



Meeting	SLT	Agenda Item No.	4h
	Strategic Board		10
Meeting Date	11 May 2021		
	15 June 2021		
Report Author	Jon Doherty		
Presented By	Rick Hylton		
Subject	Property Strategy 2021-26		
Type of Report	Decision		

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- Approve the strategic objectives and principles on which the new fire and rescue property strategy will be built upon
- Agree to officers beginning the consultation with key stakeholders on the strategy and
- Agree to the final strategy being presented to Strategic Board in September 2021

OVERVIEW

For several years now the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken a balanced and considered approach to its property portfolio.

The portfolio consists of operational fire stations, training buildings, a headquarters and operational control centre as well as associated out buildings and training towers.

Intelligence gathering for building and plant condition are reported annually within the property performance report. Buildings, significant plant, and facilities are inspected, surveyed, or otherwise assessed for each station or location and then mapped onto an annual, three or ten yearly investment plans. This information is used to identify the investment needed to maintain the estate to its current condition termed 'Asset protection'.

Capital projects for new builds, extensions and change of use are budgeted for under 'asset improvement' works.

There is a need to ensure that the property portfolio aligns to the ambition of the Fire and Rescue Plan and the needs of the Integrated Risk Management Plan. The estate also plays a significant role in enabling a working environment aligned to our People Strategy objectives.

Currently there is a relatively ad hoc arrangement for the investment in estate improvement. The Property Strategy 2021 – 2026 is designed to enable a more strategic approach to estate investment that aligns and enables the objectives of the Fire and Rescue Plan.

BACKGROUND

Development of the Property Strategy principles began in November 2020. It has included engagement with directors and departmental heads to understand their estate and facility needs over the coming years. Work has also been undertaken to understand the opportunities for a collaborative use of the estate with other partners as detailed within the direction set by the Emergency Services Strategic Collaboration Board. The outcome of this engagement has resulted in the following strategic objectives being recommended for the forthcoming Property Strategy 2021 – 2026.

- To support our commitment to communities to ensure we can provide the best possible protection to the public as we make changes to our estate. We will ensure we take account of operational and community risk
- To create an effective collaboration programme with emergency services and other partners that will enhance our ability to achieve service benefits and stretch our property performance targets for the efficiency of the estate
- To be progressive in our application of agile working to maximise operational effectiveness and efficiency. We will build on significant recent successes to implement agile working in its many forms across all our services, whether delivered by firefighters, officers, staff, or volunteers
- To continue to provide accommodation that responds to the demands of a changing fire and rescue service, embracing the digital and cultural enablers that allow us to better use our physical footprint
- To continue to drive improvements to the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of our estate, releasing much needed financial resources for reinvestment in the priorities of our fire and rescue service
- To ensure the property portfolio is appropriate and fit for purpose
- To support staff well being

To achieve these objectives, it is proposed that the following principles are adopted:

- Where possible we will utilise collaboration opportunities for land sharing in addition to the sale of assets to invest in the improvement of our buildings. We will start with those buildings with the greatest need, and which will deliver the best value and benefit for both the public and our staff.
- Keeping a flexible approach to our portfolio. Our operational bases change to reflect need and opportunities for sharing and collaborating with partners in the locations where we need to be. We will own properties where it makes sense and will look to share with partners where we can. The services provided will of course vary from site to site depending on the location and the resources needed.

- Addressing high priority operational issues caused by the poor condition of the estate and the associated deteriorating resilience of the estate.
- By continuing to implement a robust approach to the analysis of the priorities, costs, and benefits of our investments, ensuring that any opportunities to ‘invest to save’ are fully explored. This will be delivered through the governance of our investment programmes.
- Incorporating energy reduction technologies in line with the Environmental Strategy 2020 - 2030 and continuing with investments to improve health and safety, security, equality, and diversity.

The strategic objectives and principles will form the basis to develop a Property Strategy. This will in addition set out the investment and strategic workplan that is required across the property portfolio to ensure successful delivery of the Fire and Rescue Plan, Integrated Risk Management Plan and People Strategy. Crucially this work will be closely aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and ensure a clear understanding of capital spend required over the course of the next five years.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

There were no other options considered in the development of this paper.

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk to the Service ability to deliver safe and effective services if the estate programme is not adequately resourced and delivered.

There is benefit to ways of working and cost efficiencies for the Service to work in partnership on share estate programmes where there is a clear service benefit in doing so.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To sustain our current estate strategy in terms of asset protection has financial implications on the capital programme of circa £1.4 million. In addition, Asset improvement works over the past five years have been difficult to accurately project. Additional costs are likely to be driven by an increase in asset improvement works, specifically investment in shared Fleet workshops, training facilities and any investment in relocation of fire stations. The Strategy will seek to recover operating costs where appropriate through collaborative initiatives such as shared facilities.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Is this decision anticipated to have an impact on any of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

<i>Race</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Religion or belief</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Gender reassignment</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Pregnancy & maternity</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Disability</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Marriage and Civil Partnership</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	<i>No</i>		

Whilst this paper has no Equality and Diversity implications. A full people impact assessment will be undertaken on The Property Strategy 2021 – 2026 ahead of presentation to Strategic Board in September 2021.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

Initial discussions and requirements have taken place with Service Directors and Heads of department. As per the recommendations it is the intention to engage in wider workforce and other stakeholders in the next stage of the strategy development.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications of this paper and associated recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The Health and Safety at work Act 1974 places a responsibility on the Service to secure the health, safety, and welfare of persons at work. This duty extends to the provision and maintenance of plant and places of work. Both of which are directly affected by the Property Strategy.