

# Decision proposed to be taken by the Community Safety Portfolio Holder on or after 29 June 2012

## Communities and Local Government Fire and Rescue Service Capital Funding Bid

### Recommendation

That the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety approve the submission of a funding bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government to support the construction of a Fire & Rescue Training facility within Warwickshire.

### 1 Key Issues

- 1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) secured capital grant funding for fire and rescue authorities in England of £70m per annum for years 2012-2015 (£210m). During 2011/12 and 2012/13 each fire and rescue authority received a pro-rata allocation of the £70m per annum. Following consultation, the Minister agreed that funding from 2013/14 to 2014/15 will be based on a combination of;
  - 1.1.1 an efficiency fund, administered as a capital grant via a bidding process.
  - 1.1.2 a pro-rata distribution using the current distribution method.
- 1.2 CLG require confirmation that bids have been approved by the respective fire and rescue authority.
- 1.3 WCC is presently engaged with a major project to sell the present combined fire station/control and HQ site in Leamington Spa and relocate these functions in addition to a bespoke training facility. A successful bid to the CLG would significantly assist in the funding of this project –see 2.7.
- 1.4 The submission of this bid to the CLG actively supports the project work around the new fire station and will not delay this ongoing project.
- 1.5 An assessment of the bid will be based on a ratio of the amount requested and the savings identified as a result of the project being completed.
- 1.6 Although the guidance document refers to ‘an efficiency fund’ there are no references to repayment of the monies secured via the bid process and as such there are no significant risks associated with successful submission of this bid. The bid however is required to declare efficiencies.

## **2. Options and Proposal**

- 2.1 Members recognise the need to improve the operational training provision within Warwickshire. This recognition led to the inclusion of a proposal within the 2010-2013 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to establish and commission a purpose built training facility-see attached.
- 2.2 WFRS's training facility is presently accommodated across two sites, one within Bedworth and the second at the rear of Nuneaton Fire Station.
- 2.3 The site at Nuneaton has access to some limited practical training space and resources, the site at Bedworth has no outside training space and is used to facilitate classroom based instruction and assessments.
- 2.4 WFRS presently outsources key elements of risk critical training to venues outside of Warwickshire. The risk critical training outsourced at present is breathing apparatus training, specifically the use of breathing apparatus within hot, toxic and flammable atmospheres. This training provides firefighters with experience of working in realistic hot-fire conditions where they are taught about fire behaviour, door entry techniques gas cooling and extinction of a fire.
- 2.5 Should WFRS need to introduce additional training within this area there would be resultant increase in outsourcing costs.
- 2.6 Although training providers are identified via a competitive procurement process, increases in costs to outsource training are beyond the control of WFRS.
- 2.7 The provision of a dedicated training facility within Warwickshire will enable the in house delivery of all outsourced breathing apparatus training and the introduction of further areas of training to enhance fire fighter safety.
- 2.8 The bid to CLG details the costs to build the new facility, which have been estimated at £5,000,000 including land costs.
- 2.9 The provision of more frequent realistic training and the introduction of additional fire fighting skills will reduce the economic cost of fire to the residents and businesses of Warwickshire.
- 2.10 A positive impact on the economic cost of fire will support the 'Going for Growth' vision, making Warwickshire a more attractive place to live and work.

## **3 Timescales associated with the decision/next steps**

- 3.1 The submission to CLG must be received on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012.

#### 4. Background Papers

1. 2010-2013 Integrated Risk Management Plan IRMP.
2. CLG Bid Guidance Document.
3. CLG Bid Calculator .

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