



**Hampshire  
& Isle of Wight**  
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

## **HIWFRA Full Authority**

Purpose: Approval

Date: **12 APRIL 2022**

Title: **RETROSPECTIVE BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES – HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

### SUMMARY

1. As part of our commitment to continue to attract and retain individuals from diverse backgrounds, our estate must provide an inclusive and healthy workplace to support all staff.
2. This report seeks approval for a proposed programme of works across our estate to ensure our buildings remain fit for purpose and reflect the requirements of a modern public service. Specific funding for the proposals needs to be developed and will be included in an update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

### BACKGROUND

3. In September 2018, the Fire Authority approved five Estate Design Principles as part of the Estates Strategy. These Design Principles are adopted across the estate, with all estate investment works helping achieve these principles, which are:
  - (a) **Our estate will support core Service functionality:** Our estate will be located strategically to provide efficient operational mobilisation and specialist training facilities. Our buildings will provide flexible/drop in office space for all our staff to utilise.
  - (b) **Our estate will enable Partnerships and Income Generation:** Our estate will support and enable partnership working with blue light, local authority, charity and commercial partners while providing opportunity to generate income for the Service.

- (c) **Our estate will provide a Healthy and Inclusive Workplace:** Our estate will support the health and wellbeing of our people by providing clean and safe zoning to manage fireground contamination risk, inclusive rest and wellbeing spaces and by supporting a diverse workforce with the provision of gender-neutral welfare facilities.
  - (d) **Our estate will be Physically Secure:** Our estate will be physically secure by design while supporting community use and engagement with accessible and flexible spaces.
  - (e) **Our estate buildings will be Simple, Robust and Sustainable:** Our estate will be efficiently managed, developed and maintained using simple, robust yet sustainable construction technologies, materials and finishes. Our buildings will be as energy efficient as possible and will embed fire safety and carbon reduction technology.
4. There are 61 fire stations across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, almost all of which were built in the post war years. The majority of the estate is now over 55 years old.
  5. As the fire stations age, they can become unfit for purpose. Some sites are outdated in terms of meeting current legislation, best practice, inclusivity requirements and providing facilities to appropriately manage the risk from fire ground contamination.
  6. By delivering new, modern facilities the service protects the future financial position while ensuring the buildings support the Service aim of being a modern and inclusive public service. This adaptation will require additional investment in our estate.

#### MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

7. A thorough audit and evaluation of all 61 fire stations has been conducted, as part of which, all our buildings were graded against the Design Principle criteria to assess how facilities met the requirements of the Estate Strategy.
8. The audit graded each Design Principle criteria using an assessment scale as summarised below:

<b>1</b>	Meets Design Principle
<b>2</b>	Mostly meets the Design Principle
<b>3</b>	Working towards meeting the Design Principle
<b>4</b>	Meets very few aspects of the Design Principle
<b>5</b>	Does not meet Design Principle at all

9. Although assessed against all five Design Principles, the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle has been identified as a priority, since this is the area where most stations failed to meet the requirements.
10. The audit grade for the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle for the 14 wholetime stations can be seen below (On Call sites have been omitted from this summary, see paragraphs 20 and 21):

A Healthy and Inclusive Workplace						
Site	Decontamination Flow	Washing and Drying Facilities	Inclusive Shower / Toilet Facilities	Rest Areas	Quiet Wellebing Areas	SUB-TOTAL
Cosham	5	4	5	5	5	24
Newport	5	5	4	5	4	23
Gosport	4	3	5	5	5	22
Eastleigh	4	4	5	4	5	22
Fareham	4	4	5	5	4	22
Redbridge	4	3	5	5	5	22
St Mary's	4	3	5	5	5	22
Hightown	5	3	5	4	5	22
Southsea	4	3	5	4	5	21
Andover	4	3	5	3	4	19
Havant	2	4	5	3	4	18
Rushmoor	3	3	3	3	4	16
Basingstoke	4	2	3	1	2	12
Winchester	3	2	4	1	2	12

11. The audit found that Cosham Fire Station poses the biggest challenge with least Principles met, which reinforces the previously approved Business Case for capital investment at this site as part of the Station Investment Programme (SIP). Alongside Cosham, Redbridge Fire Station is also subject to a separate investment and has therefore been omitted from the work proposed as part of this paper.
12. Newport Fire Station is also being taken for investment consideration separately since work is currently underway as part of the One Public Estate to explore options for a co-located site in the Newport area with the Constabulary.
13. Facilities across all of our sites remain fully compliant with legislation and provide facilities for both male and female use. However, these existing facilities do not align with our estate Design Principles or with our ambitious Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives agreed by the Fire Authority or with feedback we have heard from our staff network groups.
14. Maintaining the status quo and not proactively investing will prevent facilities on our fire stations from receiving the improvements they require as quickly as could otherwise be the case. This will result in a delay as to how quickly improvements can be addressed for the management of fireground contamination within our buildings and a delay to providing enhanced facilities to support our diverse workforce.

## RECOMMENDED APPROACH

15. It is the recommendation that investment is made to align the estate with the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle, following industry best practice.
16. The Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle focuses on three main areas:
  - (a) **Fireground contamination:** Managing risk from fireground contamination by controlling the flow of equipment and people through the building. This will essentially divide stations into separate 'clean', 'transition' and 'dirty' zones.
  - (b) **Wellbeing:** Promoting staff wellbeing by providing facilities for prayer, moments of distress, quiet reflection, menopause and mindfulness. These facilities are particularly important for front-line colleagues to assist with post-incident trauma and recovery.
  - (c) **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Creating buildings which provide accessible facilities for all regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender identity, race or religion. This includes individual rest rooms and individual, gender-neutral showers and toilets.
17. To target investment efficiently, four main priorities to achieve the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle have been identified:
  - (a) **Priority 1:** Upgrades to decontamination equipment for best practice (washing machines and drying equipment).
  - (b) **Priority 2:** Implement clean, dirty and transition zones, adjusting the layout of the building where required.
  - (c) **Priority 3:** Implement individual, gender-neutral toilets and shower facilities, particularly in conjunction with Priority 2.
  - (d) **Priority 4:** Improve privacy and dignity in shared dormitory areas.
18. The majority of the works in this paper will be targeted at wholetime fire stations. This is due to wholetime stations being identified in the audit as buildings of highest risk when considering the current facilities and intensive use of these buildings.

19. The estimated re-grade for the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle following the completion of the improvement work for the 14 wholetime stations can be seen below:

Site	A Healthy and Inclusive Workplace - Potential Re-Score Following Works					SUB-TOTAL
	Decontamination Flow	Washing and Drying Facilities	Inclusive Shower / Toilet Facilities	Rest Areas	Quiet Wellbeing Areas	
Fareham	2	2	2	2	2	10
Hightown	2	2	2	2	2	10
Rushmoor	2	2	2	2	2	10
St Mary's	2	2	2	2	2	10
Gosport	2	2	1	2	2	9
Basingstoke	2	2	2	1	2	9
Havant	2	2	1	2	2	9
Southsea	2	2	1	2	2	9
Winchester	2	2	2	1	2	9
Andover	1	2	1	2	2	8
Eastleigh	1	2	1	2	1	7

20. The audit demonstrated that On Call fire stations graded better due to several factors:

- (a) These buildings require no investment to rest areas since they do not have this provision.
- (b) These buildings have benefitted from prior investment to drying facilities and the creation of individual toilet/shower facilities which can easily be converted to gender-neutral as part of business-as-usual maintenance regimes.

21. However, it was identified that On Call stations, including Ryde Fire Station which is to become a 24-hour crewed station, would benefit from improvements in how the building supports the management of fireground contamination, particularly Isle of Wight stations which have not benefited from the previous upgrades applicable to mainland On Call stations. This will be carried out through business-as-usual Asset Management and routine investment.

## REMAINING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

22. Although this proposal focuses solely on the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle, like all future investment in the estate, all five of the Design Principles are central to our Estate Strategy.
23. Our business-as-usual investment in our estate and facilities will continue to improve how our buildings support the five Design Principles, though it is worth noting that investing in the proposals within this report will have a secondary benefit of improving other Design Principles:

- (a) Investing in improved decontamination facilities will subsequently improve existing processes, readying firefighters to be available for the next call more efficiently and safely. This will support Design Principle 1 (Supporting Core Service Functionality).
- (b) Investing in improved decontamination facilities and creating gender-neutral toilets and shower areas will increase the attractiveness and functionality of our sites for partner and community use. This will support Design Principle 2, Supporting Income Generation and Partnership Working.
- (c) The proposals outlined within this report will be delivered in line with the Fire Authority's Carbon Reduction Pathway, thus these works will improve the sustainability and environmental impact of our sites (for example, new toilets will use less water). This will support Design Principle 5, Simple, Robust and Sustainable Buildings.
- (d) Finally, Design Principle 4, Physically Secure by Design, will not be improved directly by the proposals outlined within this paper, however a separate programme of works is currently underway to improve the security of the estate.

#### SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

24. ***Our People:*** *We look after each other by creating great places to work and promoting the health, wellbeing and safety of our people.*

- (a) This proposal will better support our people through Healthy and Inclusive building design, for example providing gender-neutral facilities to provide privacy and dignity for all, helping to address and remove barriers identified in a report by the staff network groups, approved by the Executive Group in February 2021.
- (b) Improvements to decontamination equipment and the introduction of separate 'clean' and 'dirty' zones will provide a healthier and safer workplace by aiding the management of fireground contamination.
- (c) Investment in modern, fit for purpose facilities will better support our people to feel valued while providing more appropriate facilities for teams to undertake their roles.

25. ***Public Value:*** *We plan over the longer-term to ensure our decisions and actions deliver efficient and effective public services.*

- (a) This proposal maximises public value by utilising existing building stock, resulting in longer term viability of our sites and ensuring they meet the needs of a modern fire service.

## CONSULTATION

- 26. The five estate Design Principles were shaped in 2017/18 through an extensive series of workshops with a wide variety of stakeholders, including Heads of Service, Group Managers, Station Managers, Firefighters, Health and Safety, Inclusion and Diversity, Union representatives, the staff networks and others.
- 27. Site visits were conducted as part of the audit with the Estate Team and Station Managers. This allowed for station concerns to be highlighted early before the feasibility process and implemented in the proposals.
- 28. Consultation has taken place around the proposals outlined within this report, with review from the staff network groups. This has ensured we have a diverse input on the requirements for how we can best apply the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle.

## COLLABORATION

- 29. This proposal works in collaboration with Operational Assets roll-out of a campaign to improve processes and behaviours on fire stations in relation to how fireground contamination is managed.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 30. The estimated cost of the recommended option to make improvements across the estate to better meet the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle is £4.5m. The costs are summarised below:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Funding Required</b>
Cost of works	£3.15m
Inflation/Contingency Risk	£0.9m
Professional Design & Fees	£0.45m
<b>Total Funding Required</b>	<b>£4.5m</b>

31. This project has no requirement for additional permanent staff resource. Project Management is already provided from the Property & Facilities team following approval of the Station Investment Programme projects.
32. Cost management and specialist detailed design support will be provided externally and funded through the requested budget cost.
33. This recommended option utilises regional and national frameworks for procurement.
34. The Fire Authority receives no capital funding from Government. Therefore, it is likely to be necessary to fund capital investment via a combination of:
  - (a) Planned contributions from revenue budgets
  - (b) Revenue underspends
  - (c) Sale of assets
  - (d) Partner contributions
  - (e) Borrowing.
35. As set out in the budget report in February 2022, the Capital Payments Reserve is fully committed to the existing capital programme. Therefore, it is not possible to commit to funding the required £4.5m from the Capital Payments Reserve.



36. Prudential borrowing for the Redbridge and Cosham Station Investment Programme schemes has been approved but borrowing has not yet been taken out.
37. The Authority is therefore asked to approve the programme of work; however, work will not commence until specific funding for the proposals is brought back to the Authority in an update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan later in the year. The finance and property teams will work over the next few months to refine costs and to assess the options for funding the programme, bringing this back for Fire Authority approval when more is known about the 2022/23 position and the financial settlement for 2023/24.

### IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

38. Impact assessments will be completed on a site-by-site basis in further development stages should the funding for the proposals be approved.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

39. As with all tendering exercises, Contract Standing Orders will be followed to source and secure an appropriate contractor to work with the Service to deliver the improvement works identified.
40. There is no change to the ownership of any of the Authority's assets.
41. Impact to sites with existing partners will be managed in order to avoid legal implications to leasehold tenants.
42. Where a site is leasehold (Fareham), we will engage with the landlord to undertake any works in accordance with the lease.
43. Legal advice confirms that all the proposals outlined within this report are achievable within the delegated powers of the Authority.

### OPTIONS

44. **OPTION 1 – Invest via business-as-usual** – This option maintains the status quo, continuing with the current facilities, running costs and maintenance regime. This approach would result in:
  - (a) Sites being included in the annual business-as-usual Asset Management Plan for upgrades; however, this budget has limited capacity to absorb these projects and therefore works would be completed over the next 5-10 years.

- (b) Maintaining the status quo and not proactively investing will prevent facilities on our fire stations from receiving the improvements they require as quickly as could otherwise be the case. This will result in a delay as to how quickly improvements can be addressed for the management of fireground contamination within our buildings and a delay to providing enhanced facilities to support our diverse workforce.
45. **OPTION 2 – Best Practice (RECOMMENDATION)** – This option provides a commitment to the proposed programme of works, subject to further agreement as to the funding source as outlined within this report. This approach would achieve the following improvements against the 4 priority areas outlined in paragraph 16 within a 1-2 year period:
- (a) **Priority 1:** Most sites will receive upgrades to their decontamination equipment, with additional washing machines introduced to wholtime stations for resilience. The introduction of new drying equipment will also be introduced to wholtime stations pending a trial.
  - (b) **Priority 2:** Create decontamination routes and establish ‘clean’, ‘dirty’ and ‘transition’ zones by adjusting building layouts as necessary.
  - (c) **Priority 3:** Existing male and female gendered facilities will be converted into individual, gender-neutral toilets and shower pods.
  - (d) **Priority 4:** Shared dormitory areas will be divided into individual sleeping pods for privacy and dignity.

## RISK ANALYSIS

- 46. If no investment is made, there is a risk that as we see success in attracting diverse applicants as part of our recruitment campaigns, facilities on fire stations to support this workforce will fall short of expectations. This could result in the Service being unable to retain staff.
- 47. Although national and international research into the risk of fireground contaminants is on-going and currently inconclusive, adopting best practice and improving current processes around how buildings support the management of fireground contamination allows us to future proof the estate.
- 48. Linked risks for the delivery of the programme centre around the unpredictable nature of inflation and the impact on the project costs in future

years, hence a proportional allowance being made within the funding sought.

49. Given the context of paragraph 43, best efforts will be made to group works to achieve the most cost-effective delivery, an element of increased costs due to current cost pressures on materials and labour supply chains has been made in the cost estimates.
50. The UK Exit from the EU continues to have the possibility of impacting project delivery and cost; however, an allowance will be made within the requested funding to help mitigate this.
51. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on work delivery in terms of availability of resources (both labour and materials) and varying costs for standard materials. The projects have been carefully packaged to support economies of scale and to provide a more attractive package to potential tendering companies as well as provide value for money for the Service.

## EVALUATION

52. When evaluating the success of delivery of the projects identified, there will be two success factors. Firstly, the increased provision of facilities which support Healthy and Inclusive workplaces for our people. This will be assessed by updating the audit and re-grading facilities upon the completion of the works. Secondly, the reduction of legacy building components which are at risk of failure. This will be assessed by monitoring reactive maintenance requests at sites which have seen investment as part of this proposal.
53. There will be no changes to policy or approach as a result of this paper and the estate will, as currently, be a corporately managed estate working on the remit of being fit for the needs and requirements of the organisation.

## CONCLUSION

54. Our existing stations, although currently adequate for responding to incidents, are not fit for purpose for a modern public service.
55. The recommendation is that the HIWFRA approve the programme of works subject to funding estimated at £4.5m being identified and approved at a later date, to deliver Option 2: Best Practice, to align the estate with the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

56. That, subject to approval of funding, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority approves the programme of works set out in **Option 2**, and the principles and priorities set out at paragraphs 15 to 21 to improve facilities to meet the Healthy and Inclusive Design Principle on fire station sites.
57. That Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority note the work will be undertaken by the Finance and Estates teams to develop proposals for funding the programme of works, such proposals to be brought back for approval by the Authority as part of an update to the Medium Term Financial Plan later in the year.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

*'Station Investment Programme', approved by the Fire Authority, September 2018.*

*'Barriers Identified by Staff Network Groups', approved by EG February 2021.*

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