



AS A RESULT OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH MEETING IN PERSON CAUSED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE VIA SKYPE.

THE LAW AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING DID NOT RECOGNISE REMOTE MEETINGS (LIKE SKYPE) AS FULFILLING THE REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC ACCESS. THEREFORE, THE MEETING WAS INFORMAL WITH NO DECISIONS BEING MADE. ANY DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE MADE IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WILL BE DEALT WITH AT THE NEXT FORMAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

NOTES OF THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE ESTATES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE held on Tuesday, 17 August 2021 at via Skype at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors Karen Mundry (Chair), Marilyn Houston, Stef Nelson, Stuart Parker, Norman Wright and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

The informal meeting was held using Skype.

B Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rob Moreton and Peter Wheeler.

C Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

D Minutes of the Estates and Property Committee

Members did not raise any issues about the minutes.

2 CREWE FIRE STATION

The Director of Governance and Commissioning and Head of Estates took Members through this item which updated Members on the progress with the project to replace the existing fire station in Crewe.

The contractor, ISG Construction Limited had been appointed in June 2021. At this point the Fire Authority was committed to the project to the end of the pre-construction activity that should be completed during December 2021. Once completed the Committee would need to meet to determine whether to proceed with the construction of the new fire station.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning advised Members that there had been an indication that an alternative site could be released from the HS2 project which might be suitable to build the new fire station. This did have its attractions e.g. there would be no requirement for a temporary fire station, the existing fire station would continue to operate until the new fire station was ready for occupation. The difficulty was the uncertainty about timescale and the complexity of agreeing the transactions that would be involved. For now, officers believed that the current plans should proceed. Officers would revert to Members if the alternative site option becomes available at a time that made it a realistic option.

Members were referred to the images of the proposed building and site layout and the Summary Progress Report, which contained information about the sustainable design development. Members referred to the building design of the new fire station and asked if the 'bronze effect' on the appliance bay was weatherproof. The Head of Estates confirmed that the finish would not weather, but would require cleaning from time to time. The building had been designed to be as maintenance free as possible

Provided that Members did not raise any concerns, the planning application would be submitted to Cheshire East Council. Members were content.

Members were happy to move onto the next item.

3 FIRE STATION MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which updated Members about the Fire Station Modernisation Programme (the Programme) at the mid-point of its delivery.

The Director advised Members that to date ten fire stations had been completed and there were eleven outstanding which were due to be completed during Years Three, Four and Five.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report, a table which summarised the spend to-date and included estimated costs for the balance of the Programme. The estimates were based on a cost per square metre and assumed that the fire stations would not be extended. The Programme would only continue into Years Four and Five with additional funding. Whilst the Capital Strategy already included £3m for Year Four (2022-23) and £3m for Year Five (2023-24), this money had not been released therefore was not part of the Capital Programme.

Members indicated that they were keen to see the programme completed.

Members were happy to move onto the next item.

4 SERVICE HOUSING PROJECT

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report that provided an update for Members on the programme to refurbish the service houses and to confirm progress with other aspects of the project.

Members were advised that spend on the programme to-date was £626K although during the period of the programme, some other works had been carried out on the service houses, funded from the repairs and maintenance budget. The works to be carried out this financial year could not exceed £300k due to an ongoing VAT reclaim calculation that restricts spend. Essentially, this year's spend would see the funds from the sale of the service houses exhausted, with funds continuing to be utilised from the ongoing repairs and maintenance budget. Therefore, a further budget allocation would be required for the programme to continue. The current estimate for the outstanding works that were required to be delivered over the next 3 to 5 years was approximately £1.4m.

The Head of Estates reported that a range of new material had been produced for both the service house residents and the Estates Team that included a revised License Agreement and Resident's Handbook. The processes for moving in and out of the service houses had also been reviewed and refined as well as the process relating to defect management. A residents Intranet Section had also been created which provided useful information and a portal through which house defects, or issues could be raised with the Estates service desk team.

A Member asked if the Estates team undertook regular property checks. In response, the Director of Governance and Commissioning confirmed that a robust process would be in place going forward. The houses would be inspected annually and an operational officer could undertake this task.

A Member noted that 14 boilers had been replaced and asked if heat pumps had been considered. In response, the Head of Estates advised that heat pumps would not be appropriate for the properties for a number of reasons including the plumbing. He confirmed that the inefficient boilers had been replaced with new highly efficient boilers.

Members indicated that they were keen to see the programme completed.

Members were happy to conclude the informal meeting.