



# **Bedfordshire**

## **Fire and Rescue Service**

### **BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

#### **Land and Buildings**

#### **Asset Management Plan**

**2016/17 to 2019/20**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Need for a Land and Buildings Asset Management Plan

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority are responsible for the provision of the fire and rescue service within the Local Authority areas of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough. The Service has three key objectives:

- To respond effectively, manage risks, and reduce the number of emergency incidents that we attend;
- To ensure high standards of corporate governance and continued service improvement; and
- To develop our employees and create a safe, fair and caring workplace for our staff.

In order to support the Authority's primary functions, it is necessary to provide or secure use of a range of premises from which to:

- deliver emergency response and community safety services
- train and develop staff
- provide technical and administrative support, and
- house certain staff and their families

As at 31 March 2016, the Authority owns land and property with a value of £22.067m. The Statement of Accounts for year ending March 2016 is currently being finalised. In the financial year 2016/17, the planned revenue expenditure for on-going management and maintenance of the Authority's premises is £1.25m (including salaries, repairs and maintenance, gas, water, electricity, rates, waste disposal, cleaning, insurance, but excluding income) and the planned capital expenditure on premises improvement projects is £0.120m, which when including some 2015/16 slippage and planned plus ad hoc 2016/17 additions is likely to be higher.

Budgeted income totals £70k from the houses, garages and charges for the use of stations as bases by other emergency services.

This Land and Buildings Asset Management Plan identifies the key strategic policy and resource influences which are impacting upon the Authority's approach to managing its land and buildings portfolio and sets a broad direction for the **management of these assets over the medium term (three to five years)**. The overall aim of this Plan is to enable the Authority's property portfolio and associated professional support services to be optimised to meet the identified strategic needs.

The plan sets the context and a **programme of action for the property portfolio over the medium-term** and is designed to facilitate rational property decision-making based on identified service priorities. It is intended as a practical tool which helps to **define, implement and measure how the Authority:**

- **Makes its investment decisions.**
- **Maintains and improves its assets.**
- **Increases the cost effectiveness of its portfolio.**
- **Promotes innovation and development in asset management.**
- **Listens and responds to property users.**

The Plan has been developed in line with the Authority's overarching Asset Management Strategy and implements a comprehensive approach to the management of the Authority's property assets. It is intended for a wide audience including:

- **Members** - to support decisions on investment priorities in the portfolio.
- **Service managers** - to identify portfolio changes to meet their needs.
- **The community** – as a statement of the Authority's asset management practices and priorities. The Plan also takes account of national guidance and recognised best practice in public sector asset management, including that contained within 'Building On Strong Foundations – A Framework For Local Authority Asset Management' (Communities and Local Government, February 2008) and the Operational Efficiency Review – Property (HM Treasury, May 2009). In line with this guidance, this plan seeks to:
  - Ensure the provision of **high quality and cost effective accommodation**, which will be sufficiently **flexible to adapt to the Authority's long term requirements**.
  - **Deliver a cost effective and responsive service, which supports operational needs.**
  - **Help to strategically plan accommodation for the future.**
  - **Contribute to the Authority's community safety initiatives through the design of fire stations and other facilities.**
  - **Provide the Authority with long-term value for money.**
  - **Support the Authority's corporate risk management in relation to its legislative and environmental obligations.**

## 1.2 How the L&B AMP links with Other Corporate Plans

This Plan also links with and informs other corporate plans for the effective management of the Service. The Plan is designed to support and integrate with these other plans by reflecting how the Authority's property portfolio and its management needs to be developed to ensure the Authority's priorities are delivered. The diagram below outlines the key relationships between the Asset Management Plan for Land and Buildings and other corporate plans:

## Relationship of Asset Management Plan for Land and Buildings with other Corporate Plans

### Corporate Planning Framework



### 1.3 Format and Content of the Plan

Following this introductory Section, the plan is arranged in four further Sections:

- Section 2 provides a statement of **strategic direction for property asset management** through an analysis of the environment in which the Authority is operating and its own priorities in response to this.
- Section 3 describes the Authority's current policy and practice with respect to asset management, and is designed to provide a commentary against current **'Best Practice' in asset management**.
- Section 4 provides information on the size and nature of the property portfolio under thematic headings, providing a review of portfolio **performance and highlighting specific current and emerging issues in the estate**.

- Section 5 reviews the asset management actions and **capital programme of major property projects undertaken over the previous year and details the major property projects for the current year. The action plan is structured in accordance with the broad strategic direction** defined through Section 2.

## 2. THE PLANNING CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### 2.1 External Influences for Change

As noted in Section 1.2 above, this Plan does not exist in isolation but is set within the context provided by other corporate plans. These plans are in part a response to the wider external drivers impacting on Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority. In this broader context, the following five broad external factors have been identified as having significant property asset implications for Authority:

- Changing Patterns of Service Delivery*** – With the removal of prescriptive national standards of fire cover in 2004 and their replacement by local Integrated Risk Management Planning, the focus for emergency response has shifted from property risk to life risk. There are also other major shifts in patterns of response including the impact of fire prevention contributing to reduced numbers of fire incidents, increasing responses to road traffic collisions and the increasing demands of wider civil emergencies such as inland water rescues and flood related incidents from climate change. In addition, there are specific responsibilities for responses to other incident types such as mass decontamination and urban search and rescue incidents under Civil Contingencies legislation. These changes in the demands of emergency response have clear implications for the location and design of fire stations. Equally fundamental in its implications for the design of operational premises is the increasing and wide ranging role of the service in preventative, community safety and broader community wellbeing initiatives – captured by the concept of the ‘community fire station’. As these modified service delivery models evolve – for both response and prevention, they are driving revised patterns of accommodation to support them.
- Demographic Changes and Local Development Plans*** – By 2021, the population in the county is expected to grow to 679,400. This population growth may change the geographic pattern of risk and hence require review of the positioning of, and response times from the existing portfolio of fire stations. The changing demography of the area may also affect the distribution and nature of demand for the Service’s response. The infrastructure needs associated with new housing and population growth plus a changing demographic profile, such as an increasingly elderly population, will contribute to a changing geography of risk and hence of service response. Again this may support re-profiling of facilities, including relocation of existing facilities to ensure adequate response is maintained.

There is currently a planning consultation taking place for the redevelopment of Leighton Buzzard town centre that potentially has implications for the Fire Station there. The Service is engaging in the consultation as necessary.

- Expenditure Constraints*** - The current climate of severe public expenditure constraints and, within this, the Authority’s own budgetary pressures are likely to have continuing impact over the medium term and beyond. The requirements to reduce public expenditure will result in increased pressures to reduce overall property costs, in both absolute and relative terms, in order

to protect front-line operational services. There will be a need to demonstrate that the portfolio is optimised as far as is possible and that no unnecessary expenditure is being incurred. This will include considering closely the opportunities to release monetary resources tied-up in buildings as a mechanism to modernise and improve service performance.

**A energy efficiency drive will be re-launched in 2016/17.**

- d. **Collaboration, Partnership Working and Shared Services** - There is a continuing and growing expectation that all public sector organisations vigorously pursue opportunities for efficiencies through collaboration, developing shared service models or outsourcing in areas such as fleet management and ICT. In addition, there is a continuing Government agenda to promote 'joined up' local services through initiatives which seek to more customer- focused, integrated service delivery models and improved resource efficiency **through better or shared use of accommodation and improved integration between public sector agencies. These are all drivers for potentially significant changes to the Authority's property portfolio which may lead to co-location of functions with partner Authorities/agencies or removing the need for accommodation for some functions altogether.** Discussions are currently taking place with other emergency services regarding their potential use of our properties.
- e. The FiReControl Project – The regional working agenda introduced with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, included a national project to replace individual fire and rescue service control centres in England with nine regional controls. On December 20th 2010 the Government terminated the Regionalisation of Emergency Fire Control Centre's; therefore the proposed movement of the Authority's mobilising and control function to the new regional base in Cambridgeshire, did not happen.

The Service was successful with a bid to the DCLG for £1m to replace our mobilising system. We are working in collaboration with Essex FRS to get our individual control centres upgraded, but with built in resilience with collaborative working. The anticipated completed date for our service is autumn 2016. Property related works on the control building were completed during 2014/15.

## **2.2 The Authority's Strategic Priorities and Aspirations**

In accordance with its corporate planning cycle, the Authority undertakes a strategic assessment each year to consider the strategic environment within which the Service is operating and set overall priorities and direction to guide corporate strategies and plans for the following year and the medium-term. **The Land and Buildings Asset Management Plan will adapt to ensure it is aligned to the these priorities.**

## **2.3 The Financial Resources Context (Revenue and Capital Expenditure)**

The Authority's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2016/17 to 2019/20 recognises the extreme revenue budgetary pressures facing the Authority and the public sector in general, with a requirement to do more with less.

Whilst it is recognised that staff costs represent circa 80% of Authority revenue expenditure, the current budget climate also necessitates a focused approach to asset management to identify efficiencies.

The budgeted premises running costs for 2016/17 total £1.25m. This includes the Property Team, repairs and maintenance, utilities, contracts, insurance etc

The capital budget for property projects in 2016/17 amounts to £0.40m and is likely to be higher than this amount that is in the Capital Programme when including 2015/16 slippage, budgeted condition survey works of £80k and additions in 2016/17.

Funding for the current years capital programme has been achieved from revenue contributions, without the need to undertake any further borrowing in the form of Public Works Loan Board. The capital funding from the DCLG or Home Office, via direct grant or through a bidding process has ceased for 2016/17 and currently the following years.

**The Authority is also aware that its property portfolio itself represents latent capital (locked up in land, bricks and mortar) and the release of this form of capital could make an important contribution to reducing future revenue and capital budget pressures.**

## **2.4 Strategic Direction for Land and Buildings Asset Management**

Based upon the above considerations, the over-arching strategic direction for land and buildings asset management over the next three years can be summarised as **a more robust and systematic challenge to the need for and performance of the assets in the portfolio**. This as well as providing a response to the key issues identified above set a broad strategic direction around which resources and action can be coordinated. This direction can be summarised as:

- **Reviewing the operational asset base** - This is an on-going activity at the core of the Authority's service obligations and in furthering its strategic priorities under the theme of a more rigorous, business like approach, the Authority continues to 'Match Operational Resources to Risk'. The initial phases of the project have involved an in-depth analysis of the need for the number, type and location of fire stations in order to explore the full range of possible options, comparing the existing portfolio against a 'blank canvas' plan for the number, type, size and location of fire stations and what opportunities this might allow for asset rationalisation. In terms of operational and resource efficiency, questions were raised in relation to some Retained Duty System fire stations as to whether the same level of service and response times be provided from the existing full time urban stations or from a reconfigured smaller portfolio. The outcomes of the work undertaken to date have indicated that there is no clear case, at present, to dispose of or change the location of any of the Authority's fire stations and the capital programme for buildings for 2016/17 onwards has been developed on this basis.

Changes that have been made in the past following the above work includes the crewing at Toddington Fire Station, with the removal of day crewing.

A key step in the rationalisation and use of our premises was made during 2013/14, where the Operational Support Team moved out of leased premises and into HQ and other sites. This was achievable through the better utilisation of available space, after making some changes to building layouts. This process also brought together the Functional Heads into one floor at HQ, rather than being spread across the county at numerous sites.



- **Active portfolio management** – In line with the Authority’s commitment to a businesslike approach and the planning and financial context, there is an increasing need to ensure that the property portfolio is contributing effectively to the Authority’s core objectives and that every opportunity is taken to minimise cost, generate income, to enhance or release value. This requires a much more robust approach to performance measurement and management of the portfolio. **Within asset management there is need to embrace and demonstrate consistency with best practice, use of performance measures and a strategic, innovative and collaborative approach to the use of assets.** This includes, for example, more active recognition that unused or under-utilised space is a hidden cost which needs to be minimised and that similarly buildings can in certain circumstances **provide the basis to generate income from third party lettings.** This is especially true of the non-operational space such as offices, training facilities and other ancillary facilities. Whilst a relatively small portfolio and thus any efficiency gains from improved utilisation maybe limited, it is nevertheless an area which requires robust challenge through examining whether, for example:
  - better promotion of flexible working practices could reduce demand for office space and intensify utilisation;
  - joint working arrangements with partners are being exploited to ensure facilities are fully utilised;
  - income earning opportunities are being actively sought;
  - there is equity in office facilities in different parts of the portfolio;
  - as noted above, with the cessation of the Authority’s one leased property, the Authority owns all the premises that it uses.

As noted above, discussions are currently taking place with other emergency services and it is looking likely that as well as existing shared arrangements, more are being developed to be introduced during 2016/17. This will generate income to the Authority, albeit in the main to contribute to existing costs such as rates, heating, lighting etc.

- **Using Authority assets to support wider community role** - In line with its aspirations for demonstrating civic leadership and playing a wider community role, the Authority and Service are increasingly being recognised as a focus for the community. With this community role allied to the increasing preventative nature of the service there is a requirement to ensure buildings are welcoming and easily accessible to the public. Due to the nature of the service it is not possible to make all areas of fire stations publicly accessible and so the approach needs to focus on use of ancillary areas of existing stations or within new stations to provide community facilities without compromising safety, security or effective response to incidents. There is a need to define the nature of this community role and issues such as how the community focus supports the BFRS mission and overall objectives; the operating basis of community facilities (subsidy or self-supporting), facilities provided; mixing of operational and community activities need to be considered. The Dunstable station provides the model of such community engagement.
- **Promoting shared asset use** – Closely aligned to both the theme of Civic Leadership and Robust, Businesslike Approach is the issue of taking a more robust approach to exploring shared asset use (with other agencies). The current financial pressures in the public sector are leading to greater collaboration and shared asset use amongst public sector agencies. The previous, largely passive approach to this is no longer appropriate and a more robust and proactive approach is required. Whilst the Authority is likely to be a minor partner (in terms

of its portfolio size) in comparison with other public sector agencies this does not prevent it from taking a lead on a multi-agency basis; especially in the emergency services sector. There are potential benefits to be achieved from reducing operating costs or releasing cash (from possible property asset rationalisations) and the agency that takes the lead on this may be best placed to secure such benefits. The Service does receive income from the Ambulance Service and St John Ambulance for the use of our property assets. As noted above, further discussions and opportunities are being explored.

### **3. LAND AND BUILDINGS ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE**

#### **3.1 Overall Approach**

In line with the priority of a rigorous, business-like approach, asset management is gaining an increasingly high profile within the Authority and Service.

The following sections provide a brief overview of some of the key arrangements for the Authority's land and buildings asset management.

#### **3.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

The following posts/groups undertake key roles in the asset management process for land and buildings:

<b>Individual/Group</b>	<b>Role</b>
Fire and Rescue Authority	Approve the Community Risk Management Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan, including annual capital programme and revenue budget for property.
Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group	Approve Asset Management Policy and Asset Management Plans. Monitor implementation and performance of plans, scrutinising and challenging as appropriate.
Capital Strategy Team (Principal Officers and Head of Finance/Treasurer)	Develop Asset Management Strategy and Plans. Develop Capital Programme for property for approval by Authority and monitor/oversee implementation, receiving regular update reports. Prioritise capital investment proposals. Assign and consider post implementation reviews.
Corporate Management Team (Principal Officers and Functional Heads)	Develop Community Risk Management Plan and annual revenue budget for approval by Authority and monitor and manage in-year implementation.

Head of Finance/Treasurer	<p>Undertakes the role of ‘Corporate Asset Officer.’</p> <p>Monitors and reports capital and revenue expenditure against budget/programme to Authority, Capital Strategy Team and Corporate Management Team.</p> <p>Oversees day to day operation and implementation of the Asset Management Policy and Land &amp; Buildings Plan.</p>
Property Manager	<p>Undertakes role of ‘asset officer’ for land and buildings – has day to day responsibility for all property related matters.</p> <p>Manages implementation of the Asset Management Plan and implements Capital Programme and revenue budget for property (project managing, procuring services, monitoring progress/outcomes, prioritising work, managing budget etc).</p> <p>Liaises closely with the Head of Finance/Treasurer on asset related issues.</p>

An external review in a previous year of asset management indicated no issues with the roles, responsibilities or skills profiles of those involved in asset management, it highlighted that the small size of the Property Team (Property Manager plus admin support) created capacity issues regarding more strategic asset management functions which tended to be neglected as a result of the need to focus on tactical and operational issues. It also highlighted the potential resilience issues inherent in such a small team. The options for creating greater capacity and resilience through collaborative working or a shared service approach to property management with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service will again be reviewed.

### **3.3 Management of Capital Programme Property Projects**

Proposals for capital property projects are invited on an annual basis, when Service managers submit a pro forma for consideration by Capital Strategy Team which comprises the three Principal Officers plus the Head of Finance/Treasurer. The process commences annually in July and is supported with technical information from the Property Manager. All proposals are scrutinised and evaluated against Service strategic priorities. The proposals are then presented to Members for discussion and challenge at successive budget workshops prior to the final programme being agreed by the Authority in February as a component of its annual budget.

The Asset Management Review found that the allocation of funding reflected the priorities as identified in the Community Risk Management Plan and other strategic plans and that the process was undertaken in an open way with key proposals on property matters presented to Members for decision with appropriate recommendations.

### **3.4 Managing Properties in Use**

The Property Team maintains records of the nature, location and function of all the Authority’s property. A compliance register is also maintained, which is vital in the effective management of the property which includes asbestos, legionella, gas checks, electricity checks, lightening checks, Health & Safety matters, Environmental and Equality & Diversity etc.

A continuous condition survey is carried out on the whole portfolio to obtain an up to date assessment of the properties and the priority to medium term capital and revenue works that are required. This will then inform the following year's budget process with the latest capital and revenue expenditure forecasts.

Budget bids and condition surveys are discussed at regular meetings between the Head of Finance/Treasurer and Property Manager and are linked into the Property Manager's annual personal action plan.

The day-to-day management of the operational buildings is the responsibility of the station/section managers although they have the support of the Property Team as and when maintenance issues arise.

### **3.5 Review of Need, Utilisation and Cost**

Data held by the Authority which can support not only an effective asset management function but also a robust and systematic process of challenge to the need for and performance of individual property assets includes:

- Asset values for capital accounting purposes are undertaken on a three yearly basis or more frequently if there have been significant movement in values. They were fully re-valued as at 31 March 2014 and more recently a desk top valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2016.
- Property running costs are available for each property through the financial management system. The costs of 'owning' and 'occupying' property is known and readily identified through the financial management system for individual managers.
- The development potential of all operational properties sites are continually assessed.

### **3.6 The Transparency Code**

The Code requires local authorities to publish details of all land and building assets, amongst other areas. There are some exclusions that may apply for the Authority where details are not required, such as assets of national security.

For each land or building asset, the following information must be published together in one place:

- Unique asset identity
- Name of building/land or both
- Street number
- Street name
- Postal town
- UK postcode
- Geocode (easting and northing)
- Whether freehold or leasehold
- Whether land only or land with permanent building

The above information is published on the Authority's website, there is a dedicated page for the full suite of Transparency Code subject areas including procurement, the organisational structure etc.

The above data should be published at least annually.

### **3.7 Collaboration and Partnership Working in Property Asset Management**

The Authority has undertaken some partnership working with the ambulance trust and has responded favourably to initiatives as they have arisen. For example, there was considerable direct engagement with the public on the provision of community facilities at Dunstable. St Johns Ambulance does have a rental agreement with the Authority too for use of part of Dunstable Station.

Whilst it may not be expected for the Authority to take a lead on collaborative asset management it is keen to play an active part in multi-agency projects, particularly where related to community safety.

## **4. REVIEW OF PROPERTY PORTFOLIO**

### **4.1 Number and Type of Premises**

The Authority has a duty to provide premises that are safe for users and visitors, accessible for staff and public and provide an economic and effective service to the public. The Authority will provide buildings that make efficient use of energy, minimise any harmful effects to the environment and make a positive contribution to the appearance of the local community. A summary of the numbers and types of premises occupied by the Authority is listed in the Table below:

Summary of Property Occupied by the Fire and Rescue Authority (All property assets are owned by the Authority)

<b>Premises Type</b>	<b>No</b>
Fire Stations – Shift Duty System (one of which located on Headquarters site)	5
Fire Stations – Day Crewing Duty System	1
Fire Stations – Retained Duty System	8
Service Control (located on Headquarters site)	1
Service Training Centre (located on Headquarters site)	1
Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance Workshops (located on Headquarters site)	1
Headquarters Offices	1
Area Offices	2
Houses	7

#### **4.1.1 Fire Stations**

The locations, types and sizes of fire stations are determined by the risk to the community and the ability to respond to incidents in terms of the time and number of appliances according to specific types of incidents. The positioning of fire stations is therefore location sensitive with proximity to the road network and areas of risk being critical.

Staff duty systems (wholetime, day crewed or retained) influence the provision of facilities at each station. Wholetime stations are in use around the clock and require some staff to spend extended periods in these buildings; day-crewed fire stations are in use for large parts of the day, whilst retained fire stations have far less staff activity on site and therefore require fewer facilities. In general terms the pattern of fire station provision is for whole-time and day crewed fire stations to be in urban centres and retained fire stations to be in rural areas.

Fire station design has over recent years been significantly affected by the aspirations of the Authority for community safety services and a wider community role. This has led to design of a range of public access areas on the sites of some stations (a specialised interactive community fire safety education facility has been built at the Luton Fire Station site) as well as within the existing station buildings themselves (such as the extensive community facilities at the Dunstable Community Fire Station) and the on-going programme to expand and enhance such facilities at all other stations.

As the principal requirement for fire stations is to meet standards of emergency cover, it is essential that this Asset Management Plan is based on a sound understanding of the existing and possible future emergency cover requirements.

Following the replacement of national standards of fire cover with local Integrated Risk Management Planning in 2004, the Authority developed and implemented local standards of incident response that matched fire appliance attendance times against risk. These locally determined standards will be a primary influence on any options for change to location of stations. The Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) details how the Authority assesses community risk and its current arrangements for managing that risk through prevention, protection and response.

#### **4.1.2 Emergency Fire Control Centre**

The location and design of the Emergency Fire Control Centre is determined by a number of factors including the fact that it operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year and forms a vital part of the Service's operational capability. The loss of use of this facility can impact more significantly on the operational effectiveness of the service than any other single building and so the premises and services are to the highest standard of reliability and security. In addition, alternative facilities are provided in case of an emergency evacuation of the main control room.

#### **4.1.3 Training Facilities**

The Authority has a specialist Service Training Centre comprising a range of facilities including teaching rooms, a 'hot' and 'cold' fire training complex, driver training and domestic facilities.

In addition, a range of specialist training facilities are required at fire stations including 'smoke' houses, drill towers and yards. All fire stations are provided with multi-media equipment to allow training to be carried out in lecture room environments.

#### 4.1.4 Servicing of Vehicles, Equipment and Supplies

The Authority has vehicle and equipment workshops and a supplies facility at Fire and Rescue Headquarters. They provide all the necessary technical support to equip and maintain the fire and rescue service.

#### 4.1.5 Residential Accommodation for Day Crewing and Retained Staff

Firefighters who operate at the day crewing station provide extended hours of cover. They are required to live in close proximity to the fire station to enable them to respond to the fire station when a fire call is received. The Authority provides housing for staff at the Leighton Buzzard Fire Station. The accommodation must be suitable for the normal domestic requirements of the staff and their families. The current project to improve the match of operational resources to risk may lead to a changed requirement for such accommodation in the future.

There is also housing available for retained firefighters at the Toddington Fire Station, where under a licence to occupy the fee paid is at a comparable public sector market rate.

#### 4.1.6 General Standards

The Authority will apply certain standards to all buildings, regardless of their function, although the way standards are achieved will vary according to the specific needs. These include:

**Health and Safety:** The Authority protects the health, safety and welfare of its employees and visitors, and provides a safe working environment in the premises under its control.

**Accessibility:** The Authority is committed to providing an 'inclusive environment'. For reasons of safety, it is not possible to provide public access to all areas on fire stations; however, it is the aim to provide welcoming and clearly available access to relevant parts of the Authority premises. All new buildings and refurbishment will include specific provision for access. In existing premises, the Authority will seek effective ways of providing access to services.

**Equality and Diversity:** Until relatively recently, fire stations have been designed to accommodate the traditionally exclusively male operational fire fighting staff. The designs of older fire stations did not include gender segregated showering and changing facilities for operational staff, although the more limited facilities necessary for female non-operational staff were provided. All stations operating the wholetime duty system and retained stations now have adequate facilities with improvements carried out in 2015/16.

The Property Team have now documented all E&D related facilities at the Authority's premises and will liaise on an ongoing basis with the Diversity Advisor. Any required works will be met from the annual capital works budget.

**Sustainability:** The Authority is committed to ongoing measures to ensure the property portfolio contributes to its aspiration to minimise the adverse environmental impact of its activities and to reduce its overall carbon footprint. An overall reduction in space used is an important contribution to this target, as is promoting sustainability

through procurement and design of new buildings and retro-fit of existing buildings through measures such as use of double glazing, insulation, energy efficient lighting and appliances. The age profile of the Authority's portfolio creates some challenges in this respect and means that continuing consideration will need to be given to the environmental aspects of buildings, such as energy and water consumption and to the overall carbon footprint of the portfolio.

**Building Standards:** In addition to meeting the legislative and planning requirements, the Authority will seek to provide buildings that offer a cost effective solution to the planned whole life of the building. It will not be assumed that all stations will have a life of 50 – 80 years, particularly in areas of the county where significant changes that may affect fire cover are foreseeable. Where appropriate, low cost modern building systems will be used. Buildings will be sympathetically designed and will make a positive contribution to the environment of the local community. Building methods and services will be selected to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations and, as described above, to minimise the use of energy and water, therefore, making a positive contribution to a sustainable environment. Statutory and regulatory controls are managed by structured inspection and testing regimes.

#### **4.2 Cost of Ownership and Occupation**

There is a recurring cost borne from the revenue budget to own and occupy property. Assuming the portfolio is fit for purpose and in a reasonable state of repair the objective should be to minimise this expenditure in order to release revenue for operational priorities.

Such expenditure includes smaller items of routine maintenance that are identified within the condition surveys, items of preventative maintenance carried out on a pre-determined cycle, regular premises cleaning and dealing with unforeseen repairs. The budget also meets all costs arising from heating and lighting and payment of premises related insurance, rents and rates. In the financial year 2016/17, the planned revenue expenditure for such ongoing maintenance and management of the Authority's premises is £1.25m.

#### **4.3 Value and Income**

The Authority owns land and property with a value of £22.067m, as at 31 March 2016.

As well as providing the accommodation from which to deliver services, property can also be considered as a 'productive asset' which is capable of releasing value (from property disposals) or generating income (from rental lettings). Although not its primary purpose, this can make a valuable offsetting contribution to capital projects or operating costs.

In 2016/17, the Authority has a budget for rental income from property lettings of approximately £70k. This budget may be exceeded with additional rental income from discussions with partners that are currently progressing.

The Authority continues to consider the commercial value of its premises and land particularly those located in prime town centre areas or areas of high residential



property values. It is recognised that on-going discussions with developers may generate opportunities for the Authority to benefit from the disposal of older premises on commercially valuable sites, using the income to fund replacement stations. There are also areas of station land that could be sold off in the future should there be a financial or other requirement to drive this.

The operational considerations of such proposals are paramount and because of the essential operational requirements for strategic locations, this approach may not yield usable options. As the approach is dependant on the availability of alternate sites or shared sites, and the commercial value of existing sites, the Authority's options will be kept under constant review.

#### **4.4 Condition of Premises**

It is important to understand the condition of the building stock in order to be aware of immediate health and safety issues in the portfolio, incipient risks and liabilities to the Authority; and the investment needs associated with ensuring buildings are in a reasonable state of repair - as required by the Authority to meet its service obligations. It is also an important element of 'Best Practice' within current asset management guidance.

The bulk of the portfolio buildings (70%) are over 30 years old with less than 20% aged less than twenty years. This age profile may indicate incipient issues in the portfolio related to building maintenance and constrain the ability to promote a 'green' portfolio which is consistent with the Authority's sustainability objectives. The age profile of the Authority's premises is identified in the table below:

## Age Profile of Premises

<b>Building</b>	<b>Duty Systems Employed</b>	<b>Date of Construction and Major Extension</b>
Amphill Fire Station	Retained	1953
Bedford Fire Station	Wholetime & Retained	1968 and 1988
Biggleswade Fire Station	Retained	1959 and 1985
Dunstable Fire Station	Wholetime	2008
Harrold Fire Station	Retained	1971
Kempston Fire Station	Wholetime & Retained	1970 and 1989
Leighton Buzzard Fire Station	Day Crewing & Retained	1961 & 1987
Luton Fire Station	Wholetime	1956
Potton Fire Station	Retained	1973
Sandy Fire Station	Retained	1957 & 1992
Shefford Fire Station	Retained	1968
Stopsley Fire Station	Wholetime	1984 & 2009
Toddington Fire Station	Retained	1973
Woburn Fire Station	Retained	1997
Service Headquarters	Not Applicable	1970 & 1997
Service Training Centre	Not Applicable	1987 & 1997
Area Office (North)	Not Applicable	1968
Area Office (South)	Not Applicable	1956

The age profile shows that a significant number of fire stations and other buildings that are owned by the Authority were built during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Eight properties have had major extensions since they were first built. However, age of buildings is not necessarily the sole driver of replacement plans; indeed, all the fire stations are in good structural condition and have the potential to last many more years. On the other hand, due to the increasing development in the Authority's area there may be a future need to consider the location of fire stations to ensure they meet the requirements of the Community Risk Management Plan.

Nevertheless, it is essential that a proactive programme of repair, maintenance and refurbishment takes place. The Authority has completed a data and condition survey that is used as the basis for planning programmes of work. A five year rolling programme was been developed that identifies the condition of the main elements of buildings and generates a score. These scores are utilised to help develop programmes of work either specific to the elements considered or to whole premises. This methodology helps to target those premises in greatest need of attention and to ensure that programmes of work are targeted in a balanced and structured way. Legislative requirements for premises are also considered and specific programmes for improvements to premises to comply with food hygiene regulations and other health and safety issues are in place.

## **5. PROGRAMME OF PROPERTY PROJECTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

### **5.1 Capital Programme of Property-Related Projects**

Based upon all the above considerations and factors, the Authority develops a programme of major property refurbishment and improvement projects which aims to make the best use of the existing strategic sites and buildings by enhancing and sustaining suitable premises and extending their effective life. Such refurbishment requires significant investment and entails some disruption to the users of the building. Premises and works included in the in the programme will reflect an assessment of cost and benefits of investing in the property or site and will, in the case of fire stations, take account of any potential need to remove or relocate the station to meet changed requirements for emergency cover.

Such major property-related projects form an integral part of the Authority's Capital Programme as contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

### 5.1.1 Review of Capital Programme Property Projects 2015/16

The following completed works during 2015/16 are worth noting:

Premises	Project	Actual Spend £	Status
Potton	Exterior, interior, new toilets, shower, heating, windows, decorating, kitchen	41,400	Completed
Sandy	Exterior, interior, new toilets, shower, heating, windows, decorating, kitchen	36,700	Completed
Control	Generator, Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS), completion of improvements	29,400	Completed
Biggleswade	Station improvements	6,400	Completed
HQ	Comms Office improvements, now the Property Office, HR Office, Corridor, air con	15,500	Completed
	<b>Total</b>	<b>129,400</b>	

Some of the more significant achievements over the last two years, through which the Authority demonstrated its commitment to asset management include:

- Compliance registers – asbestos, gas, electricity, air conditioning, lightening protection, legionella etc
- Drawings/plans – numerous, covering lighting, drainage, asbestos, fire alarms, security alarms, door/room numbers, heating etc
- Generators, UPS review/servicing
- Drop down charges for Rescue Pumps in all station bays
- Energy saving replacement windows where a priority
- Movement detection sensors for internal lighting and external floodlights
- Replacement of lighting with new LED economical upgrades
- New economical A rated boilers
- Development of asset registers for each property
- Service house improvements
- Disabled access improvements – door widening, flooring improvements
- HR Office improvements

### **5.1.2 Planned Programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20**

In the 2016/17 Capital Programme, the specific projects for the Property Team are:

- Extend and Redesign the BA Technician & Technical Technician Workshop £35k
- Control Kitchen Upgrade £5k
- Generator – Bedford
- Security works HQ – including Control, traffic flow, additional parking
- Improvements to the FSOT garage based at Leighton Buzzard (DCLG grant received for this work)
- Continued Floodlighting upgrades
- Car parks and drill yards re-tarmacked including drainage
- Appliance bay floors
- Re-roofing older stations

Some of the above will be funded from the annual capital budget for Condition Survey related work of £80k. This is as well as revenue budgets for minor works and repairs and maintenance.

All future work will be considered against the possibility of future co-location to a yet to be determined extent. Therefore works, including those noted above, will be subject to a final review before proceeding.

Areas of revenue and capital priority will include:

- Running Costs: Assessing how to improve the energy efficiency of the portfolio, which may include cavity wall insulation, replacing single glazed windows with double glazed, Reducing energy costs and introduction of cyclical painting programs that should in turn reduce the repairs budget. New economic LED lighting, with movement detectors to reduce wasted energy, timers on heating and lights, Installation of new AAA rated boilers to reduce CO2 and reduce energy etc.
- Energy management & Utilities :Linked with the above, is the collation and analysis of accurate utility usage data for water, electricity and gas. This will be much improved in the future with the roll out of automatic meter readings for electricity and gas, the installation of which has now commenced.
- Equality Diversity and Accessibility: Identifying the priority needs for Equality, Diversity and Accessibility. New widened front doors some with electronic access, widened doors to community rooms .New DDA toilets. Giving access to more areas within building & scope for promoting shared asset use
- Health & Safety. Review of Drill yards and parking area assessments with special review of any hazardous areas , new one way systems & protected or proscribed pedestrian walk ways & DDA parking bays that may lead to works
- Building Standards. Sustainability Improvements to: - Station bay floor works. Update of Kitchens, Toilets, renewal of roofs, Repointing & painting programs
- Space utilisation - Improved use of buildings
- Compliance .Statutory, Regulatory and Best Practice. New management systems for the continual use of premises making sure of sustainability within the Estate. This would include continuation of the removal of asbestos when works are undertaken at premises, lighting protection, GAS Safe program & Electrical periodicals
- New Cyclical maintenance program to reduce call out costs and reduce overall maintenance costs
- Security – assessment and remedial works to improve security, particularly around HQ and Control.
- Generators/Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) - a service review and works where necessary for the generators and UPS. Changes of requirements include Control with the new mobilising system and associated communications.

## 5.2 Summary Strategic Themes and Actions

The analysis of the planning context in Section 2.0 and the identification of strategic direction provide a framework within which to set key actions for asset management. A programme of action to respond to key the issues identified over the short, medium and long-term is presented below under the four identified strategic themes.

The actions identified are the strategic actions concerned with developing asset management and are in addition to the more regular actions which are set through the Property Team's annual action plan. There is no implied priority or sequencing for the identified actions and similarly no identified lead or target date for completion. The identified actions were considered as part of the annual corporate planning processes of the Authority and actions will be progressed according to available resources and organisational capacity and in light of corporate priorities reflected through the CRMP. It is anticipated however that many of the actions listed below will be reflected through the Property Team's action plan over the coming years.

### Key Asset Management Themes and Actions

#### Review of the operational asset base

- Ensure full integration of asset management considerations and principles into on-going implementation of the 'Matching Operational Resources to Risk' project.

#### Active portfolio management

- To annually review the expenditure on utilities (water, gas and electricity) and look into any anomalies.
  - To ensure that an up to date compliance register is in place and being regularly used and updated.

#### Use of assets to support wider community role

- To assist the Community Safety Team and Station Commanders in utilising the accommodation to the best effect with community groups.

#### Promoting shared asset use

- Continual review of existing and potential future opportunities for shared use of property assets.

## 5.3 Performance Indicators and Targets for 2016/17 onwards

The Authority procures gas and electricity through the LASER group. LASER is a public sector energy buying group and part of Kent County Council's Commercial Services division. LASER was founded in 1989 to manage the procurement opportunities created by the deregulation of the gas and electricity markets. LASER purchases energy on behalf of 115 Local Authorities and 45 wider public sector bodies. Current contracted volumes for electricity and gas amount to 6.7 TWhs of energy, equating to an annual delivered spend of over £350m. This is approximately 1.7% of the UK's non-domestic energy demand.

LASER's flexible procurement model aggregates the energy volumes of all customers. LASER closely monitors energy market prices and drivers, purchasing the energy requirements in multiple blocks over a period of time, prior to the point of use. Gas and electricity market prices are highly volatile and price movements of more than 10% in a week are not unprecedented. To spread market price risk, and to avoid buying during periods of peak market pricing, the Pan Government Energy

Project recommended that 'all public sector organisations adopt aggregated, flexible and risk-managed energy procurement', which LASER provides.

Water is supplied to the Authority by two providers, Anglian Water and Affinity. An external company is currently involved in supporting the reduction of water usage.

#### Meter Readings:

Water is monitored accurately via meters. For Gas and electricity, the accuracy of the manual readings has in past years led to inaccurate figures being used. The Automatic Meter Readers have now been rolled out during 2015/16 and in early 2016/17 across nearly all of the service premises and this will now significantly improve the management information available going forward. The meters start from a reading of zero, hence why some of the figures below are again estimates. However, as most of these have been fitted during 2015/16, the real time monitoring of the accurate information can commence for the 2016/17 year.

The usage of gas and electricity can vary considerably between years with a cold winter one year, followed by a mild winter the next.



**Water:**

Water consumption based on cubic meters (m3) used. The benchmark below will be used to assess the usage in 2016/17. The target is to reduce water usage. This is being enabled by the use of an external organisation supporting our water usage reduction with aids such as limiters and timers on pipes reducing water usage.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Average 2013/14 and 2014/15 for 2015/16 Benchmark</b>	<b>2015/16 Usage</b>	<b>2016/17 Benchmark</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Amphill Supply 1+2</b>	345.49	182.26	345	15/16 usage appears low, to be investigated. Keep benchmark at previous figures, subject to review
<b>Bedford</b>	850.83	867.75	850	
<b>Harrold</b>	101.20	99.51	100	
<b>Ops Comms Centre</b>	189.09	166.32	170	
<b>Kempston &amp; HQ</b>	2,131.06	2008.58	2010	
<b>Potton</b>	85.02	50.33	65	
<b>Sandy</b>	90.54	60.25	80	
<b>Shefford</b>	134.71	554.84	135	The 2015/16 usage is far too high, this will be investigated.
<b>Toddington</b>	196.53	291.27	200	More in line with 13/14 usage, keep as is for benchmark, review
<b>Woburn</b>	88.07	79.72	80	
<b>Leighton Buzzard</b>	361.95	387.89	380	
<b>Biggleswade</b>	129.84	124.11	125	
<b>Dunstable</b>	957.75	949.28	950	
<b>Luton supply 1+2</b>	1,862.89	1,758.26	1800	
<b>Stopsley</b>	651.78	623.77	650	

## Electricity and Gas:

Unlike water, electricity and gas supplies were not all on meters and therefore the accuracy of the usage has in prior years caused the monitoring to be inaccurate. As noted above, predominantly all premises have had meters installed during 2015/16, these dates are shown in the tables below. When the meters are fitted, they start from a nil reading, so the proposed benchmark below is based on using the best available usage data from the old and new systems. From 2016/17 the usage will now be accurately monitored with real time information, to enable monthly reviews and stations to be advised if there are peaks in usage, to therefore try to establish the cause of these and take remedial action. Future tables will detail more accurate information, including usage detail compared to benchmark per station.

Overall, the benchmark set for electricity usage in 2015/16 was 1,164,441 kwh compared to an estimated usage total of 1,332,505 kwh (estimated to be over by 14%). The 2015/16 gas benchmark was 196,521 M3, compared against an estimated usage of 194,419 M3 (under by 1%).

<b>Electricity Usage - Location</b>	<b>2016/17 Benchmark</b>	<b>Date Meter fitted</b>
<b>Amphill</b>	21,000	27/10/15
<b>Bedford</b>	80,000	30/05/16
<b>Biggleswade</b>	16,500	30/10/15
<b>Control</b>	181,000	Prior year
<b>Dunstable</b>	188,000	Prior year
<b>Harrold</b>	18,000	27/10/15
<b>HQ</b>	333,000	Prior year
<b>Leighton Buzzard</b>	24,000	17/02/16
<b>Luton (incl SAO)</b>	105,000	26/04/16
<b>NAO</b>	10,000	27/10/15
<b>Potton</b>	18,000	30/10/15
<b>Sandy</b>	14,000	30/10/15
<b>Shefford</b>	21,000	16/03/16
<b>Stopsley</b>	41,000	26/10/15
<b>Toddington</b>	24,000	17/02/16
<b>Woburn</b>	52,000	Prior year

<b>Gas Usage - Location</b>	<b>2016/17 Benchmark M3</b>	<b>Meter installed</b>
<b>Ampthill</b>	4,400	26/06/15
<b>Bedford</b>	No gas	
<b>Biggleswade</b>	6,000	15/05/15
<b>Control</b>	6,000	25/08/15
<b>Dunstable</b>	20,000	To be installed
<b>Harrold</b>	3,900	26/06/15
<b>HQ</b>	60,000	To be installed
<b>HQ Trng Centre and gym</b>	16,500	To be installed
<b>L. Buzzard</b>	19,250	14/08/15
<b>Luton</b>	28,000	12/06/15
<b>NAO</b>	2,500	29/05/15
<b>Potton</b>	1,850	17/11/15
<b>Sandy</b>	1,790	29/02/16
<b>Shefford</b>	3,425	29/02/16
<b>Stopsley</b>	No gas	
<b>Toddington</b>	12,000	02/09/15
<b>Woburn</b>	No gas	
<b>SAO</b>	7,235	30/03/16