



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

PROPERTY STRATEGY

2018 - 2025

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire Authority has made significant investment in the property portfolio over the past five years with major refurbishment, alterations, improvements, planned maintenance and reactive repairs being carried out across the board to the 20 fire stations (19 since the merger of Bletchley and Great Holm) and Brigade HQ.
- 1.2 The continued and increasing financial pressures being faced by all public bodies mean that it is more important than ever to ensure that investment in property and facilities is targeted and coherently planned to provide the right property, in the right place and at the right time. There are several sites where we have co-location initiatives taking place and we will continue to work with other partner organisations to explore co-location initiatives and continue to utilise our property assets to achieve optimum effectiveness and efficiency.
- 1.3 This updated property strategy builds upon the existing foundation for the effective and efficient use of all property related assets and provides a platform for structured and rigorous forward thinking and decision making about property management within the Authority. It will also aid the process of responding to property needs from the Public Safety Plan and as a consequence, operational response, as well as meeting the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 1.4 This Strategy was originally written to cover the period 2018 – 2023. It is now being extended to 2025 in order to align it with the next iteration of the public safety plan, which will be referred to as the Community Risk Management Plan and cover the period 2025-2030.

2 Background

- 2.1 In March 2015 the Executive Committee agreed a ten-year high level strategic asset management strategy that set out a number of key parameters for all asset management, including property.
- 2.2 At the same time the Executive Committee confirmed the Strategic Business Requirements (SBR's) that set out the required objectives of the property function, (see Section 3). This updated strategy further embeds those core principles for the next two years and will provide a solid foundation in supporting all business requirements.
- 2.3 Other major factors to be taken into account in setting out this strategy include the continued impact of operational decisions as to crewing and response models, as well as the full condition surveys, which were carried out during the autumn of 2017 and 2022, and which provides clear evidence of where the Authority should prioritise its future investment to the existing

property portfolio.

- 2.4 The Fire Authority owns land and buildings with a book value of £40.004m as at March 2022. Though this is broadly classified as land/buildings, it is important to recognise that the majority of the buildings have no great commercial value other than as Fire Stations.

3 Strategic Business Requirements (SBR's)

- 3.1 A fundamental aim of this strategy is to continue to embed and deliver the agreed SBR's as set out below:

Strategy

1. There is a clear direction for Property, based on clear policy from the Strategic Management Board (SMB) and the Fire Authority and an up-to-date, comprehensive, coherent Property Strategy for the organisation;
2. The Property Service and Portfolio has clear senior sponsorship and ownership at SMB and Fire Authority level;
3. The Property Service is the centre of excellence that translates the strategy and policy into an action plan and helps to deliver it;
4. The business needs of the organisation are supported in a strategic, proactive and positive manner, by taking the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan and interpreting what they mean for the Property Service;
5. A Property Strategy is developed and maintained, covering which properties are required, their locations and respective purposes, including service delivery and community use;
6. Property portfolio management is done in a way that recognises the strategic business need, local property pricing, and available leasing/financing solutions, to ensure the optimum portfolio for the best combination of cost and risk;
7. The Property Service is provided through the most economic, efficient and effective sourcing routes, with a clear position on in-sourcing and outsourcing;
8. The Service seeks to use renewable energy and lower its carbon footprint wherever possible and is cost-effective.

Customers

1. The property services provided to customers are assessed, agreed and published, ensuring that they deliver best value for money;
2. A service-wide property standard is in use and maintained, including expected facilities, operational principles, space usage, security, and sustainability factors (e.g. carbon footprint, energy usage and efficiency, water usage, recycling, sustainable procurement and sustainable construction);
3. Responsibilities and authorities with regard to the planning,

- procurement, delivery and budgetary management of Property Services are clear;
4. Performance and financial reporting are clearly defined, in use, managed and monitored;
 5. Facilities management and maintenance are done to the right quality, timeliness and cost;
 6. The Property Service works with local property stakeholders and organisations to understand and proactively manage changes and developments related to property.

People

1. The Property Service operates professionally and proactively, and is credible in the eyes of its customers;
2. An effective organisational structure, with clear roles and appropriately skilled and experienced managers and staff is in place to deliver the strategy;
3. The Property Service is robustly supported by senior management;
4. The Property Service team are professionally qualified and have the skills and capabilities necessary to deliver a professional property service;
5. The Property Service is appropriately resourced, professional in its experience, and with the capacity to provide all necessary support and development;
6. The Property Service is customer-centric, supportive, approachable, engaging, enabling, and “can do”;
7. The Property Service takes responsibility for the organisation being able to do its work, and provides solutions;
8. The Property Service is routinely up-skilled as requirements change;
9. The Property Service challenges and scrutinises any proposed property solutions to ensure fit with the Property Strategy;
10. The Property Service challenges and offers potential solutions where it believes that the organisation is not maximising its potential.

Processes

1. All processes and responsibilities within the acquisition, maintenance and disposal aspects of the Property Service are clear and deliver agreed outcomes;
2. An effective property governance framework is used for the development and maintenance of the property strategy and for the authorisation of property portfolio management, maintenance and performance;
3. There are clear processes and principles for procuring external support for property maintenance;
4. Property data is defined, collected and managed, to ensure an up-to-

date and secure property portfolio;

5. Contracts are proactively managed, to ensure the delivery of what is agreed.

Technology

1. A fit-for-purpose, flexible and integrated property infrastructure is in place to support the full property life cycle, covering acquisition, maintenance and disposal;
2. Timely and accurate property status, performance and cost data are defined and maintained with appropriate and easy access for managers;
3. New technologies (e.g. solar technology, heat-source pumps) and their cost/benefit to the service are proactively identified and evaluated, with proactive recommendations to the service where there is potential to improve.

4. Resources

- 4.1 During 2023/24 total budgeted spend for Property Services is expected to be:

Gross Revenue Spend: £2.16m

Capital Programme: £1.4m

Income Generation: £213k

The gross revenue budget broadly consists of the following:

Staff Costs: £272k

Reactive Maintenance: £159k

Planned Maintenance: £129k

Utilities: £682k

Rents / Hire £85k

*Contract cleaning
and supplies: £64k*

*Consultancy/Licen
ces/Professional*

Fees £50k

Rates: £708k

The staff costs include facilities management services, i.e. cleaning, reception and directorate administration team etc.

5. Influences for change

- 5.1 The influences for change are significant. Changing patterns of operational risk as well as new responsibilities and operational requirements will need to be understood and assessed for their effect upon the property requirement so that it can be aligned to need.
- 5.2 Environmental responsibilities are a key influence in our investment into property. Our buildings need to be energy efficient and used in an environmentally responsible manner. Much has been done in recent years, but there will always be a strong focus on energy efficiency and the impact of investment into energy efficient solutions for our buildings will be a key influence upon our investment decisions. (See also Section 11)
- 5.3 Diversity and welfare are also important change factors as we continue to respond to our increasingly diverse community and workforce. This will link directly to our response on community engagement and workforce issues such as increasing numbers of female operational staff and the apprentice intake. Equality and diversity is a continuously developing area that will require regular review of our facilities to meet the needs of our workforce..
- 5.4 The Covid 19 pandemic has demonstrated the benefits of a hybrid working arrangement, and many members of staff are no longer required to be seated at fixed location every day. This has presented opportunities to review the size of our estate footprint with a view to potential rationalisation of the office accommodation we use.
- 5.5 Security is another influence for change. As a key emergency serviceprovider there is a need to ensure that our buildings, which contain expensive appliances and vehicles, as well as information and ICT systems, are well protected. Indeed there are legal responsibilities we must honour and physical security is one of them.
- 5.6 The continuing pressure on public service expenditure remains unparalleled and continues to have a significant impact. This will mean that the policy and practices associated with maintaining, developing and using our property portfolio will need to be kept under constant review as well as contribute with efficiency savings to meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 5.7 Given all the above, the following represents specific issues for the Authority with some commentary on how each should be dealt with, which will culminate in an outline plan of action.

6. Condition Surveys

- 6.1 Full independent surveys of the property portfolio were undertaken and completed in November 2017 and Autumn 2022. These show the improving position compared to the full survey in 2013, which has continued between 2017 and 2022. Although not included as part of this document, the 2022 survey is available upon request, however the following summarises the survey outcome.
- 6.2 The entirety of the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service estate was surveyed in 2013 and reported that an investment of £4.4m over a five year period would be required to both maintain and bring the stations to good order.
- 6.3 The sites were subsequently resurveyed in autumn 2017 with a revised five-year plan showing required investment of £2.4m. The most recent full survey in 2022 shows a required investment of £1.6m over the next five years (net of contingencies and professional fees). This like for like reduction in investment required, shows the positive impact of the increased investment by the Authority against a continually ageing estate.
- 6.4 It is clear that significant improvements in the condition and quality of stations have resulted from investment made between 2017 to 2022. Of the eighteen sites surveyed, twelve have seen a reduction in required expenditure, and only six have seen an increase.
- 6.5 These improvements include the replacement of the air handling plant at Aylesbury HQ, refurbishment of BA servicing rooms, lockers rooms and kit rooms at various sites and reconfiguration of toilet, shower and changing facilities on multiple stations to improve equality of access for our staff.
- 6.6 The single largest increase in backlog however (£458k) relates to High Wycombe. Due to historic discussions with Wycombe District Council (now part of Buckinghamshire Council) about the potential relocation of the site, investment in the site has been restricted to health, safety and welfare issues and essential maintenance only. Significant investment in the site is now well overdue.
- 6.7 The history of the High Wycombe site and future considerations are detailed in sections 21 and 22 of this Strategy.
- 6.8 Elsewhere across the estate the investment required remains static with investment made to improve sanitary accommodation and ablutions offset by ageing fixtures, finishes and plant and equipment and goes to highlight the need for constant investment in an estate of the size and complexity of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 6.9 Arising from the first condition survey in 2013, a 'Property Standard' will be continue to be maintained setting out the minimum acceptable criteria for all Authority buildings.

6.10 Appendix 1 – shows the summary table arising from the condition survey 2022.

6.11 During 2021, a separate survey of the condition of all drill towers was undertaken. This highlighted the need to invest in towers to bring them up to the required standard. A summary of this condition survey can be seen in Appendix 2.

7. Use of outside consultants

7.1 The Authority does not carry all the requisite skills in-house that are necessary to manage its property portfolio. Due to its size, the Authority has to rely on commissioning professional services such as Architects, Structural Engineers and Quantity Surveyors etc., as required. These have been procured in the past via a formal tender exercise and those arrangements have been in place for several years.

8 Future use of Properties

- 8.1 It is clear from the recently completed condition surveys that the primary challenges for the Authority arise in two key areas:
- High Wycombe
 - Drill towers across all the estate
- 8.2 In addition, the Authority must retain its commitment to exit Unit 7 as soon as it is practicable to do so.

9 Domestic Dwellings

- 9.1 The Authority no longer owns any domestic dwellings with the last two having been sold off as part of the previous strategy. It does however retain nomination rights through London & Quadrant (L&Q) Housing Trust for housing in close proximity to Gerrards Cross Fire Station. Also, the Authority has nominations rights in a separate agreement over any of L&Q's housing stock within the area of Buckinghamshire bounded by the M4 and M40 for up to six, 2 or 3 bedroom, dwellings (until 8 February 2054). There is no operational proximity requirement, merely that the prospective tenant is employed by the Authority.
- 9.2 The Service has recently reviewed and increased the day-crewing allowances paid to staff on that duty system, with a view to making day-crewing a more attractive proposition to staff. Consideration will be given supporting the model further by purchasing properties near day-crewed stations that can be used to house staff working out of those stations.

10 Day to day activity

- 10.1 There are four main areas of what is recognised as 'day to day' activity in the management of property:
- Planned Maintenance
 - Responsive Repairs and Maintenance (R&M)
 - Major refurbishments
 - Facilities Management (Hard and Soft Services)
- 10.2 By and large the above activities are carried out using risk assessed criteria that comprises of (in no particular order) health and safety, weather-proofing and security. Historically it is those factors that determine the priorities for action and in times of financial restraint including limited capital funds availability, there is little room for other factors to influence priorities.
- 10.3 That position will be continually reviewed over the life of this strategy to ensure it remains valid and to determine whether other factors should be added to, or replace the current criteria.
- 10.4 In respect of the day-to-day activities, there is an on-going commitment to

continual improvement funded through the capital programme. The independent condition survey has determined with greater certainty where the authority needs to commit its resources over the next two years.

- 10.5 The current strategy in respect of planned maintenance is to ensure that as much as is affordable is covered by a planned maintenance programme and this naturally reduces the risk of any responsive repair and maintenance having to be carried out. This strategy has evolved as a good practice rather than being specifically set out as a strategic goal but should remain in place. All the major refurbishment investment into heating and mechanical systems in recent years have been followed up with a planned maintenance programme to protect that investment and this should continue.
- 10.6 In setting the budgets for each financial year an exercise will be carried out to analyse and subsequently allocate the correct funding required for each location for planned maintenance. During the period of the 2018 Strategy, all planned maintenance budgets have been centralised and are now managed by the Property Manager.
- 10.7 A continual 're-balancing' of available responsive and planned maintenance budgets is required to ensure that as better planning creates more planned maintenance contracts, responsive repair budgets are subsequently reduced. This also allows the budgets to, by and large, cope with the inevitable unexpected issues that arise. This continual refinement of budgets has proved successful in recent years so though there is now less scope for movement during the life of this strategy, nevertheless a review will always be undertaken each year.
- 10.8 The Capital programme requirements, informed by the condition survey and recent works, will be considered during budget setting each year along with all other potential bids. This does not preclude other capital investment being considered during the course of the year, especially where priorities may change due to unforeseen issues arising. Due to the nature of these issues, it is generally not practicable for these to follow the standard approval process for projects as the required works are often highly time critical. The Property Manager, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Assets, can re-prioritise and reallocate funding within the approved Property capital programme as necessary. Any changes to the programme should be reported at the next available Business Transformation Board meeting. If the amounts involved are greater than the virement limits set out in Financial Instructions, further reporting to the Strategic Management Board and the Executive Committee may be required.
- 10.9 In terms of procuring best value for money for all types of work, it is proposed to continue separating out both 'soft' services (cleaning, reception etc.) and 'hard' services (mechanical, electrical, etc.) into bundles of work that better serve the needs of the Authority, as well as appealing to a wide range of potential contractors that should lead to more competitive pricing.

11 Environment and Climate Change

11.1 The Authority still has several properties, within the present portfolio, where because of age and condition the most energy efficient methods of construction, heating and boiler services plus other mechanical and lighting services are not up to modern standards and expectations.

11.2 However, good practice has evolved over recent years that has seen this position fully rectified at every available opportunity and has seen, for example, the introduction of solar panelling at Brigade HQ, Workshops, Broughton and Winslow.

11.3 Analysis of Kw/H usage during the first two full years was included in the previous property strategy and showed an expected payback of 5.7 years. However, it also indicated that small scale installation such as that at Winslow, is only marginally beneficial and is something to be borne in mind for future applications. Whilst the 'payback' period per site will always be one key factor, other environmental factors remain significant.

11.4 Given the increase in the utilisation of Marlow Fire Station in recent years, an analysis of the potential benefits of installing solar panels at this site has been commissioned. At present there are no plans to roll this out to further sites, primarily because utilisation rates, roof sizes or positions don't lend themselves to justifying the capital investment, but the opportunities will always be kept under review, particularly as new technologies emerge.

11.5 With respect to energy supplies, the Authority currently utilises the services of an independent company, specialising in utility management, including securing the best utility market rates available. This service will be retained for the foreseeable future to negotiate on the Authority's behalf on a suitable procurement cycle.

11.6 Wherever and whenever works allow for more energy efficient installations, such opportunities will continue to be taken.

11.7 In December 2021, the Authority approved the Environment and Climate Action Plan, which sets out (amongst other things) how the Service will take action to reduce its own carbon emissions, while encouraging its staff and communities to do the same.

11.8 As noted in para 11.6, the Service will continually look for opportunities to improve energy efficiency when works are undertaken but will also proactively seek ways to reduce energy usage. Some of the key improvement actions taken during 2022 include:

- All on-call stations have had additional heating controls installed to ensure

- they are not heated unnecessarily when no-one is present in the buildings.
- A number of sites have 1st generation LED lighting, which are being replaced with 6th generation LEDs when they fail, or where it can be done as an invest to save measure. For example, replacing the bay lighting at Aylesbury reduced energy consumption by 30%
 - Combined heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) units at HQ have been programmed with a double-shutdown to reduce the amount of energy used during non-core hours.

12 Asbestos & Legionella

12.1 Asbestos – the Authority fulfils the requirements of The Control of Asbestos Regulations (2012) and associated Approved Codes of Practice to ensure that asbestos is correctly managed on all Authority premises so that no person is exposed to asbestos material in a form that can cause harm.

12.2 A program of removal has been undertaken in recent years either as part of refurbishment projects or where a specific need has arisen, thus reducing the number of properties with asbestos. These sites are then covered and managed under the Authority's procedure statement 'The Management of Asbestos in Authority Premises'.

12.3 Legionella – The Authority provides safe and clean water for all purposes of use by staff or visitors at all premises and also works to the 'Approved Codes of Practice' in the control of legionella bacteria in premises water systems.

12.4 A program of renewal/removal has been undertaken in recent years either as part of refurbishment projects, or where a specific need has arisen, thus reducing the number of properties with the need of treatment programmes. The premises that then remain with a risk are then covered and managed under the Authorities procedure statement 'Premises Water Hygiene'.

12.5 As part of the continuing drive to minimise risk as much as is practically reasonable, it is proposed to continue with a suitable programme of works.

13 Aerial Sites

13.1 When this Strategy was first approved it was noted that the extremely uncertain position with regard to maintaining income from mobile mast licences that was set out in the previous strategy had very largely been mitigated due to some protracted and tough negotiation with the operators. A gross income stream of some £185k p.a. had been secured for the next 20 years and includes recharge arrangements and fees for site call outs.

13.2 More recently, the income has decreased slightly to £175k p.a. following the merger of Bletchley and Great Holm. Recent legislation has also tipped the

balance of power towards the telecommunications providers in many instances, potentially creating issues that could impact on the Services ability to fully utilise its sites in the manner intended. It is unlikely new contracts will be entered into when the current ones expire.

14 Accessibility to Fire Stations and Other Premises

14.1 The Authority takes its obligations to provide accessibility to all members of the community very seriously and will continue to do so. Wherever and whenever undertaking major refurbishments or new build, or where identified by the EDI working group, works relating to accessibility will be carried out, where it is cost effective to do so, within an operational or office environment.

15 Leased/Rented Buildings

15.1 The Authority presently leases just one building as part of its overall property portfolio, this being Unit 7, Garside Way, Aylesbury – Office accommodation, Stores, USAR.

15.2 In March 2017, this lease was re-negotiated to provide the Fire Authority with more flexible exit options following the opening of the blue light hub. For a relatively small increase in the annual rent, the Authority was able to agree new break clauses at the end of December 2019, 2020 and 2021. The original lease break clause at the end of 2022 also remains, with the full-term expiring 24 December 2027. Further flexibility was negotiated during March 2023 so that the break clause can be exercised by giving at least nine months' notice at the end of any month, not just in March each year.

15.3 Whilst there are no specific plans to lease or rent other property during the course of this strategy, an open mind will be kept in relation to any possibilities that may present themselves and which make economic sense.

16 Buckinghamshire Council and Milton Keynes City Council Plans

16.1 Buckinghamshire Council and Milton Keynes City Council all have plans in place that look to re- develop, improve or refurbish town centres and other locations around the county.

16.2 The Authority is aware that some of these plans contain specific proposals that impact upon the current locations of some fire stations, notably in High Wycombe and Princes Risborough.

16.3 Officers will continue to work with Members, colleagues and the relevant councils to ensure the interests of the Fire Authority are protected at all times and that any subsequent outcomes that involve any re-locations are thus planned for accordingly.

- 16.4 Part of the work with the councils, particularly in the south of the county, will be to make representations with regard to key worker housing.

17 Risk Management

- 17.1 For all actions arising from this strategy the appropriate risk assessment(s) will be undertaken. The strategy itself will mitigate against the risk of uncoordinated property management activities being undertaken and not meeting priorities. In addition, following the recent condition survey, the outcomes will continue to be RAG assessed as they are now in line with existing or amended risk criteria that may be determined. Nevertheless staff and public safety will remain at the forefront of any risk assessment.
- 17.2 In terms of operational risk, the Property Service will work closely with operational response colleagues to ensure that any proposed location changes that may arise for any reason in the future are fully informed by advice from operational response colleagues as to risk.
- 17.3 During 2022, the risk of disruption to energy supplies, while remaining unlikely, appeared to increase due to the threat of reduced supplies as an indirect result of the war in Ukraine. The Service has worked with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to review the potential impacts to our estate should managed rota disconnections every need to be implemented. The Service already had electricity generators at Aylesbury, Broughton, Marlow, Princes Risborough and West Ashland, and following the work with BEIS, has now also purchased, and installed generators at Buckingham, Gerrards Cross and High Wycombe. To mitigate the risk of disruption to gas supplies, the Service has purchased a backup supply of electric radiators and installed hot water immersion heaters at several sites.

18 Community use of Fire Stations and other premises

- 18.1 At present there is limited community use of the Authority's premises. Some research was carried out as part of the 2012 strategy to determine whether there was any demand for meeting rooms, but the market appeared to be saturated at that time often with better facilities than this Authority could offer.
- 18.2 Since 2012 there has been an increase in the use of premises by other organisations where there is a mutual benefit for the fire and rescue service. Rooms have been used, at no cost, by groups associated with the Safeguarding Boards in both Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for multi-agency meetings and training purposes. This Service has also supported the NHS Falls Prevention team by providing rooms for stability classes as well as blood donor sessions. This aligns with the organisational approach to fire safety as those who are vulnerable to falling are at far greater risk from fires in their homes.

18.3 During the period of this strategy we will seek to facilitate other community groups that express an interest as part of a policy to work with the wider community. Whilst each case will be judged on its merits there is no plan to raise income from this objective and all cases will be subject to security and safety concerns being properly met and balanced with overall corporate objectives and wider collaborative working.

19 Collaborative Opportunities

19.1 In line with the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for estates, the Authority has for many years had a healthy dialogue with Thames Valley Police (TVP) colleagues on the possibilities of co-location or sharing of existing facilities. A lease agreement for the use of the 'Annex' at Broughton by TVP has been in place for some years and of course the proposals at the blue light hub have taken such arrangements to new heights with both TVP and South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS).

19.2 Co-location opportunities have progressed further with TVP with sites now also being shared at Princess Risborough and Newport Pagnell.

19.3 The Authority will always actively pursue estate related collaborative opportunities where it is feasible to do so.

20 Blue Light Hub – West Ashland, Milton Keynes

20.1 Since the last Property Strategy the arrangements for the Blue Light Hub project have been completed and the site became operational in June 2020.

21 High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Stokenchurch Fire Stations – Recent History

21.1 The Fire Authority has for many years faced challenges in respect of both the location and condition of the above stations. If all the right conditions could be met, then ideally the Authority would probably replace all three of these stations and provide alternative sites to the east and west of High Wycombe. However, this possibility now appears increasingly unlikely.

21.2 Wycombe District Council (now Buckinghamshire Council) had made it clear in their site allocation plans over the years that they have a wish to see the fire station in High Wycombe relocated elsewhere, to enable their vision of a much clearer line of sight and much more aesthetically pleasing view towards and around the Wycombe Swan Theatre. However, it appears that position has now changed and recent discussions have focused on making best use of the existing site.

21.3 Both High Wycombe and Stokenchurch Fire Stations require major

investment. Beaconsfield has had recent investment, however, its challenge is around site movement as it sits on what was once a landfill site. Although movement has been slight in recent years, it does nevertheless present a long term challenge and the dilemma is always how much more to invest in a site that is susceptible to land movement.

- 21.4 The condition of the fire station at High Wycombe has now reached a 'tipping point'. After many years of informal discussion with Wycombe Council (now Buckinghamshire Council) and to a lesser extent with the other blue light services there is now a need for some decisive action so that the Authority can present a building that is fit for purpose and secure the most effective response for the foreseeable future.
- 21.5 The 'make do and mend' approach is no longer sustainable.
- 21.6 Stokenchurch is a very challenging site. The Authority has kept the building in a serviceable condition over the years to enable operations to continue, but it is a very old building and if operations are to continue there in the long term, then almost certainly it would be more cost effective to demolish the existing building and build a new station on the plot. The plot itself has some issues being long and narrow thus making it difficult to make effective use of the site.
- 21.7 In addition, Stokenchurch has become a very difficult station to respond from as it has become harder to attract retained firefighters able to meet the response requirements for the location with available firefighters generally being used to provide second or third line response to High Wycombe or Marlow stations.
- 21.8 For the Authority the ideal situation would be to provide two new stations and to make the whole exercise cost neutral by utilising funds from the sale of the three existing sites to enable two new stations to be built.
- 21.9 However, this scenario has for many years been an unlikely one. Firstly, there have never been any sites identified either to the east or west of High Wycombe that could successfully house a new fire station. The previous district council have made informal suggestions over the years on possible sites to move High Wycombe Station, however, all have proved problematical for one reason or another and have never been seriously pursued.
- 21.10 The question of land values is also problematical, i.e. given the wish of the Council to move High Wycombe Fire Station and to have that retained in their Delivery and Site Allocations Plan 2013, does raise a question at the very least as to how that affects the land value because that will impact upon the ability on any prospective purchaser to develop the site.

21.11 Given that in over a decade of informal discussions the Council have never stated any intent to buy the site and have not been able to identify a suitable site to relocate to, there seems no reasonable prospect of the Fire Authority being able to relocate and gain the full value of the existing site.

21.12 Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, whilst there is some appetite amongst a number of stakeholders for a blue light hub in the south of the county, there is actually no pressing requirement for either Police or Fire to relocate both having perfectly adequate town centre locations, notwithstanding the fire station condition issue. A 2017 bid to win One Public Estate funding to commission a feasibility study for a blue light hub failed primarily because of a lack of commitment by all three blue light services and no obvious lead authority.

21.13 A short and long term strategy for all three sites is therefore required to enable the most effective service to be provided to residents in the south of the county.

22 Proposed strategy for High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Stokenchurch Fire Stations

22.1 The way ahead must focus on the needs of the growing community and the role of this strategy, particularly in the next year or so, must be to look at the possible options but to perhaps focus on the existing High Wycombe Station location as the key to the way ahead.

22.2 It is not the role of this strategy to prejudge any outcomes, merely to set out an intention that during 2023/24 work will commence with a view to presenting back to Members a range of costed options for Wycombe Fire Station by the financial year end.

22.3 There will be funding challenges so affordability of any given option will be a key part of any recommended way forward.

23 Buckingham Fire Station

23.1 The Authority has for some time been exploring options for either relocating or making better use of the land at Buckingham Fire Station. This has not progressed in any formal way primarily because of the resource allocation towards the completion of the blue light hub project.

23.2 Some indicative plans had been commissioned that showed it may have been feasible to split the site approximately 50/50 allowing one half to be disposed of, with the resulting capital receipt funding a new station. However, there were other obstacles that meant the proposed site split was

not practical in the original format envisaged.

23.3 There is a tentative indication that Thames Valley Police would be interested in some form of co-location in Buckingham and any proposals for the future will include that.

23.4 Any significant work at Buckingham Fire Station is not a priority at present and will be for consideration in future Property Strategies, but not this iteration.

24 Links to other Plans and Strategies

24.1 It is fully intended to ensure that any actions arising from this strategy are cognisant of other plans and strategies that the Authority has in place, specifically:

- Corporate Plan
 - The Property Service is a strategic enabler that seeks to ensure *we provide high quality, cost effective assets and equipment with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing requirements*. 'Assets' in this context includes property.
- Public Safety Plan
 - Most aspects of the PSP require proper, fit for purpose, safe buildings and facilities and forms an integral part of the property service provision.
- Procurement Strategy
 - All procurement related to property services will be in line with the Procurement Strategy.
- Medium Term Financial Plan
 - The service understands it is operating in a challenging financial environment and will seek to provide service within budget and will remain vigilant to opportunities to provide better value for money at all times.
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
 - Our premises must provide a safe and accessible working environment that values and respects the identity and culture of each person.

25 Equality and Diversity

25.1 The previous Property Strategy was formulated in consultation with the Equality and Diversity Manager and a People Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed, where it was determined that for the nine protected characteristics

the impact of the strategy was neutral. An equality impact assessment (EIA) was completed to consider the impact of extending the Strategy to 2025. It is expected that impacts will be positive and there is nothing to indicate any negative impacts.

25.2 However, where specific actions or projects are undertaken in the future as a result of this refreshed strategy, it is expected that a specific EIA will be completed as appropriate.

25.3 Property related EDI issues are considered as part of the EDI working group, which will make recommendations for changes that will have a positive impact on EDI across our estate. When planned property work is undertaken the opportunities will be taken to improve the usability of premises for all staff. Within the strategy and capital programme, an amount of £25,000 per year has been included for additional works that specifically improve the EDI of our premises in high priority areas.

26 Property Portfolio Records & Performance Indicators

26.1 **Premises Data Record** - The Property Service has a complete set of Premises Data Records for each property that sets out key information for each building including - current condition, projected remedial works, budget base and energy consumption and will significantly inform the evaluation of any proposed schemes within the property portfolio.

26.2 In addition, the Property team will continue to maintain a web portal for storage of this data and all other legislative documents relating to the Authorities estate, such as - Asbestos Registers, Land Registry, Site Plans, Building layout plans, Building Contracts, Tenants contracts/Licences etc. This was introduced with a 'one stop shop' and business continuity planning approach in mind.

27 Action Plan

Ref	Recommended Actions	Date	Status
1	Continue to prioritise all actions relating to the construction and occupation of the new Blue Light Hub facility in Milton Keynes	April 2018- Dec 2019	Complete
2	Review use of external professional services to assess whether value for money is being achieved	2018/19	Complete
3	Review and cost possible options covering location and response in the south of the County with a view to presenting such options back to Members by the end of the financial year 2018/19	March 2019	Review of High Wycombe only during 2023-24
4	Review requirement to remain in Unit 7 following occupation of Blue Light Hub	Post December 2019	Exit plan to be formulate during 2023-24
5	Facilitate continued community use of fire stations and develop new opportunities as they arise as part of the policy to work with the wider community	Ongoing	Ongoing
6	Complete collaborative work with Thames Valley Police to co-locate at Princes Risborough	March 2019	Complete
7	Complete collaborative work with Thames Valley Police to co-locate at Newport Pagnell	March 2019	Complete
8	Continue to seek out and develop collaborative estates opportunities where it is feasible to do so	Ongoing	Ongoing
9	Present detailed and costed options for the future of the Buckingham Fire Station site	March 2019	Remove from plan
10	Identify feasible overnight accommodations in Mid/North of County for duty officer including potential works.	July 2018	Complete
11	Carry out an interim review and refresh of the Property Strategy 2018-2023	By July 2021	Due to complete 2023
12	Commission next full condition survey	2022/23	Complete

N.B. The Action Plan does not seek to include normal 'day to day' repair and maintenance projects that form part of normal revenue or capital programme activity.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY DASHBOARD



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service	Gross Floor Area (m ²)	56,761	
	Net Usable Area (m ²)	45,409	
	Cost per m ²	£29	
	Building Year	1930 - 2010	
	Total Backlog	£1,320,600	
	Total Budget	£292,100	
Survey Date	February - March 2022	Combined Costs	£1,612,700

Site Location & Description

Oakleaf Surveying Ltd surveyed 18 fire stations across Buckinghamshire. The stations were all purpose built and varied in size, age, and construction, from the brick built 1930s stations like Brill to the concrete framed 1960s stations like Olney and then through to the steel/concrete framed stations of the 1980s/90s like Broughton. There are also several bespoke contemporary stations such as Marlow with its block walls and large sections of curtain glazing.



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue projected capital outlay per capital financial year													
Site Code	Site / Block Name	GIA	Total Cost	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Condition Grade	M&E Grade	Site Grade	Overall Grade
002	Aylesbury Fire Station	15,571	£33,850		£33,850					C	B	B	B
003	Beaconsfield Fire Station	3,067	£51,200		£51,200					B	A	C	B
004	Brill Fire Station	1,065	£110,750			£110,750				C	B	C	C
005	Broughton Fire Station	6,131	£27,200	£27,200						B	B	C	B
006	Buckingham Fire Station	4,252	£142,950		£142,950					B	C	C	C
007	Chesham Fire Station	1,294	£156,200			£156,200				C	B	C	C
008	Gerrards Cross Fire Station	3,801	£40,050		£40,050					B	B	B	B
009	Great Missenden Fire Station	1,181	£165,350					£165,350		B	A	C	B
010	Haddenham Fire Station	3,147	£7,100	£7,100						B	B	B	B
011	High Wycombe Fire Station	3,315	£457,650			£457,650				B	A	A	D
012	Marlow Fire Station	3,054	£6,950	£6,950						B	A	A	A
013	Newport Pagnell Fire Station	2,798	£20,800		£20,800					B	B	C	B
014	Olney Fire Station	1,746	£17,700		£17,700					C	B	B	B
015	Princes Risborough Fire Station	1,882	£53,450						£53,450	B	B	B	B
016	Stokenchurch Fire Station	1,182	£157,450					£157,450		C	A	C	C
017	Waddesdon Fire Station	814	£25,800						£25,800	B	A	A	A
018	Winslow Fire Station	991	£2,700	£2,700						B	A	A	A
TOTAL		56,761	£1,612,700	£43,950	£306,550	£792,650	£0	£322,800	£146,750				-

Condition Backlog Maintenance Works

Building	£1,219,900
M&E	£100,700
Backlog Total Cost	£1,320,600
Cost per m ²	23.26

Condition Future Planned Costs for Future Maintenance Works (5 years)

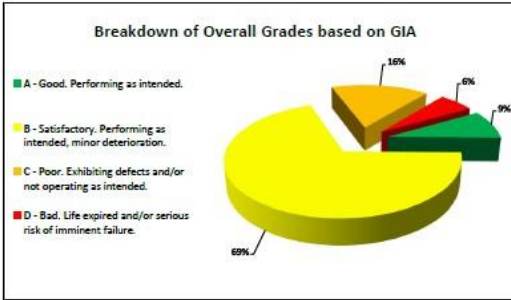
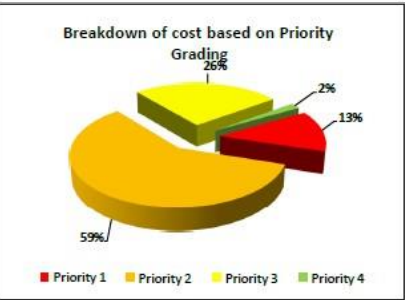
Building	£275,900
M&E	£16,200
Future Planned Total Cost	£292,100
Cost per m ²	£5

Combined Total Costs

	£1,612,700
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Breakdown of Priority Grading

Priority 1 - Urgent Work	£214,250.00	13%
Priority 2 - Essential Work	£956,250.00	59%
Priority 3 - Desirable Work	£417,700.00	26%
Priority 4 - Long Term Aspirational Work	£29,700.00	2%



Appendix 2 - Premises Dashboard (Example)

Appendix 2

Drill tower survey – summary of assessment of work required:

Station	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
Amersham	17,500	8,500	6,200	32,200
Beaconsfield	3,600	4,200	2,100	9,900
Brill	23,900	10,800	3,100	37,800
Broughton	4,800	4,800	2,500	12,100
Buckingham	5,600	3,800	1,050	10,450
Chesham	1,500	4,800	0	6,300
Gerrards Cross	2,400	9,400	1,350	13,150
Great Missenden	19,000	14,700	9,100	42,800
Haddenham	2,400	10,400	4,700	17,500
High Wycombe	16,000	500	7,800	24,300
Newport Pagnell	0	1,100	700	1,800
Olney	18,500	11,300	4,900	34,700
Princess				
Risborough	16,700	9,200	3,500	29,400
Stokenchurch	3,200	8,300	0	11,500
Winslow	14,800	9,200	4,750	28,750
Totals	149,900	111,000	51,750	312,650