

**Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Finance and General Purposes Committee**

**Item: 10**

**29 October 2013**

**Replacement of Basingstoke Fire Station**

**Report by the Chief Officer**

Contact: Andy Chapman, Head of Facilities Telephone: 02380 626847  
Email: andy.chapman@hantsfire.gov.uk

**1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Basingstoke project board and follows the completion of an extended feasibility study into the replacement of Basingstoke Fire Station. A preferred option is identified.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Committee is invited to note the preferred option and to reaffirm their commitment to the replacement of Basingstoke Fire Station.

**3 Introduction and background**

- 3.1 A business case for redeveloping Basingstoke Fire Station was submitted to the Service Management Team in late 2009. At that time an analysis of response times and consideration of the predicted future growth of Basingstoke and the surrounding area led to a recommendation that the current location of the station was suitable for longer term needs, with good access on to arterial roads
- 3.2 Hampshire County Council (HCC) architects were commissioned to carry out a feasibility study of the existing site and they produced outline plans and viability costs for both a new and a refurbished station. The refurbishment proposal was discounted and in December 2011 the HFRA approved a capital budget of £6m for a new build station.

**4 Feasibility study (phase 2)**

- 4.1 The initial study had not considered other sites in Basingstoke, including that owned by the HFRA at Carpenters Down. Other significant factors for consideration included temporary arrangements for operational cover, a developing response vehicle strategy and a mandate to improve the training facilities.

- 4.2 The project board commissioned HCC Architects to undertake a second phase of feasibility. The brief for this required the consideration of wider options and those factors which had not been included in the original study. Six sites were identified for both permanent and temporary facilities including the existing site at West Ham Close, the HFRA Carpenters Down site, the roundabout adjacent to West Ham Close, nearby industrial units at Morse Road and Houndmills and a distribution facility on the Ringway / Reading Road interchange close to the M3. The roundabout site and the site at Morse Road were subsequently discounted by the project board, after receiving advice from HCC Highways.
- 4.3 The viability costs resulting from this study were significantly higher than the approved budget of £6m. These costs were based upon the building specification used at Winchester Fire Station and included the significant cost of decanting operations to a temporary station during redevelopment.
- 4.4 The most affordable of these options was a new whole time and retained station at Carpenters Down but this was deemed to be operationally unacceptable, as it would result in the loss of the highly trained retained watch who are required to crew a number of the secondary and special vehicles deployed at this station.

## **5 Feasibility study (phase 3)**

- 5.1 A review of the brief by the project board led to the decision that an off site, temporary fire station was unaffordable. The whole time and retained station at Carpenters Down was discounted for the operational reasons stated above and it was decided to explore a two station model which maintained the retained duty system (RDS) presence at West Ham Close.
- 5.2 To inform this phase of the study, the Group Manager, Basingstoke commissioned a fire cover simulation using primary response from both Carpenters Down and West Ham Close. This concluded the two station model was operationally viable.
- 5.3 For this stage of the study, the project board called for a reduced building specification which would meet statutory standards and operational requirements.
- 5.4 The scenarios considered and subsequently evaluated are:
- Option 6 – a new whole time and retained station at West Ham Close with interim use of Group HQ and rear garages for primary response
  - Option 8 – a new whole time station at Carpenters Down and a new retained station at West Ham Close

- Option 9 – two stations with the whole time response split between West Ham Close and Carpenters Down and the RDS remaining at West Ham Close
- Option 10 – ditto option 9 but with a modified crewing model at Carpenters Down requiring detached accommodation

## **6 Evaluation**

6.1 The project board approved an asset appraisal model with the following criteria for evaluation (% weighting in brackets):

- Operational effectiveness (40) – interim (5) and final (35)
- Cost (40) – capital spend and receipt (35), whole life cost (5)
- Risk (10) – risks to development (5), current resources (5)
- Community (5) – impact, engagement, facilities
- Sustainability (5) – future proofing, environmental impact

6.2 Project board members were issued with a report prepared by HCC Architects and the four options described in 5.4 were debated. This was followed by an evaluation which was facilitated by Faithorn Farrell and Timms (FF&T), who have been appointed Employers Agent for this project.

6.3 The result of the evaluation was as follows:

- Option 6 – 87.0%
- Option 8 – 50.5%
- Option 9 – 53.5%
- Option 10 – 55.5%

6.4 The project board unanimously agreed to recommend approval of option 6.

6.5 This preferred option comprises:

- A new whole time station at the existing West Ham Close site, with a floor area of 1500m<sup>2</sup> and garaging for six front line appliances
- Dormitory accommodation for a watch of 18
- Detached garaging for four secondary / special vehicles
- Training facilities include an improved drill tower linked to the refurbished breathing apparatus (BA) chamber and an animal rescue ditch.
- The interim use of the office building and BA chamber for whole time primary response

- Interim secondary response from an adjacent industrial unit
- Refurbishment of the office building following completion of the new station

## **7 Resources**

7.1 The capital budget allocated for this project is £6 million

7.2 The viability costs for Option 6 have been independently scrutinised by FF&T and have been moderated as follows:

Redeveloped Fire Station facilities	£4,450,000
Refurbishment of HQ Building	£ 480,000
Interim facilities during redevelopment	£ 450,000
Balance available for training facilities	£ 620,000

7.3 The net construction costs (NCC) have been benchmarked against the Building Cost Information Service and validated by Faithorn Farrell and Timms, who have recent involvement in the appraisal of a new fire station at Guildford.

7.4 The budget available for training facilities will accommodate the BA chamber refurbishment, an enhanced drill tower, designated road traffic collision area, infrastructure improvements for the use of compressed air foam system (CAFS) and future provision for a sacrificial wall.

7.5 FF&T have been appointed to act on behalf of the HFRA as independent project and cost managers. They will report to the project board and be managed by the Head of Facilities.

7.6 The Group Manager, Basingstoke will continue to play a leading role within the project team and it is intended that the involvement of local staff will continue throughout the design and construction stages.

## **8 People Impact Assessment**

8.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation. An Impact Assessment will be further developed and reviewed by the project board.

## **9 Consultation**

9.1 A project team has represented all service departments and has been led by the Group Manager, Basingstoke.

9.2 All fire fighters (whole time and retained) at Basingstoke Fire Station have engaged in the feasibility study from the commencement of phase 2. Within this group, three sub teams of local fire fighters have supported the

project team and have informed the operational requirements for the new station, interim arrangements and training facilities.

## **10 Risk analysis**

- 10.1 Risks related to the achievement of project objectives are assessed and managed by the Project Board and team. A risk register has been developed and has become a key element of project governance.

## **11 Conclusion**

- 11.1 The redevelopment of the station at Basingstoke, within a defined budget, was approved by the Authority in December 2011. Since that decision an extensive study has been carried out to explore different options and to ensure the investment demonstrates good value for money.
- 11.2 The project is now ready to commence the design development and planning stage with the aim of work commencing on site late in 2014 for completion by the end of the 2015/16 financial year.

### Background information (Section 100D of Local Government Act 1972)

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:

- New Fire Station, Basingstoke – Feasibility Report dated August 2013 and incorporating Appendices A to I. A copy of this report will be available for the Committee to inspect at the meeting

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