

Telford and Wellington Fire Stations

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260225 or Andrew Kelcey, Head of Resources, on 01743 260240.

1 Purpose of Report

This report enables the Authority to consider proposals for the redevelopment of Telford and Wellington Fire Stations, and to consider future funding requirements.

Due to the current financial position and possible restrictions on future finances, it should be recognised that these works represent aspirations and that agreeing the recommendations of this paper does not represent a commitment to the schemes.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Agree, for the purposes of capital budget planning, the allocation of £500,000 in the year 2012/13 for works at Telford and £1,000,000 in the year 2013/14 for works at Wellington. Both schemes are to be subject to full costings and capital appraisals being carried out prior to approval.

3 Background

The need for work at the Authority's Telford site has been recognised for a number of years and proposals for small schemes have been included within other projects, most recently Shrewsbury Station Refurbishment. Following a review of the options for Shrewsbury, the Telford scheme was removed and officers tasked with developing a business case specifically for Telford. This paper sets out officers' thoughts regarding the works required.

The redevelopment of Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT), which included the redevelopment of Wellington Fire Station, has been delayed due to funding issues with the Learning and Skills Council. Consideration has, therefore, been given as to how Wellington can be best developed to meet our needs.

4 Issues with the Telford Site and Proposed Works

Telford station is in relatively poor condition; poorly laid out and larger than needed, particularly since a wholetime pump and crew have been relocated to Tweedale. It is also the Service's main training centre.

Suggested works and the benefits associated with these are set out below.

Relocation of all station facilities to the ground floor to provide an improved working environment

Benefits

- Improved station facilities in a more compact environment
- Potentially reduced maintenance and running costs

Balances

- Station personnel are currently happy with the station layout, although they have identified that minor works (including redecoration and repairs to ceilings) are required.
- It would be appropriate to review the impact of changes made to fire cover in Telford, and any further changes, before making significant investment in the site.
- No use has been identified for the space released.

Provision of additional operational training lecture rooms and upgrade of the toilet, shower and changing facilities

Benefits

- Provision of a 'dirty' lecture room will reduce demand on other facilities and the need for students to spend time crossing the yard and changing out of working clothing.
- Toilet, shower and training facilities are inadequate.

Balances

- Operational training needs across fire and rescue services are likely to be reassessed as a result of the current Health and Safety Executive review of Fire Service operations, which has a significant focus on operational training. It is not possible to predict the effect of this on future needs.

- This work was considered an appropriate use of Communities and Local Government (CLG) funding for equality and diversity stretch targets. Our application for this funding has been declined by CLG.
- It may be possible to address the inadequate toilet and shower facilities with low-cost temporary works and redecoration.

Management Training, Seminar and Conference Facilities

Better use of the under-utilised top floors of the station would enable greater flexibility in use and arrangement of events.

Benefits

- Training courses seminars and meetings, including Fire Authority meetings, could be held on our own sites, increasing flexibility and reducing the administrative burden and cost of arranging alternative sites.

Balances

- No specific need has been identified.
- The amount of investment required to bring the accommodation up to the required standard is considerably higher than the savings achieved by not renting alternative spaces.

Initial estimates indicate that works to refurbish Telford to provide all of the facilities identified above, including the provision of lift access within the building, will cost approximately £500,000.

5 Issues with the Wellington Site and Proposed Works

Wellington station, whilst still meeting our needs, is also in relatively poor condition and poorly laid out. It consists of a 3-vehicle appliance bay and large, open-plan accommodation over this, with small offices, narrow corridors and large numbers of steps in 2-storey accommodation at the side. This accommodation does not meet the standards of our other buildings, creates access difficulties and will be difficult to refurbish.

It is suggested that we should consider demolition and rebuilding of the accommodation block together with full internal and external refurbishment of the appliance bay and accommodation over this, subject to funding availability.

Initial estimates indicate that this work will cost approximately £1,000,000 to complete.

6 Other Issues

The Service is currently managing a major capital project at Shrewsbury. It does not appear appropriate that we should take on further major projects at this time, and it is suggested that the Telford and Wellington schemes be programmed to follow the completion of the Shrewsbury project.

7 Financial Implications

The costs included in this report are initial estimates and may change as further work to identify our needs, and how best to meet them, is carried out. It is suggested that, subject to Fire Authority approval, these figures are included in future budget planning assumptions.

Funding for the minor works required at Telford can be met from existing revenue budgets.

The current capital budget includes £40,000 for lecture room improvements at Telford and £100,000 for enabling works to support the TCAT scheme at Wellington. It is suggested that this borrowing approval be retained in case the TCAT project does receive future funding

Assuming that running costs are the same as those currently incurred, a net capital funding requirement of £1,360,000 would add £122,400 to debt charges, if met from loan.

8 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has not been carried out on this proposal. If works are undertaken the design of the buildings will be subject to a full equality assessment and construction to current accessibility standards.

10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	*
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings	*	Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*