



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESTATES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE held on Friday, 9 December 2022 at Fire Conference Room - Fire Service HQ, Clemonds Hey, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2UA at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors Karen Mundry (Chair), Michael Beanland, Stef Nelson and Norman Wright.

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members are reminded that the meeting would be audio recorded.

B Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marilyn Houston, Rob Moreton, Denis Murphy, Stuart Parker, Peter Wheeler and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett. Councillor Michael Beanland attended as a substitute for Councillor Stuart Parker.

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 Tuesday 1st March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 FIRE STATION MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

The Head of Service Improvement presented an update on the progress of the Fire Station Modernisation Programme which allowed Members to share their views on plans to continue the Programme. He reminded Members that it was initially agreed that £17 million would be spent on the Fire Station Modernisation Programme over 5 and a half years.

However, due to the impacts of the Covid Pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and inflation, further funding was required for the completion of the Programme. Some fire stations also required further work than initially identified at the start of the Programme. The Director of Governance advised that the increase in costs and competing demands such as environmental efficiency, meant the Programme timeline and priorities required revision.

The Head of Service Improvement highlighted the revised Programme criteria attached as Appendix 3. A significant driver for future spend was the usage of the fire stations that still required modernisation. The fact that both Ellesmere Port and Warrington Fire Stations were going to be very significant draws on the remaining budget meant that it was inevitable that a revised approach was necessary. Members agreed with the criteria of the revised Programme and instructed officers to produce a revised timeline.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Programme Delivery Principles and Programme Criteria be supported; and**
- [2] officers develop the revised Programme taking the Principles and Criteria into account.**

3 CREWE FIRE STATION PROJECT

The Head of Service Improvement introduced the report which provided an update on the work that had taken place on the Crewe Fire Station Project following the agreement to proceed.

He informed Members that an additional 3 weeks had been added to the scheduled project timeline and that the project remained on budget. All risks associated with the project were being reviewed at the monthly Land and Station meeting and lessons learnt from the Chester Fire Station build were taken on board.

Members queried how renewable energy resources could be put back into the grid. The Head of Service Improvement explained that some energy created from fire station solar panels had been put back into the grid. However, it was more beneficial to retain/ store the energy for use at a time when no energy was being created by the solar panels.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the report on Crewe Fire Station Project be noted.**

4 WILMSLOW DUTY SYSTEM TRANSITION

The Head of Service Improvement provided an update on the project to transition the current Wilmslow nucleus duty system to a day crewing duty system.

Members were informed that five houses had already completed, and the rest were expected to complete at the end of January 2023. The total cost of the houses was over £4m and had been funded from borrowing. It was expected that some of the £4.5m budget would not be spent.

A Member queried whether the cost of the borrowing was covered by the savings on staffing costs. The Director of Governance advised that this was the expected position. Members noted the benefits of the project which included staffing savings, operation efficiencies and the addition of assets to the Fire Authority.

The Head of Service Improvement stated that all staff effected by the transition of duty system had been consulted. The house allocation process was underway and led by the Service Delivery team to ensure best fit.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report on Wilmslow Duty System Transition be noted.

5 SERVICE HOUSING PROJECT

The Project Manager provided an update on the project to refurbish the Service houses. He advised that funding for the project was supplemented by the sale of five Service houses from around the county in 2019.

He explained that the project was currently in phase five and most of the allocated budget available next year would be spent on new roofing for houses in Congleton. A further £1m was required to be spent and delivered over the next 3 to 4 years. Members raised concerns with the availability of funds to finance the project. Whilst this was a valid question the Director of Governance felt that there remained some scope to fund the remainder of the project from future house sales. Some works were, in fact, being funded from the annual maintenance budget too.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report on Service Housing Project be noted.