process. Failure to invest and maintain buildings would lead to much higher property costs for the Authority.
- 3.3 Social – it is known that the working environment has an impact on the health and well-being of staff. A noticeable uplift in moral has been noted at stations where improvements have been made.
- 3.4 Technological – many aspects of building mechanical and electrical fixtures have changed leading to more efficient and effective building services. These are included when stations are modernised.

- 3.5 Legal – all relevant legislative requirements are complied with as part of the process via the services of building surveyors, Building Regulations, Health and Safety, Procurement Regulations and Financial Regulations.
- 3.6 Environmental – subject to most emphasis recently from central Government. The Service recently commissioned a property survey by the Carbon Trust and has plans to incorporate the outcome into a new Environment Strategy. The property group, when making improvements at premises, has already included energy saving approaches.

4. Background

- 4.1 We are in the first year of a four year Capital Programme for land and buildings approved by the Authority in February 2020.
- 4.2 A buildings condition survey, conducted by Oakleaf, now forms part of the property planning process. The wider strategic planning process, the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), is considered and linked through the Property and Asset Board chaired by Matthew Warren. The approach taken is to consider all factors listed above in the risk assessment and work closely with stakeholders to improve our fire stations and training facilities.
- 4.3 The global pandemic has significantly changed the way many of our facilities are used by staff. The Service are seeking to better understand the impact in the long term and will be starting a project in the new year focused on property and what future requirements and usage will look like.

5. Capital Programme Investment

- 5.1 The Service has focused much of its investment over the last three years on its training facilities. As the Committee will appreciate, with a high turnover in operational firefighters and incidents reducing, the need for realistic training facilities is critical. This investment will continue with a new state of the art central facility in Huntingdon. The last three years have seen the following investment;
- 12 new drill towers at fire stations,
 - new training buildings (with critical breathing apparatus training facilities) at St Neots, Wisbech and Ely (in build).
- 5.2 The Service has identified a number of On-Call stations that are designated “strategic stations” owing to their location with regard to risk; these stations are also used as bases for the roaming pumps to ensure fire cover is maintained. They have all been subject to significant upgrade over the last three years that has included welfare facilities (with access for all), proper breathing apparatus servicing areas, updated lecture rooms with multiple data entry points, better personal protective equipment storage and redecoration throughout. The stations upgraded were; Cottenham, Littleport, Soham, Linton, Whittlesey, Wisbech, March, Chatteris, Ramsey and Sawtry. In addition, Sawston, Gamlingay and Dogsthorpe will have improvement works in 2021.
- 5.3 In addition to the work that was informed through the IRMP, maintenance works including drill yards, replacement heating systems and external repair/maintenance

at SHQ and a COVID-19 secure update at the Occupational Health Unit are ongoing.

- 5.4 The Capital Programme continues to be ambitious with plans to collaborate with the Constabulary at St Neots moving forward. Planning is still expected on the new Huntingdon Fire Station and Training Centre in December 2020. Clearly this improvement would not be possible without the support of the Authority, working closely with operational staff, effective procurement with quality contractors and our professional support services.

6. Update on the Review of Property Group Collaboration with the Constabulary

- 6.1 As reported to the Authority in October 2020, the project commenced immediately working jointly with the Constabulary property group to establish a robust business case.
- 6.2 Significant information has been gathered and multiple stakeholders across both organisations have been engaged in the project. What became apparent very quickly was that both organisations deliver the function in very different ways. Some examples of the initial findings are given below;
- CFRS use professional support services when needed but the Constabulary has dedicated members of staff within their group (we have already streamlined our group),
 - CFRS has very different outsourcing models compared to the larger in-house Constabulary group,
 - CFRS has a centralised property technician team that works across the county and we have worked hard to ensure our staff understand the service that is provided by them. In contrast the Constabulary has staff that are more tied to a location and carry out a wider range of tasks,
 - The ICT systems would need a considerable amount of work and investment to ensure they were fit for purpose and could pass data between organisations in a secure way whilst being simple for the end user.
- 6.3 Owing to these challenges, both organisations suggest creating an options paper for presentation in June 2021 as more time is required to better understand the impact of potential changes. This will likely result in more of an incremental approach to change that might include sharing posts and working practices rather than one centralised group.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document	Location	Contact Officer
Fire Authority Minutes February 2018	Hinchingbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	Matthew Warren matthew.warren@cambsfire.gov.uk 01480 444619

