

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 7th June 2005

Report Title Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
Departmental Asset Management Plan

Summary This report sets out the Fire and Rescue Service Departmental Asset Management Plan for 2005/06, which has been prepared in accordance with County Council guidelines.

For further information please contact:

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background papers None

Appendices:

- Fire and Rescue Property Listing
- Fire and Rescue Suitability Survey/Analysis of Results

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN: Details to be specified

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Other Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Member(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Elected Members | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cllrs John Haynes and Dave Shilton |
| Cabinet Member | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cllr Richard Hobbs |
| Chief Executive | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Legal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Duxbury |

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Finance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Oliver Winters |
| Other Chief Officers | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| District Councils | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Health Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Police | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Other Bodies/Individuals | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Property Services Department |

FINAL DECISION: For Information

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Further consideration by this Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Cabinet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an O & S Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an Area Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Further Consultation | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7th June 2005

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Departmental Asset Management Plan

Report of the County Fire Officer

Recommendation

The Fire and Rescue Service Asset Management Plan is presented for your comment and endorsement.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to define the property asset requirements of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service that will support its service objectives, strategy and plans. This is in accordance with the Corporate Property Strategy of the County Council.

2.0 Corporate Planning Context

- 2.1 Service Asset Management Plans (AMP's) are to be developed having regard to county priorities set out in the Corporate Business Plan 2005 - 2008 and the key themes arising from the area plans.
- 2.2 The Corporate Property Strategy requires that the Service holds property for service delivery purposes only, in accordance with occupancy guidelines and that revenue costs should be minimised.

3.0 Process

- 3.1 Service Departments are responsible for the preparation of individual AMP's using data supplied by Property Services. The Council's Corporate Property Strategy and AMP reflect the Service's strategic objectives and operational requirements. Cabinet has endorsed the Corporate Property Strategy and the Corporate AMP process.

- 3.2 Property Services Department carry out and update condition surveys on all premises on an annual basis. In addition to this the Service's Technical Support Department is instituting a regime of combined annual inspections to be carried out in consultation with local users.
- 3.3 Suitability Surveys will be completed for all premises by Property Services Department on a bi-annual basis and reviewed annually as part of the property review process.
- 3.4 The Property Performance Indicators have been considered and agreed by all Service Departments and have been developed by Property Services in accordance with Government guidelines.

4.0 Overview of Property Aims, Objectives and Strategies

4.1 Accommodation Required For Service Delivery

- 4.1.1 To a large extent these requirements 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 Service is required to provide for them. This is reflected in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Service is also very much governed by political decisions at local, regional and national levels, many of which will impact upon the Service's strategic asset management plan.
- 4.1.2 There are already developments within the County (notably the Hams Hall industrial park and the Warwick Gates housing estates) that will severely test the Service's ability to meet its present response targets. These raise the possibility of additional or relocated fire stations being required in the Coleshill and Leamington Spa areas.
- 4.1.3 The Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which includes a radical review of the type of risks that the Service has to respond to and also the nature of that response. The Year 2 Action Plan has been produced to address the issues identified and this, along with the IRMP itself, will be reviewed annually.
- 4.1.4 In the long term the location, size, configuration of buildings and the likelihood of expansion of services will be determined by the IRMP which may have far reaching implications for Fire Service accommodation requirements.
- 4.1.5 One of the main themes of the resulting Year 2 Action Plan was a more proactive approach to risk reduction and therefore greater community involvement with the Fire and Rescue Service, prior to the need to make a 999 call. This continues the shift in the Service's activities from intervention to prevention and will expand the community use of Fire Stations mentioned later in this document.
- 4.1.6 The Service is also using the Fire Services Emergency Cover (FSEC) computer modelling system supplied by ODPM to further review its

response to emergency incidents. When the FSEC project is completed it may re-target emergency cover from commercial and industrial properties to domestic areas where the highest numbers of fatalities and injuries currently occur. If this were the case the Fire and Rescue Service might need fewer, but better equipped, fire stations. Some outlying retained stations would have to be upgraded to day crewed or 24 hour shift stations, whilst others could be considered as an overprovision as a result of the improved cover provided by the upgraded stations. 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.

- 4.1.7 In the last year the Service has established five Area Risk Management Teams in Coleshill, Nuneaton, Rugby, Leamington and Stratford. This had been done by relocating personnel from central support departments. Additional accommodation for these teams has been found within the existing premises, with a resultant easing of the overcrowded situation in office accommodation in Budbrooke and Nuneaton Technical Fire safety centres.
- 4.1.8 The introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System and other administration intensive duties will place additional demands on office accommodation with extra hours needing to be worked on station, particularly for retained personnel.

4.2 Collaboration and Partnerships

- 4.2.1 The Service has actively pursued collaboration with other agencies on a number of fronts and will continue to do so.
- 4.2.2 The sharing of the Radford Road fire house in Coventry with West Midlands Fire Service has allowed Warwickshire to meet its statutory training requirements at a fraction of the cost of building and maintaining its own facility.
- 4.2.3 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 operational level.
- 4.2.4 The establishment of a West Midlands Regional Fire Control, scheduled for 2007/08, will remove the need for the Service to provide accommodation for its own control room and may result in more office space becoming available at Service Headquarters in Leamington. This will depend on the number of staff who move to the regional control centre, those who decide to leave and those to be redeployed.

- 4.2.5 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 Fire Fighter groups.
- 4.2.6 The Fire a Rescue Service is looking to develop its business through partnerships and will look positively on any opportunities for collaboration.

4.3 Accommodation Required for Support Activities

- 4.3.1 In recent years the Service has recruited a number of additional support staff in areas such as Youth Development, Community Fire Safety, Business Development and within the Area Risk Management Teams. This has contributed to a shortage of accommodation, which will mean that alternative ways of working may be considered alongside finding new office space.
- 4.3.2 The pilot scheme to transfer 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 new drive towards Community Fire Stations, however, such moves would have to be balanced against the need for community centred events and initiatives.

4.4 Community Involvement / Community Fire Safety

- 4.4.1 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. There has also been a rapid growth in the size of the Young Firefighters Association in Warwickshire and more stations are looking to start groups in their own areas. This, of course puts additional pressures on the accommodation areas.
- 4.4.2 Whilst good progress is now being made to modernise facilities on stations, the Service still needs to address issues such as outdated or inadequate heating, lighting and toilet facilities as these community based initiatives are expanded and extended.
- 4.4.3 The Service's properties are also badly out of date with regard to energy consumption and conservation; most have minimal insulation and are single glazed.
- 4.4.4 Disabled access and facilities on Fire Stations are currently being addressed through a centrally driven and funded programme, which should be completed by the end of 2006. This will bring the stations up to the standard required to ensure compliance with the Disability

Discrimination Act and open our stations up to all members of the local communities.

4.5 **Space Requirements**

- 4.5.1 As has already been mentioned the Service 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 and the limited use of home working and 'hot desking' has alleviated some of the resulting pressure on accommodation. The situation has now been reached, however, when any subsequent expansion or collaboration will have to compete for limited space on retained stations or will require the acquisition of new accommodation. The possible move of Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance Trust's Headquarters and Control room away from Leamington, which is under discussion at the moment, would have a similar result.

4.6 **Occupancy**

- 4.6.1 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 Service'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. With all this taken into account, the table below attempts to set out the occupancy figures for Service premises.

Table to show Occupancy Figures for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Premises

Premises Name	Description	Total Staff at Premises	Full Time Equivalent	Maximum Staff on duty at one time
20 Nuneaton	Shift / ART	58	57.5	19
Nuneaton FSC	Fire Safety	8	6.6	8
21 Bedworth	Day Crewed / Retained	24	21	18
Bedworth TADC	Training Centre	25	21	25
22 Coleshill	Day Crewed / Retained / ART	31	27.75	20
23 Polesworth	Retained	12	9.5	12
24 Atherstone	Day Crewed / Retained	21	18.75	15
25 Brinklow	Retained	11	9.25	11
26 Rugby	Shift / ART	56	55.5	17
27 Kenilworth	Retained / Victim Support Unit	11	9.25	11
28 Warwick	Retained / Transport Office	12	10.75	11
Budbrooke FSC	Fire Safety	15	13	15
29 Leamington/SHQ	Shift / ART / Main Offices	143	141	80
30 Southam	Retained	12	10	9
31 Fenny Compton	Retained	9	7.75	9
34 Shipston	Retained	14	12	14
35 Stratford	Shift / Retained / ART	43	39.75	20
36 Bidford	Retained	12	9.25	12
37 Alcester	Retained	10	9.25	9
38 Studley	Retained	12	9.75	12
39 Henley	Retained	10	8.5	9
40 Wellesbourne	Retained	11	9	11

Key: Shift - Wholtime Station with 4 watches providing 24 hour cover.
Day Crewed - Wholtime 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.

5.0 Key Areas For Change

5.1 Female Changing Facilities

5.1.1 An important issue for the Service with regard to its property portfolio is 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.

- 5.1.2 Whilst good progress has been made three stations and two centres have no adequate provision for female changing and washing facilities. A project to provide suitable changing and shower facilities at the Service Training and Development Centre at Bedworth is underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2005. Initial plans and costings are also being obtained for the necessary work to be carried out at Studley Fire Station.
- 5.1.3 These are, in most cases, medium sized projects that will have to be completed by external contractors. The projects are being funded on a rolling basis using funds from Capital Bids.

5.2 Security of Premises

- 5.2.1 Whilst modernisation and collaboration projects have brought many benefits to the Service they have also presented a new set of problems to be addressed.
- 5.2.2 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 some of these 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.
- 5.2.3 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.
- 5.2.4 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 Service and it's staff.
- 5.2.5 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.
- 5.2.6 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.
- 5.2.7 These factors, combined with the drive to encourage more public access to, and use of, Fire Stations means that the Service will need to review and improve the security measures, both active and passive, which are currently in place for its staff and premises.

- 5.2.8 The Service intends to explore the viability of a County wide electronic door entry system using individually issued proximity cards. If found to be viable then the intention would be to gradually roll the system out across the Service on a prioritised basis taking into account public access requirements, staff safety, the current security measures in place and availability of funds.
- 5.2.9 It is also 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.

5.3 Fire Station Appliance Bay Doors

- 5.3.1 Four fire stations still have very heavy manually operated doors dating from their initial installation some thirty years ago. With the diversity of personnel now joining the Fire Service, and modern day emphasis on correct manual handling, 17 door sets are in need of replacement with lighter, automatic doors. This has the additional benefit of opening up the inside of the stations to the local communities that they serve, raising interest in the activities taking place.
- 5.3.2 This issue is being 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. Health and safety concerns will require at least 4 more door sets to be replaced this year.
- 5.3.3 The Service has received Capital Funds to address this issue in 2005/06. The remaining rear door at Atherstone Fire Station and both rear doors at Bedworth Fire Station will be replaced in 2005. Any remaining funds will be used to begin the replacement of the bay doors at Rugby Fire Station.
- 5.3.4 A further capital bid for 2006/07 should enable the Service to complete the replacement of all of the remaining old style bay doors.
- 5.3.5 Arrangements for the maintenance of the electrically operated doors need to be addressed to reduce the risk of failure and accidents.

5.4 Service Control Suite

- 5.4.1 Following the cessation of the combined radio project with West Midlands, Hereford and Worcester, the Service is now awaiting news on the establishment of a regional Fire Control centre, originally scheduled to go live in 2007/08. This has left Service Control staff in limbo and their working environment is now in serious and urgent need of refurbishment.
- 5.4.2 The Service will carry out redecoration and minor refurbishment as funds allow this year. It should be noted, however, that if the regional Fire Control project is significantly delayed then the Service Control

Suite will need major refurbishment (both the roof and suspended floor in the main operations room are giving cause for concern) which would require a Capital Bid to be made.

5.6 General Refurbishments.

- 5.6.1 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.
- 5.6.2 It should be noted that many schemes to improve conditions on fire stations have been carried out through the implementation of self-help schemes with materials being provided from Service funding and labour often being provided freely by station personnel. The adoption of the Integrated Personal Development System and other changes in working practice following the Fire Service modernisation agreement, combined with the effect of the Asbestos Management Regulations means these schemes have now all but ceased. This will create further pressures on existing budgets.

6.0 Review Procedure

- 6.1 The existing property portfolio is under a continuous rolling review by the Technical Support Department and Health and Safety Department in conjunction with Station Managers. In addition the Service will continue to respond proactively to the modernisation agenda being set nationally, which currently leaves many unknowns in terms of office and vehicle accommodation requirements.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Service Asset Management Plan is presented for your comment and endorsement.

William Brown
County Fire Officer

Shire Hall
Warwick

18th May 2005