

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: ESTATES AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE
DATE: 13TH MARCH 2020
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: FIRE STATION MODERNISATION PROGRAMME
– PROGRESS REPORT AND FUNDING

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members about progress with the Fire Station Modernisation Programme (the Programme), particularly in relation to Year Zero (2018/19) and Year One (2019/20). To seek agreement from Members to secure the release of further capital funding for the Programme.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Note progress; and
- [2] Agree that officers should secure the release of further capital funding for the Programme.

Background

2. The Fire Authority approved the Programme in September 2018, allocating £8.5m with £3.5m released initially. The Estates and Property Committee agreed the Delivery Schedule for the Programme in March 2019. This is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Information

3. Two fire stations have been modernised; Bollington and Tarporley (Year Zero). The works were completed in January 2020. The works were procured on a Direct Award basis under the Procure North West Lite Framework. This provided a quick route to market and promised an early completion date. Unfortunately, this did not prove to be the case. The works overran considerably and the contractor did not impress. The PNW Framework Director has been proactive in assisting officers with dealing with the contractor issues. The cost of the works did increase, but not significantly. Officers will show Members some images of the completed works.
4. The procurement of a contractor to deliver the rest of the Programme was concluded in July 2019 and Wates Construction was appointed. Subsequently, a great deal of work has gone into creating a good working relationship. This included the preparation of detailed programmes for the four sites to be modernised in Year One as well as agreeing ways of working to support the successful delivery of the Programme.

5. Four fire stations are currently being modernised; Birchwood, Middlewich, Runcorn and Sandbach (Year One) and are due to be completed in June 2020. The initial period on site has gone well and officers are optimistic that the June deadline will be met.
6. The preparatory work for Year Two is now starting. However, at present there is no funding for this work or subsequent years.

Financial Implications

7. The capital approval for the Programme was £8.5m. At the outset £3.5m was made available for the Programme. This initial sum covers the works carried out in Year Zero and those that are to be completed in Year One.
8. The tables below set out the spend profile to-date:

Year Zero 2018/19 – Actual Spend		
Bollington Fire Station	£233,872	£406,738
Tarporley Fire Station	£172,866	

Year One 2019/20 – Expected Spend		
Birchwood Fire Station	£825,000	£2,900,000
Middlewich Fire Station	£475,000	
Runcorn Fire Station*	£1,025,000	
Sandbach Fire Station	£575,000	

* major project, one of three fire stations in this category

9. Members will see that the first 6 fire stations (of 21 covered by the Programme) will have cost around £3.3m, which is 38% of the £8.5m that has been approved for the Programme. Whilst it is difficult to give a definitive view about the projected overall costs of the Programme it is reasonable to assume that it cannot be completed to the desired standard for £8.5m. Currently, a figure of somewhere between £11.5 and £12m appears more realistic, albeit a lot can change over the next four years (Year Two to Year Five inclusive).
10. Officers do not believe that it is appropriate to seek the allocation of additional funding for the Programme at this point. However, the balance of the £8.5m that has been allocated already needs to be made available if the Programme is to progress.
11. Officers intend to carry out a formal review of the Programme when the Year One works are completed, by which time the preparatory activity associated with the Year Two works should be completed. At that point officers could show Members further detail about actual spend and anticipated spend. Members could then determine how they wish to move forward with the Programme and more particularly whether additional funding should be sought.

Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. The Programme is delivering facilities that meet the Service's expectations around equality and diversity.

Environmental Implications

14. The works to-date have delivered some environmental improvements to the fire stations. However, since the Programme was commenced climate change has become a much more significant issue. Officers intend to carry out an assessment of one fire station in Year Two to establish what would be involved to achieve significant environmental improvements, possibly even a zero carbon building. This will give an indication of the kind of costs that this might entail. It is hoped that this can be factored in to the review mentioned in paragraph 11.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE