

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 21 SEPTEMBER 2016
REPORT OF: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
AUTHOR: GUS O'ROURKE

SUBJECT: PROVISION OF TRAINING FACILITIES -
FUTURE OPTIONS

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents a number of options for the future provision of operational training facilities for the Service.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] consider the options presented;
- [2] endorse option 2A as the preferred option (recognising that this will require the retention of the Authority's Sadler Road site); and
- [3] authorise expenditure up to a maximum of £500,000 to develop Option 2A to the next stage of a detailed business case.

Background

2. The Blue Light Collaboration (BLC) Programme was approved by Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner in December 2015.
3. The original business case for the BLC Programme included a requirement for the development of a new training facility at the Clemonds Hey site (and sale of the Sadler Road site).

Information

4. The Service undertook a detailed review of its operational training requirements and facilities that would need to be relocated to and developed at Clemonds Hey. In order to do so the Service brought together a project team of experienced officers and an external consultant (who is currently supporting the Authority with its new fire station build programme).
5. As a result of the review it became apparent that planning considerations, risks and capital costs associated with certain options meant that they were not viable and therefore these cannot be recommended by officers.

6. Of particular note, it was identified that although achievable to fit some aspects of the Service's existing operational training facilities on the Clemonds Hey site they could not be completely replicated. In addition, a number of cost and ecological issues meant that the re-creation of the Service's training facilities in accordance with the initial scope of the BLC Programme was not a viable option. Details of this option are still included in the Options Appraisal below.
7. The options for the future provision of training facilities for the Service have been presented to Members at their Planning Days.

Options Appraisal

8. Officers identified five possible options for the Service's new training facilities. These are detailed below.
 1. A new training venue at Clemonds Hey which replicates some of the existing facilities at Sadler Road.
 - 1A. A new training venue at Clemonds Hey which replicates all existing training facilities and has some additional facilities which would meet future needs.
 2. Refurbishment of the Service's training facility at the Sadler Road site.
 - 2A. A new training facility at the Sadler Road site, developed and improved to meet future needs.
 3. A joint training facility located at the Sadler Road site for use by both Cheshire Police and the Service.
9. A number of factors were used to help determine a recommendation for Members. A suitable assessment was developed using the criteria listed below:
 - i. Available whole life of facilities.
 - ii. Meeting future training needs.
 - iii. Land ownership.
 - iv. Parking.
 - v. Site Layout.
 - vi. Impact on the environment.
 - vii. Highway access/egress.
 - viii. Speed of delivery.
 - ix. Joint working.
 - x. Temporary accommodation.
10. In addition to the above suitability assessment criteria the initial capital cost and whole life costs were assessed.

11. The review undertaken into all options is contained within a report produced by the Service's planning consultant. The report is comprehensive and takes into account the extensive review work that has been undertaken by the project team (in excess of 100 pages) and can be provided to Members on request. Hard copies will be made available in Member group rooms prior to the meeting.

Option 1 and 1A

12. Option 1 and 1A would involve the development of new training facilities at the Clemonds Hey site. Option 1 would seek to replicate the existing facilities at the Sadler Road site on the land to the rear of the Clemonds Hey building. Option 1A would seek to achieve the same as option 1, but with additional training assets that would enhance the facility.
13. Options 1 and 1A would both include practical training 'outdoor' assets and it was proposed that the incident command training suite would be relocated into the upper floor of the Police's tactical training building.
14. A number of collaboration benefits were identified when this option was researched. However, these were significantly outweighed by cost and a number of risks. These included.
 - Water supply and drainage constraints.
 - Space above the tactical training building (for new ICTS) restricted by structure and requiring fire safety upgrades that made it potentially more costly than erecting a separate building.
 - Carbonaceous discharge/noise/HGV's potentially affecting neighbours.
 - Command training area restrictive and not providing any opportunity for future-proofing or development.
 - A line of established trees that may prove difficult to remove from a planning perspective.
 - Costs being prohibitive. Option 1 cost is estimated at £11.7M and option 1A cost is estimated at £12.6M.
 - A risk that not all required facilities could be built on the site requiring additional training facilities to be constructed and delivered elsewhere at further cost.
15. Consequently, Options 1 and 1A were not deemed suitable by the review team and therefore, cannot be recommended.

Option 2 and 2A

16. Option 2 and 2A would involve the retention of the Sadler Road site. Under option 2 the site would be refurbished. Option 2A includes the retention of the Sadler Road site with site development to significantly improve current facilities and with the capacity to expand the facilities to meet future needs of the Service and specific elements of the Fire Reform Programme.

17. The refurbishment cost of the existing facilities in Option 2 is estimated at £4.33m. It is projected that the subsequent total revenue costs of the site over a 20-year period would be £3.86m. Therefore, the whole life 20-year costs are estimated to be £8.19m. However, it is anticipated that the existing facilities in option 2 would need major refurbishment or replacement in 10 years. This would add at least an additional £1.6m in costs making a comparative whole life cost of £9.79m
18. The capital cost of building new training facilities in, Option 2A, is estimated to be £7.45m with revenue costs over 20 years being £3.86m giving a whole life 20 year cost of £11.3m. However, whilst option 2A may require some refurbishment after 20 years its anticipated minimum lifespan is 20-25 years.
19. Option 2A provides modern and enhanced realistic training facilities.
20. The review team believes that option 2A will provide better long-term value and importantly, significantly greater benefits to firefighter safety and is, therefore, the recommended option.

Option 3

21. Option 3 was discussed with the Police and it is not possible or achievable at this present time. However, approval of option 2 or 2A would mean that it would still be possible to explore joint training in the future.

Next Steps

22. Subject to Members approval, the next steps will involve the production of a detailed business case which will allow the Service to procure a suitable contractor.
23. The procurement methodology and process, previously used to develop the current new fire stations and Safety Centre is likely to be utilised. It will be critical to the programme's success that the facilities are correctly designed, meet the user requirements and provide a suitable solution to manage the construction risks.
24. During this stage the following will be undertaken:
 - Appoint consultants required for the project (quantity surveyor and services engineer)
 - Undertake surveys, such as ground investigation, contamination, topographical, ecological etc.
 - Develop the design brief in conjunction with users
 - Produce draft plans
 - Produce a second stage cost estimate (to a greater detail than the sums currently prepared)
 - Liaise with statutory bodies such as services suppliers (water in particular) and the Environment Agency to ensure the design proposal meets modern regulations.
 - Discuss the programme with the local planning authority
 - Appoint a contractor and its design team

25. This should ensure that the delivery period, following the completion of the business case and approval to proceed, is reduced to a minimum and all the reports necessary to support the planning application are in place.
26. Members will receive further reports at various stages of the project and be asked to make key decisions. e.g. Approval of programme budget and appointment of contractors.
27. It is anticipated that costs up to £500k may be incurred for the production of the detailed business case.

Cheshire FRS Incident Command Training Suite (ICTS)

28. It should be noted that this report and the financial implications do not include any upgrade/refurbishments of the ICTS software or hardware. This facility will in the future need to have its software and hardware upgraded to take advantage of technological developments and to improve the learning experience in the suite. The costs quoted do include building alterations that will benefit the suite, but it is inevitable that new future software and technology will also be required to enhance the suite.

Financial Implications

29. It should be noted that the costings have been identified using figures associated with other fire & rescue service training centre developments. Whilst the costs outlined below are estimates, they are the most accurate costs which can be identified prior to the development of a detailed business case and the conclusion of procurement.
30. Estimated Costs:

Option	Property Revenue Costs over 20 years (at current cost)	Capital Costs	Total Whole Life Costs
Option 2 Sadler Road Refurbishment	£5,464,200 (includes refurbishment after 10 years)	£4,327,050	£9,791,250
Option 2A Sadler Road Enhanced	£3,864,200	£7,457,050	£11,321,250

31. The costs of the approved option will be included in the Authority's Capital Programme. The revenue cost of up to £500k for the production of a detailed business case will be included in the revenue budget and funded from reserves.
32. At present the Service spends approximately £100K sending firefighters and officers to the Fire Service College to undertake realistic training required to develop their skills and to provide the Service with an opportunity to assess them in realistic conditions. It is anticipated that if option 2A is approved this could be carried out 'in-house' within the new training facility, providing a revenue saving.
33. There are risks to VAT recovery on the project build. The Authority is taking advice on these with a view to mitigating them.

Legal Implications

34. Any programme of this nature will require a variety of bought-in skills to support the in-house team. It will be important to secure the right support and ensure that all parties are clear about their roles.
35. The contract associated with the delivery of the new training facilities will be relatively complex due to the nature of the work that will be involved and will be for a significant sum. External legal support may be engaged to help with the procurement and preparation of the contract.

Equality and Diversity Implications

36. The proposed programme will be underpinned by a comprehensive Equality Impact assessment and the development of the programme will be supported by a working group which will include representatives from all operational roles within the Service.

Environmental Implications

37. There will be a requirement to undertake a number of ecology surveys to determine the effect of the proposed development on the wildlife within the site and the surrounding area. Any planning application will need to demonstrate the impact on protected species and the measures to be put in place to protect and develop the habitats required.
38. Due to natural life cycles, most ecological studies of this nature can take several months to complete and have specific seasonal windows in which surveys can be carried out. The investigations made to date suggest that developing the Sadler Road site (Options 2 and 2A) would have a limited ecological impact on protected species, with only bats and nesting birds requiring investigation.

CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD

TEL [01606] 868804

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Blue Light Collaboration Business Case
Blue Light Collaboration CFA Paper December 2015
Report of the JESIP Review