

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 20 DECEMBER 2022**

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

LEAD OFFICER: LEIGH WHITEHOUSE, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR RESOURCES

SUBJECT: CHOBHAM AND LINGFIELD FIRE STATIONS – REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE

Purpose of the Report:

This report seeks Cabinet approval to redevelop Chobham and Lingfield Fire Stations to address and mitigate constraints to the service provided by the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and health and safety issues for SFRS operational crews and staff.

This report proposes demolishing the existing fire stations at Vicarage Road, Chobham GU24 8BZ, and Saxbys Lane, Lingfield RH7 6DP, to design and construct two modern fire stations on the existing building footprints. Improvements to both sites are essential to allow SFRS to accommodate the new, larger fire appliances used by the Service and enhance the welfare facilities for SFRS personnel.

Approving the investment and the proposal recommended in this report will allow SFRS to improve and enhance its service and its ability to best protect the lives of Surrey residents.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the allocation of capital funding from the pipeline to redevelop the existing fire stations in Chobham and Lingfield, and design and construct two new fire stations on the existing building footprints. The capital funding required to redevelop the two buildings is commercially sensitive at this time and is set out in the Part 2 report.
2. Approves procurement of appropriate design and construction partners to deliver the design, build and fit out of the two new buildings in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.
3. Notes that, regarding the procurement of design and construction partners, the Executive Director for Resources and the Director of Land and Property are authorised to award such contracts, up to +5% of the budgetary tolerance level.

Reason for Recommendations:

It is essential to redevelop both Chobham and Lingfield Fire Stations in order to:

- Address and mitigate constraints the current buildings present to the SFRS service and personnel based in these fire stations.
- House the new, larger fire appliances used by SFRS.
- Improve the health and safety provision and welfare facilities for SFRS staff.

Executive Summary:

Background

1. SFRS has a legal responsibility to respond to fires, road traffic accidents and other emergencies with crew models that include 24/7 operational staffing. The Service employs approximately 750 members of staff, including 650 firefighters, to serve the 1.2m population across Surrey.
2. To maintain optimal Fire Service provision, SFRS has, and requires, a live network of 25 strategically located fire stations across Surrey. A strategic review of the Council's fire station portfolio, carried out over 2021-22, confirmed that all existing sites remain essential to meeting service response times for fires, road traffic accidents and other emergencies.
3. The review also found that varying degrees of refurbishment is required across all fire stations, but that urgent redevelopment is required at Chobham and Lingfield. The issues identified at these two sites are:
 - a. Structural: the new, larger fire engines cannot be accommodated in the existing bays, and the existing buildings cannot be adapted.
 - b. Health and Safety: there is no separation between "contaminated" and "clean" areas, posing a risk to staff health.
 - c. Welfare: no provision for dignity when sleeping or gender-neutral facilities.
 - d. Net-zero: both sites are high carbon-emitting properties.
4. Furthermore, to be able to carry out their duties, SFRS personnel (and in particular, operational fire crew) are required to maintain stringent levels of fitness. Neither Chobham nor Lingfield fire stations have suitable fitness training facilities; Chobham has a cardio-resistance machine set up in the appliance bay, and Lingfield has a similar piece of equipment in the welfare/rest area.

Options considered

5. Three main options were considered to address and mitigate the issues the current buildings pose to the SFRS and the service it provides:

Option	Description
A	Minimal intervention; refurbish existing buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for improvements to the welfare facilities at both fire stations. • Would not address the fundamental Service requirement to house the new, larger fire appliances.
B	Demolish buildings and clear the sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long construction period.

Option	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for a complete re-design of how the sites are used by SFRS: the buildings would be re-positioned for 'drive through' fire appliance bays. • Anticipated that utilities (water, power, drainage) would have to be re-positioned. • Addresses all Service requirements, enhances Service use of the sites.
C	<p>Redevelop buildings on existing footprints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for money option and aligns to allocated budget. • Demolish both buildings, redesign of internal lay outs, rebuild on existing footprints to suit the individual site parameters. • No requirement to re-position utilities. • Addresses all the Service requirements.

6. The recommended option is Option C which meets SFRS service requirements to best protect the lives of Surrey residents, improves the welfare facilities for SFRS personnel based at the fire station, and is within the pipeline allocation for fire station reconfiguration in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Site redevelopment

7. The proposal to redevelop both Chobham and Lingfield fire stations, as per Option C, will deliver the following critical operational facilities:
- a. Increase the number of appliance bays at each site to two, allowing for an additional "multi-role" vehicle at each station, as well as the larger bay required for the new fire appliances.
 - b. Provide suitable, separate rest areas. At present, staff and crew have to rest and sleep in chairs in a general communal area which is also used for meetings/briefings, preparing and eating meals, and exercising. This space is also shared with other "blue light" community officers. The design plans include provision for dedicated areas for these activities to ensure and promote the privacy and welfare of station personnel.
 - c. Upgraded shower, changing and toilet facilities which are not designated male/female, to provide private and equal access to amenities for all staff (current facilities are designated as "male" only, and are sub-standard).
 - d. Dedicated gym/fitness area.
 - e. Reconfiguration of external space to maximise and make best use of the space for crews to undergo continued skills training at their resident stations, which includes ladder training, road traffic accident training and fire hose training.
8. The construction period for both sites is expected to be one year (October 2023 – October 2024) during which time the SFRS will operate temporary decant options to ensure continuity of its service and associated activities to protect the lives of Surrey residents.
9. Redeveloping the sites also presents an opportunity to significantly reduce the Council's carbon footprint as the new buildings will be more energy efficient, which in turn will also result in a more affordable solution over their long-term economic life.

Figure 1: The proposed developments for the new fire stations



Chobham Fire Station



Lingfield Fire Station

Figure 2: The new, larger fire appliances being rolled out by SFRS



Consultation:

10. The following have been consulted and had input into this proposal:

- SFRS senior management and staff, including on-call fire-fighters who operate out of Chobham and Lingfield Fire Stations.
- Executive Directors within Surrey County Council.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety.
- The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste.
- Surrey County Council officers within the Greener Futures, Land and Property, Finance and Legal teams.

11. A public consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning application.

Risk Management and Implications:

12. Key risks associated with the schemes have been identified and are being actively managed, as outlined below.

	Risk description	Mitigation action/strategy
1.	Planning permission: Site access/green belt land may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application engagement with Reg 3 team • Monitoring responses

	Risk description	Mitigation action/strategy
	delay planning decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Case Officer liaison
2.	Cost increases: Inflation and market cost increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Cost Manager throughout the design development • Cost reviews and reports produced on a regular basis
3.	Delay to project: Delays to timescales from approval, planning or construction will impact costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost estimates include provision for inflation but any delays to the project will result in significant cost increase
4.	Site constraints: Size, geometry, access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered engagement with Service throughout the design development period • Design team to understand necessary restrictions and rights across adjacent lands • Transport and Access assessments to include Construction Management Strategy
5.	Service continuity: During construction period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close engagement is in place for temporary decant options to ensure service continuity during the construction period
6.	Net-zero carbon target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs and construction have factored in opportunities to deliver the sites at the least carbon impact and enable minimal operational carbon footprint going forwards • Undertake sustainability workshops to explore opportunities available to reduce carbon emissions.
7.	Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust public engagement campaign is planned, including engaging with local ward councillors, to inform residents of the plans and give them an opportunity to respond, via the planning application process

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

13. Replacing the existing old and outdated fire stations at Chobham and Lingfield with new, modern and fit for purpose buildings will save on high future maintenance costs. The buildings will be designed to be more energy efficient, so contributing the Council's net-zero ambitions. The new facilities will also allow SFRS to improve its service for resident's safety and enhance and provide for the health, safety and welfare of SFRS personnel working at the fire stations.
14. The capital investment to deliver the new buildings is allocated within the MTFS and is commercially sensitive at this time; this information is set out in the Part 2 report.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

15. Although significant progress has been made to improve the Council's financial position, the financial environment remains challenging. The UK is experiencing the highest levels of inflation for decades, putting significant pressure on the cost of delivering our services. Coupled with continued increasing demand and fixed Government funding this requires an increased focus on financial management to ensure we can continue to deliver services within available funding. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium term financial outlook beyond 2022/23 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term,

our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.

16. The recommendation to transfer capital funding from the pipeline to budget is provided for in the current MTFS, as such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommendations in this report.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

17. Under Section 2(1) of the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 a local authority has extensive development powers and may, for the benefit or improvement of its area, erect, extend, alter or re-erect any building and construct or carry out works on land.
18. Cabinet is under fiduciary duties to residents in utilising public monies and in considering this business case Cabinet Members will want to satisfy themselves that it represents an appropriate use of the Council's resources.
19. When applicable, Legal Services will support with the procurement process to ensure compliance to the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders and any other relevant legislation.

Equalities and Diversity:

20. A People Impact Assessment for both fire stations has been completed by SFRS officers (Annex 1) in place of an Equality Impact Assessment, which is not required.

Other Implications:

21. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/ Looked After Children	No direct implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Separate community and safe places provision, in line with the Council's and SFRS White Ribbon accreditation.
Environmental sustainability	The developments will be designed and built to a high sustainability standard in relation to the council's commitments on net zero emissions, waste minimisation, supporting biodiversity and 'urban greening,' resilience to future heat stress and flood risk and sustainable transport/ accessibility.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Consistent with the Council's net zero target, the buildings will be designed with the ambition to deliver the sites at the least carbon impact and enable operational minimal carbon footprint moving forwards by increasing insulation, reduced air leak, solar panels, and be future proofed to be adapted and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Materials and construction emissions will be reduced where

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
	feasible. The next design stages will address the Green Agenda within the budget allowance for the project and will design solutions to address the Green Agenda, e.g., Sustainability Application of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs); opportunities for rainwater harvesting; irrigation solutions; biodiversity net gain, landscape boundary treatments etc.
Public Health	No direct implications arising from this report.

What Happens Next:

22. Should Cabinet approve this proposal to redevelop both Chobham and Lingfield Fire Stations, the high-level timescales are as set out below:

Key milestone	Timescale
Planning: submit application and receive decision	Mar – Jul 2023
Award contract to construction partner(s)	Jul 2023
Construction period	Oct 2023 – Oct 2024

Report Author:

Darren Humphreys, Contract Manager – Land and Property. Tel: 0781 5994124

Paul Williams, Senior Development Manager – Land and Property. Tel: 07977 295642

Consulted:

SFRS senior management and staff.

Executive Directors within Surrey County Council.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety.

Cabinet Member for Property and Waste.

Surrey County Council officers within the Greener Futures, Land and Property, Finance and Legal teams.

Annexes:

Annex 1: SFRS People Impact Assessment for Lingfield and Chobham

Part 2 report

Sources/background papers:

None

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