

Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals David Soanes - Resources Directorate
Michelle McHugh

FINAL DECISION **YES**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS: Details to be specified

Further consideration by
this Committee

To Council

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny

3rd September 2008

Directorate Asset Management Plan 2007/09

Report of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer

Recommendation

For members to comment on the Directorate's Asset Management Plan and make recommendations as appropriate.

1.0 Directorate objectives and their property implications

Accommodation Required For Service Delivery

- 1.1 In April 2006 WFRS, Community Safety, Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), and Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) became the Community Protection Directorate. The new Directorate has an expanded, non-emergency, community safety role as well as retaining the responsibility for providing an effective response to fires, road traffic collisions (RTCs) and other emergency incidents. This new role will build on the moves over the past few years to refocus WFRS activities from intervention to prevention and will expand the community use of Fire Stations mentioned later in this document.

DAAT and Community Safety

- 1.2 Following surveys of the Directorate's newly acquired accommodation; it has become clear that Pageant House, currently occupied by DAAT and Community Safety, does not suit our requirements. Plans were in place to move staff from Pageant House into refurbished offices in Shire Hall in late 2008. This has not been possible. Ideally Community Safety needs to share accommodation with the Police Community Safety team in an office centrally located in the Warwick area. Avenues have been explored to try to achieve this but so far due to lack of suitable accommodation and lack of funding it has proven to be difficult.

EPU

- 1.3 The refurbishment of Shire Hall may impact the work of the EPU, which may result in the EPU having to move into temporary accommodation or refurbished accommodation.

WFRS

- 1.4 To a large extent the accommodation requirements for delivery of emergency response are dictated by the current location and future development of population and industrial centres across the County and the level of emergency cover that the WFRS is required to provide for them. The Fire and Rescue Service is also very much governed by political decisions at local, regional and national levels, many of which will impact upon the Directorate's strategic asset management plan.
- 1.5 The Service produced an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) in 2004, which included a radical review of the type of risks that WFRS has to respond to and also the nature of that response. An action plan was produced to address the issues identified and this, along with the IRMP itself, was reviewed annually. The Community Protection Directorate has produced a new IRMP 2007/10, which will be reviewed periodically. In the long term the location, size and configuration of accommodation required will be determined by the IRMP.
- 1.6 WFRS is also using the Fire Services Emergency Cover (FSEC) computer modelling system supplied by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to further review its response to emergency incidents. The accommodation requirements to meet operational needs would have to be considered alongside those for community activities, which will become one of the dominating factors in the modern Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.7 Three years ago WFRS established five Area Risk Management Teams (ART) at Fire Stations in Coleshill, Nuneaton, Rugby, Leamington and Stratford. Additional accommodation for these teams was found within the existing premises, creating some spare office accommodation in Budbrooke and Nuneaton Technical Fire Safety centres.
- 1.8 Where possible the Directorate will explore opportunities to dispose of properties that no longer suit the requirements for service delivery. Examples of these might include the remaining day crewed houses at Coleshill and the Portacabin building on the Royal Show Ground at Stoneleigh.

2.0 Areas of existing or potential shared use of property

Collaboration and Partnerships

WFRS

- 2.1 WFRS has actively pursued collaboration with other agencies on a number of fronts and will continue to do so. Property review meetings have been held with Warwickshire County Council, District Councils and Town Councils to explore ways to improve the use of our buildings in the Kenilworth, Southam, Nuneaton, and Rugby areas. While there is limited scope with small retained stations, other area meetings may produce more scope for collaboration and partnerships for shared use at stations that are permanently staffed.

- 2.2 The sharing of the Radford Road fire house in Coventry with West Midlands Fire Service has allowed WFRS to meet its statutory training requirements at a fraction of the cost of building and maintaining its own facility. However the Directorate has identified a need for a fire behaviour building using a carbon fuelled rig. Training and Development Centre (TADC) are currently investigating the best way forward.
- 2.3 The collaboration project with Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance Trust has produced savings and economies for both services in terms of accommodation and running costs. It is also regarded as being a positive move in terms of improving communication and co-operation between services, both on the training ground and at the “sharp end”. Warwickshire Ambulance Trust has merged with surrounding services in July 2006 to form the West Midlands Regional Ambulance Trust. The West Midlands Regional Ambulance Trust have confirmed they will still need the use of the rooms they currently occupy at Service Headquarters as their Control room for the Warwickshire area and have refurbished the Control room and Training room.
- 2.4 The establishment of a Regional Fire Control Centre in the West Midlands, scheduled for 2010, will remove the need for WFRS to provide accommodation for its own control room and will result in more office space becoming available at Service Headquarters in Leamington. However before this space can be fully utilised there will be a cost implication decommissioning equipment and refurbishing the area.
- 2.5 A partnership between Warwickshire Young Firefighters Association and Positive About Young People (a WCC initiative to prevent disaffection amongst young people and remedy it where it occurs through a community based multi-agency approach) has provided portable accommodation units to improve facilities for a number of Young Firefighter groups.
- 2.6 WFRS is looking to develop its business through partnerships and will look positively on any opportunities for collaboration.

Accommodation Required For Support Activities

- 2.7 With the transfer of Service Stores from Montague Road to Headquarters at Leamington and the installation of the Service Training Centre at Leicester Road, Bedworth, WFRS has reduced the accommodation for support departments to the bare minimum possible. However more limited accommodation could possibly be found by sharing offices currently under single occupancy. Also if structural alterations take place more accommodation could be made available by the creation of open plan offices. In addition, the Warwick and Leamington Area Property Review has been completed in conjunction with Property Services.
- 2.8 In April 2008 a moveable wall was fitted to the Conference Room at WFRS Headquarters to create a more functional and adaptable space. It has created two smaller meeting rooms without the permanent loss of the large conference space.

- 2.9 The successful transfer of the transport department to occupy what was the recreation room at Warwick fire station raised the possibility that other departments could move to retained stations. With the increasing drive towards Community Fire Stations, however, such moves would have to be balanced against the need for community centred events and initiatives.
- 2.10 Following the Atherstone on Stour incident, the Directorate has secured accommodation for the internal investigation team at Faraday Hall, Rugby and the Fire Brigade Union at Warwick House, Nuneaton.

Community Involvement / Community Fire Safety

- 2.11 The recent focus to encourage community involvement with the Service and for locally targeted initiatives in community fire safety work means that Retained Fire Stations originally intended as frost free housing for fire appliances and auxiliary kit are now being used more in the role of village halls and community centres.
- 2.12 There has also been a rapid growth in the size of the Young Firefighters Association in Warwickshire, with 13 stations running groups of around 20 young people. This, of course, puts additional pressures on the available accommodation on Fire Stations, particularly areas for kit storage and changing facilities. Whilst good progress is now being made to modernise facilities on stations, the WFRS still needs to address issues such as outdated or inadequate heating, lighting and toilet facilities as these community based initiatives are expanded and extended.
- 2.13 Disabled access and facilities on Fire Stations are currently being addressed through a centrally driven and funded programme, which was originally due to be completed by the end of 2006. This target date has been put back and the works will now be completed as funding allows, by the end of 2008 with the exception of Studley fire station where the DDA work will be incorporated with the station refurbishment in 2009. This will bring the stations up to the standard required to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and open our facilities up to all members of the local communities.

Space Requirements

- 2.14 As has already been mentioned WFRS has reduced the number of buildings that it occupies whilst taking on an expanding community role and assimilating other functions and departments into its limited space. The streamlining of stores and supplies, the limited use of home working and "hot desking" and the creation of Area Risk Teams on stations have alleviated some of the resulting pressure on accommodation.

3.0 Planned or possible changes to property assets

WFRS

Female Changing Facilities

- 3.1 One of the most important issues for the WFRS with regard to their property portfolio must be that of female changing facilities throughout the County. With the turnover of retained personnel the number of female firefighters varies year on year, but all of Warwickshire's fire stations need to have suitable washing and changing facilities for male and female members of staff.
- 3.2 A project to provide suitable changing and shower facilities at the Service Training and Development Centre at Bedworth was completed in January 2006. In addition a small project was carried out in conjunction with some DDA work to bring the facilities at Warwick Fire Station up to standard. Studley and Kenilworth Fire Stations are now the only stations where female changing facilities are deemed inadequate. Kenilworth has three female firefighters with one shower and limited changing facilities in the Ladies toilet. Studley currently has no female firefighters, but this may be due in part to the fact that the station has no shower or changing facilities for female firefighters at all. However as mentioned previously, plans are in place to refurbish Studley fire station to include female changing facilities and DDA work in 2009.

Security of Premises

- 3.3 Whilst modernisation and collaboration projects have brought many benefits to the WFRS they have also presented a new set of problems to be addressed.
- 3.4 Traditionally all Fire Stations have had the same, standard Yale lock with each Retained Firefighter and each fire engine being issued with a key. This effectively gave all of our Firefighters access to all of our stations. The disabled access audits carried out recently have identified the need to replace many front doors with new lightweight doors. It is not possible to fit the old style lock into the new doors, so a new "universal access" solution must be found.
- 3.5 Approximately ten years ago premises that were not staffed 24 hours a day were equipped with intruder alarms. Many of these systems are now in need of upgrade or replacement.
- 3.6 The presence of ambulances on Fire Stations has resulted in several instances of drug dependant individuals breaking in to gain access to the drugs held on the vehicles. This has in turn led to an increase in the level of petty thefts being experienced by the WFRS and it's staff.
- 3.7 The successful rollout of good quality computers and other IT equipment across the county has also made the Service's premises a target for opportunistic theft and planned burglaries. Fire Safety Headquarters at Budbrooke has suffered particularly badly from this.

- 3.8 The creation of Area Risk Teams has led to an increased incidence of lone workers being left on premises, which at the moment cannot be described as always being adequately secured.
- 3.9 These factors, combined with the drive to encourage more public access to, and use of, Fire Stations means that the WFRS will need to review and improve the security measures, both active and passive, which are currently in place for its staff and premises.
- 3.10 The security of Leamington and Service headquarters was improved in 2007 with the installation of new electronic security doors and barriers. Any visitors to the site now have to 'report' to reception via an intercom to gain permission to enter.
- 3.11 The Service intends to explore the expansion of this system across the county, possibly using individually issued proximity cards. If found to be viable then the intention would be to gradually roll the system out across the Directorate on a prioritised basis taking into account public access requirements, staff safety, the current security measures in place and availability of funds.
- 3.12 Nuneaton and Stratford stations have been highlighted as the next project for improved security.
- 3.13 It is intended to review general building security as part of the ongoing property condition / Health and Safety survey. Minor improvements will be made at a local level as thought appropriate.

Training Towers

- 3.14 In the past every fire station has had a training tower. The move to competency-based training combined with a greater emphasis on realistic training scenarios and computer-based training has meant that although there is still a need for training towers a more realistic facility is needed. The Resources Directorate have carried out a structural review of all metal training towers in the county to give an indication of the rate at which the towers will need replacing or removing. This resulted in drill towers at Warwick and Shipston being withdrawn from use due to the uneconomic repairs that are necessary to make them fit for purpose. Previously these towers have been replaced on a like for like basis at a cost of between £40,000 and £50,000.
- 3.15 The Community Protection Directorate is keen to explore different options for provision of ladder and rescue training including working at height training within the county in conjunction with the Resources Directorate, i.e. instead of replacing Warwick training tower use the finance to build a facility with a pitched roof.
- 3.16 If this is not possible then Operational Support has confirmed we need to replace the towers like for like.

Fire Behaviour Unit

- 3.17 There is a need for CPD to have access to a fire behaviour unit using a carbon fuelled rig. TADC and Resources Directorate are currently exploring the best options.

Bulk Fuel Dispensing Facilities

- 3.18 The WFRS has bulk diesel tanks currently at six locations in the County. These provide operational resilience in the event of fuel shortages caused by disputes or other factors and also enable the Directorate to buy diesel at prices substantially below those attainable by other methods of purchase.
- 3.19 The Storage tanks and surrounding areas are now badly in need of updating to bring them into line with The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001. A capital bid was submitted for funding to achieve this in 2006/07 but was not successful. However funding was secured to make the minimum improvements necessary; this enabled a programme of updating the bulk diesel tanks at Rugby, Nuneaton and Leamington and Stratford. Funding was also secured for the removal of the fuel tank at Bedworth.
- 3.20 Work was completed at Rugby, Nuneaton and Leamington in October 2007; the removal of the tank at Bedworth was scheduled for May 2008. Work is in progress looking at alternative solutions to the supply of fuel at Coleshill fire station.
- 3.21 More funding will be needed in the long term to prevent the sites deteriorating into an unsafe state.

Fire Station Appliance Bay Doors

- 3.22 This issue has been addressed on a rolling programme funded by Capital Bids. In 2003/4 bay doors at Nuneaton, Shipston, Warwick, Bedworth (2 front only) and Atherstone (1 rear only) were replaced. The remaining rear door at Atherstone Fire Station and both rear doors at Bedworth Fire Station were replaced in 2005. All of the bay doors at Rugby Fire Station were replaced in March 2006.
- 3.23 The replacement of doors at Alcester Fire Station was completed in 2007 completing the replacement of all of the remaining old style bay doors in the County.
- 3.24 Arrangements for the maintenance of the electrically operated doors need to be addressed to reduce the risk of failure and accidents and to comply with PUWER Regs 1999. In addition some of the early, non automated up and over bay doors will need automating to reduce the manual handling risks involved. Both of these issues have financial implications.

Service Control Suite

- 3.25 Following the initiation by CLG the national FiReControl Project is now working towards the completion of a Regional Fire Control Centre in the West Midlands which is scheduled to go live in 2010. The roof over Service Control was replaced last year and the Service has carried out redecoration and minor refurbishment as funds allowed this year. It should be noted, however, that if the Regional Fire Control Centre project is significantly delayed then the Service Control Suite would need major refurbishment.

General Refurbishments

- 3.26 The accommodation throughout the Service is in general need of refurbishment. The current property review and condition surveys will help to identify the areas of greatest need and target resources more effectively.
- 3.27 The WFRS's properties are also badly out of date with regard to energy consumption and conservation; most have minimal insulation and are single glazed. The WFRS is exploring grant funded financial options to improve insulation and energy consumption.
- 3.28 In March 2008 Property Resources notified CPD that all vulnerable glazing had to be inspected under the Act, at a minimum cost of £274.00 per building (resulting in a total cost of approximately £7K).
- 3.29 This unforeseen financial commitment has caused the CPD concern. For example the cost of the inspection alone will take 30% of an Area Risk Management Team's maintenance budget and that is before any remedial work.
- 3.30 In future any large project such as this should be brought to the attention of the finance department so it can be shown as a budget pressure.

Community Safety and DAAT

- 3.31 As mentioned earlier in the report, Pageant House is not suitable and alternative accommodation urgently needs to be found.

EPU

- 3.32 The EPU team may be affected by the refurbishment of Shire Hall. If this proves to be the case then EPU will have to move into temporary accommodation or refurbished offices. Detailed plans are not yet available.

4.0 Inventory of assets occupied

Occupancy

- 4.1 The Corporate Property Strategy requires that services hold property for service delivery purposes only and in accordance with occupancy guidelines. It is difficult to reconcile the Directorate's occupancy figure against the guidelines, because of the different duty systems worked and the fact that by definition retained stations will be unoccupied for most of the time. It should also be noted that the number of Retained Firefighters assigned to a particular station varies over time, as does their availability on a week-to-week basis. In addition, as has already been mentioned, several members of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team work from numerous locations. With all this taken into account, the table attached as Appendix 1 attempts to set out the occupancy figures for Community Protection Premises.

Review Procedure

- 4.2 The existing property portfolio is under a continuous rolling review by the Technical Support Department and Health and Safety Department in conjunction with all Managers. This work is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Corporate Property Strategy.

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Community Protection Directorate.

Occupancy Figures for Community Protection Premises

Premises Name	Description	Total staff at Premises	Full Time Equivalent	Maximum staff on duty at one time
20 Nuneaton	Shift / ART	56	55.5	19
Nuneaton FSC	Fire Safety	8	6.6	8
21 Bedworth	Day Crewed / Retained	23	20.25	18
Bedworth TADC	Training Centre	25	21	25
22 Coleshill	Day Crewed / Retained / ART	28	25.75	20
23 Polesworth	Retained	12	9.5	12
24 Atherstone	Day Crewed / Retained	22	19.5	15
25 Brinklow	Retained	11	9	11
26 Rugby	Shift / ART	56	55.5	17
27 Kenilworth	Retained / Victim Support Unit	13	10	11
28 Warwick	Retained /Transport Office	12	10	11
Budbrooke FSC	Fire Safety	15	13	15
29 Leamington/SHQ	Shift / ART / Main Offices	145	143	82
30 Southam	Retained	12	10	9
31 Fenny Compton	Retained	9	7.75	9
34 Shipston	Retained	12	10.5	14
35 Stratford	Shift / Retained / ART	44	40.5	20
36 Bidford	Retained	11	8.5	12
37 Alcester	Retained	11	10	9
38 Studley	Retained	12	9	12
39 Henley	Retained	9	7.75	9
40 Wellesbourne	Retained	12	9.75	12
Stratford Police Station	Neighbourhood Watch	1	1	1
N. Warks Area Office	Community Safety	1	1	1
Paegent House, Warwick	Community Safety / DAAT	11	11	11
Winton Hse, Stratford	Community Safety	1	1	1
Newton Hall, Rugby	Community Safety	1	1	1
Faraday Hall, Rugby	Investigation Team	5	5	5
Warwick House, Nuneaton	Fire Brigade Union	2	2	2
Shire Hall, Warwick	Emergency Planning	7	6.5	7
Peripatetic Case Workers	DAAT	9	9	N/A

Key: Shift – Wholetime Station with 4 watches providing 24-hour cover.
Day Crewed - Wholetime Station crewed during the day with crews on call from home overnight.
Retained – Station normally vacant with crews on call from work or home.
ART – Area Risk Team, normally 9 – 5 and office based.
FSC – Fire Safety Centre, normally 9 – 5 and office based.
DAAT – Drugs Action Advisory Team.