

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

Item 9

27 June 2012

Review of the relocation of Winchester Fire Station

Report by the Chief Officer

Contact: Group Manager, Steve Trevethick, telephone: 07918 888 008

1 Summary

- 1.1 The new Winchester Fire Station and associated facilities has supported an increase in operational cover and community safety activity in Winchester. The building used a site already owned by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and reused two existing buildings.
- 1.2 By careful and integrated planning the building provides greater flexibility in its use and improved strategic capacity for the future. It has increased the options available when planning the response to incidents and will help with the delivery of protection related work. It has also enhanced the delivery of road safety activities at local, county, and national levels. The building has been designed to secure the maximum benefit from environmental measures.
- 1.3 This report considers the relocation project and in particular identifies the learning points which can be used to inform the construction of a new station in Basingstoke which is currently planned.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee:
 - a) endorses the improvements in service delivery, infrastructure, future capacity and increased resilience by the move of Winchester Fire Station from North Walls to Winnall; and
 - b) supports the learning points identified to be used to inform the construction of a new station in Basingstoke.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 Following consultation the Service proposed to build a new Fire Station in Winchester and relocate from the existing site in North Walls. This paper reports on the:
 - integrated planning that supported this project;
 - the design, build and move;
 - opportunities realised by this project; and
 - learning points for the future.

- 3.2 The 2006 – 2009 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) proposed a change of firefighter crewing arrangements at Andover, Havant, and Winchester. These fire stations would change from being permanently crewed during the day only to being crewed 24 hours a day. This improved the ability to respond to incidents and also meant it was possible to undertake community safety activity on nights and weekends. This change occurred at Winchester in October 2007 and the number of firefighters was increased from 17 to 44 using a four watch system. This change was reviewed and reported to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) on the 27 February 2009.
- 3.3 The fire station at North Walls, Winchester was built in 1937 and some modifications were necessary to support a four watch shift system. However it was not possible to meet the changing demands on the Service from this location and a long term solution was needed.
- 3.4 The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2008 – 2011 included an objective of “Relocating Winchester Fire Station” as part of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan.

4 Design, build and move

- 4.1 The design and build project was overseen by a project board that had representatives from all HFRS functions. A significant learning point was establishing a working party from personnel at Winchester fire station that could directly inform the design. This led to a successful and functional building and ensured that the primary users ‘owned’ the new station from the outset.
- 4.2 The building specification included:
- five appliance bays that would support the future strategic disposition of appliances;
 - modern accommodation for station-based staff including training facilities
 - accommodation for the fire protection officers, the Group Manager and administration staff; and
 - community meeting rooms.

It was also intended that the building should meet strict environmental criteria.

- 4.3 It was identified that two existing buildings on site could be reused, one of which was refurbished and has become a road safety centre. The second building is currently being considered for leasing to a partner organisation and if this happens it will generate an income for HFRS to support our financial challenge plan.
- 4.4 The building was completed early in January 2011 and was handed over to the Service on 31 January 2011. Winchester Fire Station formally re-located from the North Walls site after 74 years to the new site at Easton Lane, Winnall on 23 February 2011.
- 4.5 The move was supported by all station and site personnel and was overseen by the Station Manager.

4.6 The station was officially opened on the 27 April 2011 by the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire Dame Mary Fagan DVCO JP.

5 Opportunities realised and potential

5.1 By relocating Winchester Fire Station to Winnall and using the existing site we have been able to improve our delivery of services, resilience, and infrastructure across the three aspects of our work (protection, prevention and response).

5.2 The emergency response at the station is based on two fire appliances and a special equipment unit. The station has recently become support for the Detection Identification and Monitoring (DIM) vehicle. This specialist vehicle provides a chemical identification capability for Hampshire and is also part of a wider national capability. The location of Winchester and the availability of two further appliance bays will provide much needed capacity for the future distribution of appliances in the county to meet changing needs.

5.3 The station provides 24 hour cover using the four watch system and a retained duty section (RDS).

5.4 Response times for critical incidents have not changed significantly since the fire station was relocated. Between March 2011 and February 2012 Winchester responded to 61% of critical incidents received within the eight minute response time target (based on 132 incidents). This compares to 62% for the previous 12 months (based on 152 incidents). For the same reporting periods attendance times have improved by 2% to 97% for non critical incidents (15 minutes response time) and by 3% to 94% for non emergency incidents (60 minute response time).

5.5 These attendance times are below the county average but this is caused by the geographical area covered by the Winchester station which includes a significant rural area with associated longer run times. So far only one years' data is available; ideally three years' data should be used to form a comprehensive and weighted assessment.

5.6 Additional station space and facilities have led to an increase in the number of people from both the community and partner organisations visiting the station. The station open day last year attracted a far greater number of people than ever before on a Winchester station. Partnership meetings are now facilitated/ hosted on site enabling better integration with all partners and agencies. Meeting rooms are now used by local groups and also as emergency breakout rooms for Headquarters continuity planning.

5.7 Water rescue training is undertaken at Winchester for the county. Equipment, facilities and training areas are now available on site to support this activity. The station accommodates the fire protection officers and management team, which for the first time can operate from one location. This has supported better training and coordination across the team.

5.8 The Road Safety Centre is being developed on site and provides facilities to support the county-wide training of operational staff and road safety education in the community. It is the first of its kind in the country and its development is being supported by a watch and crew manager, the Vehicle Extrication Team

and station personnel. The refurbished building contains an operational viewing area and a number of adaptable training facilities to support both practical and theoretical training, safety events and meetings. The Road Safety Centre recently hosted a National Fire Bike conference and has developed a “BikeSmart” programme to support the reduction in motorcycle injuries and deaths. The Centre has also hosted the regional National Vehicle Extrication Challenge.

- 5.9 There were a number of learning points emerging from the management of the project and the subsequent operation of a technically sophisticated building (for example in the control of the environmental measures which were incorporated). These are currently being reviewed by technical specialists and will inform future building work.

6 Identified learning points

- 6.1 The following learning points have been identified to support any further new builds:

- Consider using a set of standard designs which can be adapted and used for future stations;
- Continue to maintain long term strategic vision regarding the number and location of stations;
- Maximise the flexibility available in the use of the building and allow spare capacity to meet changing demands in the future;
- Consider the risk to the project if key people leave during the project;
- Consider appointing a manager with specific responsibility for the design and build;
- Enlist independent expertise to validate the technical aspects of the building (e.g. building management systems);
- Consider which type of standard building contract is most appropriate;
- Ensure strong management of snagging issues at the end of the contract;
- Contractor’s project manager to be required to stay on site until building is complete;
- Involve station personnel from the outset in the design and specification; and
- Manage expectations throughout the project.
- Ensure that expertise is available within HFRS, and as part of long-term maintenance contracts, for the appropriate ongoing management of technical building systems, such as the Building Management System.

- 6.2 These points will be taken into account in the current project to replace the existing station in Basingstoke.

7 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

- 7.1 The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2008 – 2011 included an objective of relocating Winchester fire station as part of the HFRS integrated risk management plan (IRMP).

- 7.2 The new fire station and its associated facilities have exceeded this initial IRMP concept. The site enables HFRS to develop its prevention, protection, and

response activities and to improve the delivery of services in both the local and wider community.

8 Risk analysis

- 8.1 Remaining at the original North Walls site was not considered to be a long term viable option due to limited staff space and outdated facilities. There was also a lack of adequate accommodation to support prevention and protection activities being undertaken or developed. The site was land-locked with limited opportunity for increased development. Maintenance costs for the building were likely to rise as the building aged.

9 People Impact Assessment

- 9.1 The people impact assessment (PIA) was initially undertaken by the Strategic Projects and Specialist Response department and was subsequently updated by the project board with the following agreed outcomes:
- strategic location for response and garaging of vehicles;
 - accommodation facilities for the response and community safety staff;
 - training facilities to support station-based activities
 - specialist training facilities for road traffic collision and road safety initiatives; and
 - flexible community facilities provided as an integral part of the building.
- 9.2 The project had links to the following documents:
- Service Delivery plan;
 - Training medium term plan;
 - Winchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) plan - the reduction of road traffic collisions;
 - Communities and Local Government (CLG) - achieving design quality in fire and rescue service buildings;
 - Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method environmental standard (BREEAM);
 - HFRS equality scheme; and
 - HFRS core values.
- 9.3 Requirements were met for Disability Discrimination Act compliance that included – access, public access, toilets, dedicated parking, identified meeting and work locations on ground floor for staff and visitors and lift access to first and second floors. Other groups/ areas identified that had the potential to suffer a negative effect with this building proposal were retained staff, the environment and traffic congestion access.
- 9.4 Some retained staff could be at risk of redundancy if the station move resulted in their home address being outside of the four minute catchment area. This was supported by recruiting people that were within the new catchment area, beginning 18 months prior to the move. Existing staff who were at risk were offered a supported relocation package to enable them to move. This saved additional expenditure on recruiting and training. This was taken up by two individuals and one person left of their own volition prior to the move.

A review undertaken of the recruitment of retained firefighters since the move has identified that applications have increased to 1.83 per month in the year since the station relocated from an average of one per month for the preceding four years.

- 9.5 Traffic conditions, and in particular congestion, have been managed by the introduction of “wig wag” lights assisting the appliance turning out from the station. When an emergency call comes in the station can manipulate the traffic using a “green wave” system so that timed priority is given to the appliance on the route that is selected.

10 Environmental and sustainability impact assessment

- 10.1 The purpose-built facility is the first completed UK fire station to be awarded the BREEAM “Excellent” standard. The BRE Environmental Assessment Method is internationally recognised as setting the standard for best practice in sustainable building design. The standard awards points in nine sections:

- management;
- materials;
- health and wellbeing;
- waste;
- energy;
- land use and ecology;
- transport;
- pollution; and
- water.

These give an overall weighted score for the building using a scale of pass, good, very good, excellent and outstanding.

- 10.2 The station is a modern example of how environmental considerations can be used to support both the environment and reduce power cost over future decades, although this does need to be balanced with initial build cost.
- 10.3 Specific areas that were invested in to support our environmental objectives are summarised in Appendix 1.

11 Resource implications

- 11.1 The initial project capital budget allocation was £3.5m. Following more detailed consideration of the user requirements and allowing for grant funding in connection with the renewable energy sources, the budget was increased to £4.09m. Work is in hand to conclude the final account for the work and to settle any outstanding accounts. The final total spending is expected to be about £4.3m but this has not yet been confirmed. This will be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee when the final total is known.
- 11.2 The project incorporated the additional works to refurbish one of the existing workshops buildings as the Service’s new Road Safety Centre.

- 11.3 Negotiations have taken place to sell the former site. This is still subject to gaining appropriate planning permission. The capital receipt will be used to support future capital investment

12 Consultation

- 12.1 Consultation was undertaken prior to this project commencing including:
- Winchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
 - Winchester City Council;
 - Winchester partners and stakeholders;
 - Public consultation at Winchester Guildhall;
 - Consultation county wide as part of HFRS IRMP objectives; and
 - Winchester fire station and surrounding fire stations.

13 Conclusion

- 13.1 HFRS has moved to a permanent crewing arrangement at Winchester, re-located the Fleet Maintenance Centre to Eastleigh, and re-located Winchester Fire Station to a pre-owned site, enabling the disposal of one site for financial reward. This process has increased prevention, protection and response delivery both in the Winchester area and in the county.
- 13.2 Station personnel were involved in this project from the start and this has supported a good and usable building design. The station has an important geographical location within Hampshire and the design will support the further strategic aims of HFRS. Opportunities were taken during this project to gain additional benefits, (e.g. the Road Safety Centre).

14 Background papers

- 14.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

None

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.

Summary of environmental measures incorporated in the building

A building management system provides a “window” into the operation of the main building systems and allows them to be controlled to keep the building running comfortably and efficiently. The station is divided into different heating areas which are monitored and controlled. People in each room can increase or decrease the set temperature by a few degrees that will automatically revert back at a set time. The appliance bay is only heated to 5°C to provide frost protection.

Good building design, insulation and air-tightness helps to keep the building warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The cavity walls and roof have solid insulation while double glazing throughout has design openings to support natural ventilation. Sun glare in the height of summer is restricted by the large overhanging roof.

External lights are controlled by time and light sensors while efficient lights inside switch off automatically when rooms are unoccupied. Domestic appliances have also been selected which minimise energy use.

Rainwater is collected from the main roof to a large underground tank. After some basic treatment this water is used for toilets and vehicle washing. Appliances and fixtures have all been selected to ensure water is used efficiently.

The station has three low-carbon energy sources; solar thermal panels, solar photovoltaic panels, and ground source heat pumps.

The solar thermal panels collect energy from the sun to heat water which is stored for domestic use. A small gas boiler provides additional heat to ensure hot water is always available at the right temperature. Solar photovoltaic panels are installed that use energy from the sun to generate electricity during daylight hours.

The building is heated by a ground source heat pump system. Fluid circulated through pipes in the ground can either collect heat or reject heat into the ground for cooling. The electricity used to power this is a quarter of the power required to supply the equivalent heat output. The cooling mode of the ground source heat pumps for the building only works when the outside air temperature reaches 24°C. When in cooling mode the “waste” heat is used to pre-heat the hot water supply for the taps.

To support the reduction of risk, increase sustainability and business continuity whilst supporting the environment, the building has been fitted with a fire automatic water suppression system.