



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESTATES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE held on Friday, 6 November 2020 at 2.00pm - Remote Meeting - Via Skype

PRESENT: Councillors Karen Mundry (Chair), Stef Nelson, David Edwardes, Marilyn Houston, Stuart Parker, Peter Wheeler, Norman Wright and Independent (Non-Elected) Member Lesley Thomson

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members are reminded that this meeting would be audio recorded and broadcasted live to enable public viewing.

B Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

C Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

D Minutes of the Estates and Property Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Estates and Performance Committee held on Friday 13th March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

6 CREWE FIRE STATION

This item was considered first at the request of a Member and with the consent of the Chair.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which presented an overview of the feasibility work relating to the Crewe Fire Station site. He informed Members that there had been two major challenges that had extended the feasibility work: how to secure a suitable temporary fire station arrangement during the build that was achievable for an acceptable cost; and whether the bungalow building on the site should be retained or demolished.

The Director explained that there were still two challenges that had the potential to impact upon work at the Crewe Fire Station site: a restrictive covenant concerned with building height needed to be relinquished; and the potential impact of HS2 development work needed to be clarified with absolute certainty. Unless these were both brought to a satisfactory conclusion the project could not proceed.

Members were reminded that the previous feasibility report exploring a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site concluded that the facility could not be created without spending well in excess of what was felt to be value for money. The Head of Estates and Facilities explained the options for the Crewe Fire Station site that were contained within the recently completed feasibility report from IKG Consulting Limited, Appendix 1 to the report supplied with the supplementary agenda pack.

Members considered all options within the feasibility report, noting that Option 4 was expected to be the cheapest and that Option 6 was expected to achieve the shortest construction period.

A Member queried whether additional environmental enhancements such as electric charging points had been considered within the options. The Head of Estates and Facilities assured Members that there had been consideration of the enhanced environmental performance measures that could be achieved. The plans were intended to include the installation of charging points as it was not only sensible to do so, it would help to meet any aspirations to deliver a zero carbon rated building.

A Member required further clarification on the term “partial replacement” used within the feasibility report and raised concerns that this could be misinterpreted. The Head of Estates and Facilities confirmed that the term was used as the bungalow was intended to be retained for those options where the word ‘partial’ had been used. However, the fire station would be replaced and the bungalow incorporated into the design. The Director of Governance and Commissioning agreed that the term “partial” was probably unhelpful; a new fire station would be created regardless of the option selected.

Another Member queried the market value of the bungalow. The Director of Governance and Commissioning stated that the market value had not been calculated. At this point the main concern was the environmental value of the bungalow. Was it better to retain it, or demolish it and use the spoil on site, e.g. for some of the foundations.

Members raised concerns about the impact of HS2 upon the site. The Director of Governance and Commissioning stated that the communications received did not make it clear whether there would be any impact and confirmed that he was seeking further information from HS2 Ltd.

Members reviewed all information contained within the report and agreed that Option 6 should be the preferred option. However, if a suitable site could not be found for the temporary fire station, then Option 4 should be pursued. Members also recommended that further capital funding should to be allocated to the project by the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] Option 6 within the feasibility report be adopted as the preferred option – more properly described as complete replacement of the fire station, but incorporating the existing bungalow building; and**

- [2] **Option 4 be pursued if a suitable alternative site for the temporary fire station cannot be secured in order for Option 6 to proceed.**

RECOMMENDED: That

- [3] **The Fire Authority allocated additional capital funding (£2m) for the Crewe Fire Station project.**

3 FIRE STATION MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

This item was considered second at the request of a Member and with the consent of the Chair.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided information on the Fire Station Modernisation Programme (the Programme). The team responsible for the delivery of the Programme provided additional information about their contribution to the Programme.

The Maintenance and Property Manager provided information on the works that were completed during Year One of the Programme. The Procurement and Contracts Manager referred to the Social Value report for Year One of the Programme which stated how the Programme had supported the local economy. She highlighted that £500,000 had been spent in the local supply chain for Year One and that a targeted 24% of the total supply chain spend would be spent locally for Year Two.

The Group Manager for Projects discussed the plans for the works in Year Two. He reiterated that Year Two had a greater emphasis to reduce carbon emissions in comparison to the plans for works in Years Zero and One. The Building Services Engineer explained the enhanced environmental measures that were intended in Year Two.

The Head of Estates and Facilities explained that the Programme spend to-date were significant higher than anticipated, with £3.25m spent across the six fire stations within Years Zero and One. It was suggested that costs for future modernisation activity could be reduced by reviewing the Programme's plans for Years Three and beyond. This would lead to a less ambitious Programme.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning highlighted the four types of works that tended to attract significant costs. Members felt that as the types of work identified were designed to enhance staff welfare they did not wish to compromise by reducing the extent of the Programme. Members were comfortable that the Year 2 works should proceed as planned. It was noted that officers were also intending to continue with the pre-construction work for Year Three.

Members noted that in order to complete the Programme, further borrowing would be required. The Director of Governance and Commissioning advised that further borrowing would heavily impact revenue streams. Members agreed to recommend that the Fire Authority allocate further capital funding (£3m).

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted; and

[2] Officers proceed with the works for Year Two as planned, without reduction.

RECOMMENDED: That

[3] The Fire Authority allocate £3m additional capital funding to enable Year 3 of the Programme to proceed during 2021-22.

2 SERVICE HOUSING

The Project Manager dealing with the programme relating to the service housing introduced the report which provided an update on refurbishment works to the service houses and confirmed progress with ancillary matters, i.e. sales of surplus properties and processes and documentation.

Members were reminded that the Committee had considered a report in March 2019 which contained details of the programme to refurbish the service houses. The Project Manager explained that a significant amount of work had been completed, but that sizeable proportion of it would be better described as maintenance work. This had meant that the refurbishment/improvement works were being delivered at a slower pace than had been hoped.

He also reported two of the five surplus service houses had been sold and that one was currently in the process of being sold. Two of the houses were proving to be more difficult to sell.

A Member queried whether consideration had been given to sell the houses to an organisation that might want them for social rental. The Director of Governance and Commissioning stated that this option had not previously been considered and that it would be considered.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

4 CHESTER FIRE STATION

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided Members with an update about progress on the construction of Chester Fire Station. Members noted that despite setbacks during the initial stages of the project and the current Covid-19 Pandemic, the project had progressed well, with its completion due early in 2021.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Chester Fire Station report be noted.

5 TRAINING CENTRE

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided Members with information about progress with the Training Centre project. He confirmed that the project had overspent and explained the major reasons for this. He was pleased to report that the site would be handed over as complete within 10 days and that thereafter staff training on how to use the various facilities within the training centre would get underway. Members would receive a tour of the site as soon as it was safe to do so.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

7 WILMSLOW EMERGENCY SERVICES FACILITY

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided a brief update about work to-date associated with the decision to introduce the day crewing duty system at Wilmslow Fire Station.

He explained that discussions with colleagues from North West Ambulance Service and Cheshire Constabulary identified the potential to create an emergency services facility in Wilmslow. As a result feasibility work was ongoing, which was aimed at establishing how such a facility could be created on the site, together with the erection of nine service houses close-by.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.