

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

## CABINET



**DATE:** 27 FEBRUARY 2024

**REPORT OF CABINET MEMBERS:** NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR FIRE AND RESCUE AND RESILIENCE

**LEAD OFFICERS:** KATIE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH  
DAN QUIN, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, SURREY FIRE & RESCUE

**SUBJECT:** SFRS FIRE HOUSE AND TRAINING FACILITY

**ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA:** GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT/ TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>
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Cabinet approval is requested for capital expenditure to redevelop the SFRS fire house and training provision and deliver a new facility which will be capable of providing crucial training for new staff and will facilitate the ongoing training of the existing operational personnel.

The current facilities are no longer fit for purpose and without this investment the service will no longer be able to provide the necessary training to enable the operational personnel to carry out their role safely and efficiently.

In line with the Council's priorities, this facility will help **enable a greener future** by reducing our carbon output and also improve organisational effectiveness by being **outcomes focused** and investing in **our people**.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves capital funding from the pipeline to redevelop the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) fire house and training facility and design and construct a new fire house and training facility on the existing site. The capital funding required to develop the new facilities is commercially sensitive at this time and is set out in the Part 2 report.
2. Approves procurement of appropriate supply chain partners to deliver the design, build and fit out of the new structures in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.
3. Notes that, regarding the procurement of supply chain partners, the Executive Director for Environment, Infrastructure and Growth and the Director of Land and Property are authorised to award such contracts, up to +5% of the budgetary

tolerance level and any other legal documentation required to facilitate the approvals within this report.

#### **Reason for Recommendations:**

- Essential capital investment is required to enable the redevelopment of one of the SFRS critical assets – SFRS live fire training facility.
- The existing fire house and drill towers at this facility are reaching the end of their useful life. Parts for the ventilation system are no longer readily available due to this type of system being obsolete, requiring replacement parts to be refurbished or remade from second hand items. This has resulted in significant periods when the facility is non-operational.
- There are several significant Health and Safety (H&S) concerns including internal linings falling from the ceiling, insufficient smoke extraction and ventilation which demonstrate that the facility is no longer fit for purpose.

#### **Executive Summary:**

##### **Background:**

1. To maintain optimal Fire and Rescue Service response provision, protecting the lives of Surrey residents, SFRS employs around 500 operational personnel (firefighters). These firefighters use the training facilities at Wray Park both during their initial onboarding process and at various points throughout their career to ensure compliance with current legislation and maintain up to date skills and knowledge.
2. Each new firefighter undergoes between 8 and 13 weeks of residential training at the training centre. A fundamental part of this training includes working at height, use of breathing apparatus, confined space working as well as live fire behaviour training. The working at height and fire behaviour training is undertaken within the fire house and drill towers at the centre. To simulate real life situations during the training process, wood is burned in specialised cradles within the fire house and towers every day for at least 48 weeks of the year.
3. The fire house was built in the early 1980s and requires substantial funding each year to maintain the facility to enable its use. Several shipping containers were added to the site in 2010 to further support the statutory training requirements and fill the gap where the fire house cannot support essential training operations. There are currently three potential options for the fire house system, and the most cost-effective option in terms of outlay and future running/maintenance costs will be chosen during the next design stage. This will ensure that the ongoing revenue costs are kept as low as is reasonably achievable.
4. Redeveloping the site also presents an opportunity to significantly reduce the Council's carbon footprint in a facility that is currently the highest carbon emitting asset within the council's estate. Sophisticated smoke capture and scrubbing technology will be employed within the new facility to drastically reduce the environmental impact on neighbouring Surrey residents. It is estimated that emissions will reduce by over 90% from the current levels. The level of reduction will be more accurately quantified as the design develops.

5. The development of the fire house also gives SFRS the opportunity to potentially generate additional income utilising the extra capacity within the facility. There is potential to work with the Fire Service College as a satellite training centre providing courses for the fire sector and other Fire and Rescue Services as well as private sector organisations.

#### Options considered:

1. Do nothing
This option does not allow for critical infrastructure required to ensure ongoing operational needs are met.
2. Optimal delivery. This option requires the full demolition and re-plan/re-build of the entire site including a larger structure and changes to the access roads leading to enhanced planning and budget risk.
This option is not achievable within the budget allocation.
3. Site redevelopment. This option is a compromise between the two previous options providing all the Service requirements on a smaller scale to suit the site parameters whilst aligning with allocated budget.
This is the preferred option as it achieves the service requirements within existing budget.

#### The Proposal:

6. The proposal is to deliver option 3, 'site redevelopment'. This will allow for the service to continue to deliver the following, operational critical facilities:
- New, multi-level live fire training building containing 9 separate 'burn rooms' to allow for a multitude of training scenarios to be carried out.
  - Separate cold smoke building to enable training with breathing apparatus, confined space, and entanglement training to take place concurrently with the live fire training.
  - A training area for foam firefighting, a specialist Road Traffic Collision (RTC) training site and Large Goods Vehicles (LGV) and forklift training areas, training tower for ladder drills and a steel training structure with roof for working at height.
  - A robust investment solution to resolve escalating maintenance costs.
  - An asset that contributes to the Greener Futures agenda and Surrey County Council's (The Council) Net Zero Carbon (NZC) commitments.

#### Consultation:

7. The Council recognises that pre-application consultation is a key requirement for planning proposals. The approach to engagement for the project will seek to meet prevailing best practice in community engagement on a project of this scale and nature. The Council will aim to be clear, open, and honest in our engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the community. The overall consultation objectives for the project are to:
- Raise awareness of what is proposed and give community, business, and political stakeholders an opportunity to comment on and potentially influence the proposals.

- Involve stakeholders in identifying issues which are material to our proposals.
  - Embrace a range of communication and engagement methods to ensure the process is open and accessible to everyone.
  - Create opportunities to feedback on the proposals and be clear what there is to influence.
8. A flexible approach to consultation will be maintained so that issues identified throughout the process can be considered and necessary changes made prior to a proposal being finalised.
9. The following have been consulted and had input into this proposal:
- SFRS senior management and staff, including Learning and Development (L&D) staff who work out of Wray Park.
  - Executive Directors within the Council.
  - The Cabinet Member for SFRS.
  - The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste.
  - SCC officers within the Land and Property, Finance and Legal teams.

#### **Risk Management and Implications:**

	<b>Risk description</b>	<b>Mitigation action/strategy</b>
a.	Insufficient budget to deliver fit for purpose training facilities to meet SFRS requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be close working with the SFRS team to understand their minimum requirements.</li> <li>• Design team have simplified the design and construction of the proposals as far as is reasonable.</li> </ul>
b.	The existing utilities capacities are not sufficient for the redevelopment of the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick Everard have procured the necessary surveys to identify utilities capacities on site.</li> <li>• Atkins are developing the MEP designs to understand the utilities requirements of the developments.</li> </ul>
c.	Challenges with access to site during construction period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early engagement will be undertaken with the contractor to develop an access strategy.</li> <li>• Pick Everard will engage with a transport and highways consultant.</li> </ul>
d.	Planning permission is refused or must be withdrawn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vail Williams will apply for pre-app advice once there is sufficient certainty over the designs.</li> </ul>

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications:**

10. This report proposes the decommissioning of an existing, old, and run-down facility replacing with modern, fit for purpose, new training facilities. This will save on high future costs of maintaining current buildings and provide facilities that contribute to meeting the Council's NZC ambitions.
11. The potential of a joint training facility with other Fire authorities was investigated but it was discounted at an early stage due to the high level of usage that SFRS requires the facility to meet their training obligations.
12. This project forms one of several capital investments required to enable SFRS's statutory requirements to be delivered. It forms part of a phased programme which

includes the replacement fire station, fire house and ongoing refurbishment to the training centre.

13. The capital investment and financial modelling to deliver the new building is allocated within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and is commercially sensitive. This is set out in the Part 2 report.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary:**

14. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
15. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 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 the stable provision of services in the medium term.
16. The recommendation to transfer from capital pipeline to budget and the revenue impact of both the borrowing and future running costs are provided for in the current MTFS. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommendations of this report.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:**

17. This paper seeks Cabinet approval for capital expenditure for redevelopment of the SFRS fire house and training facility, and for approval for the procurement of supply chain partners.
18. When considering the proposed expenditure, Cabinet is under fiduciary duties to local residents in utilising public monies and Cabinet Members will want to satisfy themselves that it represents an appropriate use of the Council's resources.
19. In relation to the redevelopment works, 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.
20. With regard to the procurement of the redevelopment works and related supply chain partners, the relevant officers must ensure that all procurements are carried out in full compliance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders (PCSOs) and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as appropriate. Legal Services will advise on appropriate forms of contract and provide legal support throughout the procurement process(es) where requested.
21. Legal advice should be sought prior to the commencement of the works, to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations and obtains any necessary consents.

**Equalities and Diversity:**

22. A People Impact Assessment is not required as the training will not be affected throughout the build because adequate training facilities will continue to be maintained throughout.

**Other Implications:**

23. 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.

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Corporate Parenting/ Looked After Children	N/A
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	N/A
Environmental sustainability	The development will be designed and built to a high sustainability standard in relation to the Council's commitments on NZC 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 NZC target, the building will be designed with the ambition to be operationally NZC and be future proofed to be resilient to the impacts of climate change. The key features of an operationally NZC building include high thermal efficiency, a low carbon heating system and maximising the generation and use of on-site renewable energy. Materials and construction emissions will be reduced where feasible. The next design stages will address the Green Agenda within the budget allowance for the project and with design solutions address the Green Agenda, e.g., Sustainability, and the Application of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs); opportunities for rainwater harvesting; irrigation solutions; biodiversity net gain, landscape boundary treatments, etc.
Public Health	The current facility is the highest carbon emitting asset within the council's estate. Sophisticated smoke capture and scrubbing technology will be employed within the new facility to drastically reduce the environmental impact on neighbouring Surrey residents.

<b>What Happens Next:</b>
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24. Should Cabinet approve the report's proposal, the high-level timescales are as set out below:

Key milestones	Date
Cabinet approval	27 February 2024
Planning application submission	June 2024
Planning decision received	January 2025
Contract award	January 2025
Construction commencement	April 2025
Construction completes	May 2026

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**Consulted:**

Details of who has been consulted on the issue, external and internal (including officers, members, public, stakeholders, partners, etc).

Cabinet Member for Property and Waste

Cabinet Member for SFRS

Ward councillors for Reigate

SCC Director for Land and Property

SCC AD for Capital Projects Land and Property

SCC AD for Property Strategy and Management

SCC Legal team

SCC Finance Business Partner

SFRS staff – property, operational and administrative – have assisted in the design and requirements.

**Annexes:**

Part 2 report

**Sources/background papers:**

None

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