



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

Report reference number: 57 - 021

Government security classification Not protectively marked

Title of report: Estates Strategy

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Service wide

Report by: Karl Edwards, Director of Corporate Services

Date of report: 13/12/21

Enquiries to: Karl Edwards, Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for the attached Estates Strategy. On approval of the Estates Strategy a detailed delivery plan will be developed to provide specific timelines, cost, resources etc. an outline plan is included to show key milestones. The governance framework is outlined within the strategy providing details of the key decision points and approvals against specific deliverables.

The Estates Strategy is aligned to a number of key ECFRS documents and most importantly aligns to the priorities within the Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP) and the needs of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Estates Strategy has a significant role in enabling a working environment that allows our people to thrive and to deliver a safe and responsive service to the communities of Essex.

The Estates Strategy 2021 – 2026 is designed to enable a strategic approach that provides a clear set of key objectives and priority areas of focus over the next five years. It is acknowledged that each priority area will require a delivery plan supported by the key financial investment requirements, balanced against the IRMP and MTFP.

2. Recommendations

The Commissioner is asked to approve the ECFRS Estates Strategy to enable the onward development of a further detailed delivery plan. This will provide a clear strategic direction and lead the way forward for positive and progressive changes across our estate with clear deliverables supporting a number of other key ECFRS strategies.

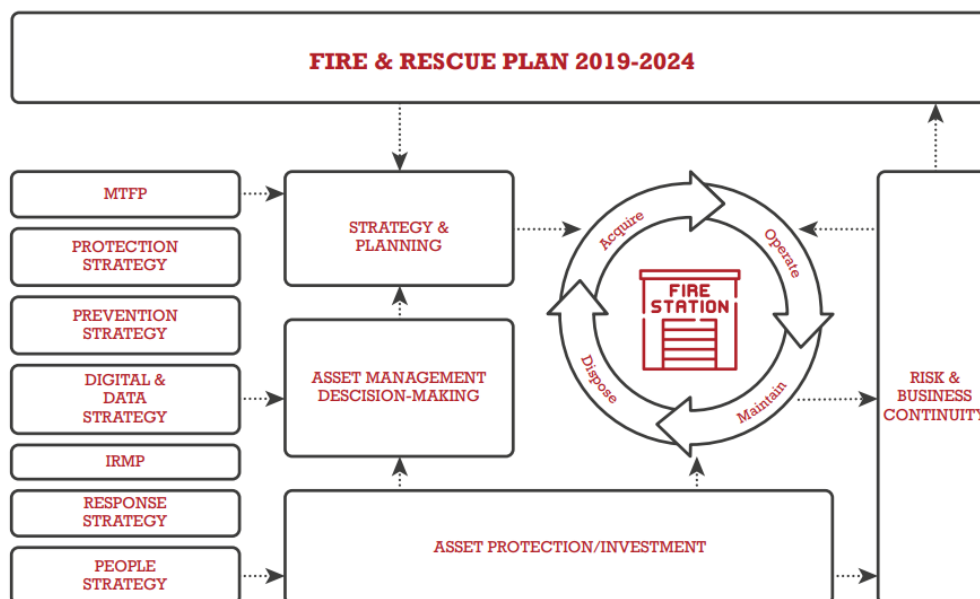
3. Benefits of the proposal

Development of the Estates 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 Estates 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 wellbeing and inclusivity within the workplace

4. Background and proposal

Effective asset management can ensure that buildings and workspaces fully support services that are delivered from them. To be most effective this requires a prioritised planning approach that balances service need against strategic aims and objectives whilst maximising the use of available resources. The diagram below shows how all elements of our Strategic Plans, Asset information, Our People, Risk etc feed into one another in a way that meets our requirements and decision making processes.



There are a number of priorities and objectives set out within the Estates Strategy and it is proposed that the following principles are adopted to support the delivery of these:

- 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, that deliver the best value and benefit for both the public and our staff.
- Keep 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.
- Address our high priority operational issues caused by poor condition of the estate and the associated deteriorating resilience.
- 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.
- Incorporate energy reduction technologies in line with the Environmental Strategy 2020 - 2030 and with investments to improve health and safety, security, equality, and diversity.
- Monitor the condition of the estate, identifying appropriate requirements to ensure the portfolio is fit for purpose. Identifying asset improvement and asset protection works separately to ensure that we are making best use of our resources.
- Maximise our approach within the Digital & Data Strategy to ensure that we are introducing new technologies that allow our estate to function in an agile, flexible, and collaborative way.
- Develop a Roadmap that details the cost, timelines, and resource requirements to deliver the Strategy and feed into our Reserves Strategy and Capital Programme.

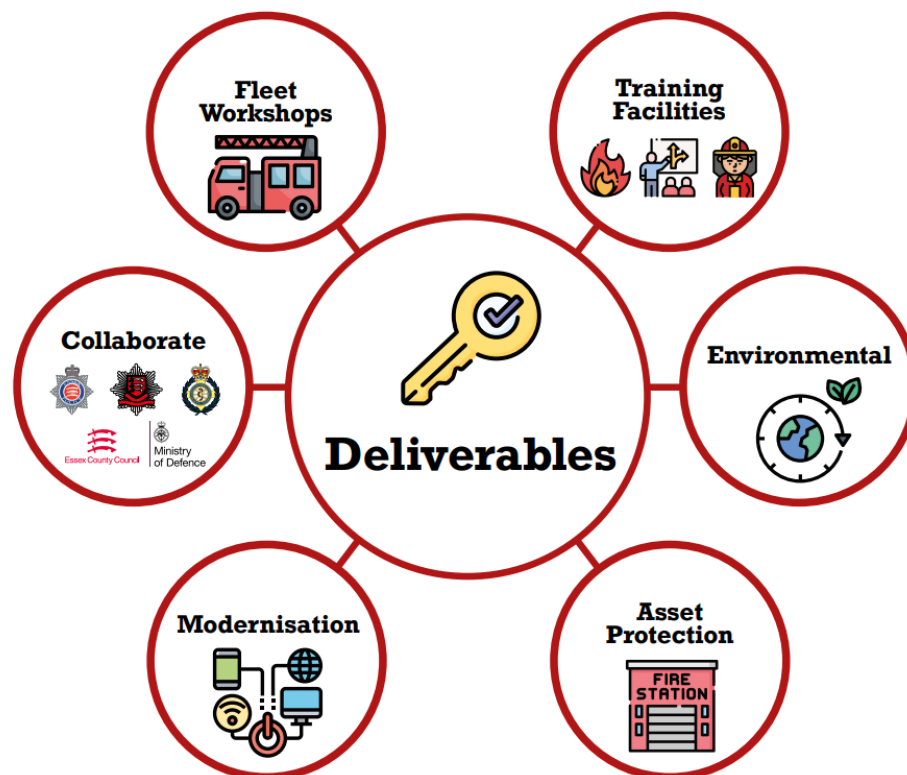
5. Alternative options considered and rejected

The ECFRS Estates Strategy has taken into account and aligns with a number of key partner agencies estates strategies to ensure that there is commonality within the design and delivery of the key principles and objectives. This approach allows for future collaborative opportunities to be continually explored and progressed where appropriate and viable.

The decision could be taken not to develop a clear Estate Strategy, but this was discounted as it would lead to a lack of strategic direction in decision's relating to the Estate and as a result could lead to the Service not maximising the potential benefit to the public.

6. Strategic priorities

The Estates Strategy is closely aligned to the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-2024 and enables the delivery of the priorities within the Plan. The Strategy also identifies our key Estate priorities over the next five years as outlined below. Further explanation is provided within attached Estates Strategy regarding each of these. It should be acknowledged that these are very much about our future requirements; and will all require more detailed planning supported by their own respective business case and financial investment needs before they can be progressed further.



7. Operational implications

The Estates Strategy has been aligned to a number of key ECFRS Strategies to ensure that it supports the strategic objectives and priorities across the wider organisation. More specifically to the operational implications, the Estates Strategy has taken into consideration the Prevention,

Protection and Response Strategies and the IRMP which has partly contributed to its design and outlining of key requirements.

8. Financial implications

To sustain our current estate in terms of asset protection alone, has financial implications on the capital programme of circa £1.3 million. It is acknowledged that there needs to be greater oversight and planning in place to ensure delivery against this capital programme and to ensure it is being achieved in the right way. Asset Protection and Improvement budgets will be reviewed during the budget setting process. Largely this will be achieved through the Strategic Estates Group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. Any significant new capital expenditure requirements will be determined through alignment to the new ECFRS Estates Strategy (Appendix-1) Any new investment proposals will initially be taken for approval through the Asset Management Board for financial consideration against a full business case.

9. Legal implications

There are currently no legal implications pertaining to approval of the ECFRS Estates Strategy.

10. Staffing implications

The Estates Strategy has been cascaded to a number of key stakeholders through the new Strategic Estates Group (SEG). All feedback has been taken into consideration and incorporated into the designing of the key priorities and objectives. It has been formerly presented and approved through the Service Leadership Team (SLT) prior to presentation and approval at Strategic Board. All Representative Bodies have equally had the opportunity to review and provide feedback. Overall, the adoption of this strategy will deliver positive changes to the ECFRS estate and ensure that the right investment is being made in the right areas to support our future direction and wider strategic objectives.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

We have considered whether individuals with protected *characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on each 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>		

12. Risks

The estate strategy future requirements are built on the longer-term view against our strategic risks. Whilst there is not a current strategic risk pertaining specifically to estates, it should be acknowledged that the condition and maintenance of our current assets does contribute to the control measures that underpin our strategic risks.

The strategy seeks to reduce risk not only through improved compliance with statutory legislation but also through a reduction in incidents. The estates strategy does recognise the need to demonstrate best value when determining the detail against each of the future requirements.

One of the key areas for urgent progression within the estate's strategy is that of our hot fire training facilities currently based at Wethersfield. This currently sits as Red Strategic Risk due to the impending redevelopment of this site and the notification from the current landowners (MOD) to have to vacate by the end of 2023, with a possible but unconfirmed extension to 2025. The service needs to progress rapidly with the commission of alternate arrangements in order to mitigate this risk.

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 Estates Strategy.

13. Governance Boards

Strategic Estates Group – 29 July 2021

Service Leadership Team – 11 May 2021

Strategic Board – 15 June 2021, 13 September 2021, 13 December 2021

14. Background papers


- The Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-2024
- Essex County Fire & Rescue Annual Plan
- Integrated Risk Management Plan
- Digital and Data Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- People Strategy
- Response Strategy

Decision Process (057-21)

Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

.....I support this recommendation

Sign:  Date:.....22/12/21.....


Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies


(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

.....Discussed with rep bodies as part of the at the Strategic Board paper discussions with rep bodies.

Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority’s (“the Commissioner’s”) Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer Sign: 
Print: .Darren.Horsman.-.Deputy.MO.
Date: 24.1.2022

Chief Finance Officer Sign: 
Print:Neil Cross.....
Date: 22/12/21

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? **YES**

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

.....

If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Step 4 - Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- 1 Of Decision Sheet **NO**
- 2 Of Appendix **NO**

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....
.....

Date redaction carried out:


If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: Print:

Date signed:

Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:  (PFCC)

Print: Roger Hirst

Date signed: 25 January 2022