

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	17 OCTOBER 2024	REPORT NO:	CFO/59/24
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE	REPORT AUTHOR:	HEAD OF ESTATES STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	GROUP MANAGER – DAVE WATSON DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT – MIKE REA HEAD OF LEGAL – RIA GROVES HEAD OF DATA AND TECHNOLOGY – PAUL TERRY GROUP MANAGER – PHIL BYRNE TDA COMMERCIAL MANAGER – SUZANNE WAITE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT ON THE NEW AINTREE FIRE STATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY / NATIONAL RESILIENCE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE AT LONG LANE, AINTREE.		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: SOCIAL VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
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Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an overview of the recently completed major capital project to construct a new multi pump fire station, Training and Development Academy/National Resilience Centre of Excellence at Long Lane, Aintree and to request that Members approve the recommendations below to allow financial closure of the project with the main contractor, Wates Construction Ltd.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members:
 - a. note the contents of the report and;
 - b. approve the release of £275k from the Capital Investment Reserve to allow for final closure of the project.

Introduction and Background

3. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's leadership message shifted in early 2021, turning austerity into aspiration and the burning platform of budget cuts

and restraints into a burning ambition to be the best Fire and Rescue Service in the UK.

4. At the Authority's Annual General Meeting on the 9th June 2022, the Authority took the courageous decision and Members approved the recommendations in CFO/031/22:
 - a. Approving the combining of Croxteth and Aintree Fire stations into a single site at Long Lane.
 - b. Approving the purchase of the 12-acre site at Long Lane.
 - c. Approved the construction of a new multi-pump superstation, Training and Development Academy/National Resilience Centre of Excellence at Long Lane, Aintree.
5. The report highlighted that the new site was designed to allow a phased approach, sensitive to financial/budgetary variations. Therefore, the Authority would be able to manage its fiscal resources based on risk of future unknown cost assumption. This would enable construction cost to remain within budget tolerances, elements of the scheme such as external classrooms / storage and ancillary buildings could be phased or removed to ensure the development continued within budget, with the minimum impact on the risk critical training model.
6. A planning application was considered and approved at the Liverpool City Council planning committee on the 3rd May 2022. The planning application received no objections from committee members, statutory consultees, or members of the public. The Chair of the planning committee and wider members expressed their support for the proposal recognising the positive impact this development will have on the Liverpool City Region and communities of Merseyside.
7. Main construction works started onsite on 17th October 2022 for a planned 80-week programme. Early earth works to allow drainage and access roads progressed well throughout October, November, and December during extremely wet weather conditions.
8. Works on site continued to progress well, with the steel frames of the main buildings being installed during February and March 2023. An official bolt tightening ceremony took place on the 17th March 2023 with the Chair, Vice Chairs and Chief Fire Officer all attending a special bolt tightening to mark this important step.
9. Members will recall they have approved a capital budget of £41.158m for the New TDA and Fire Station at Long Lane. This budget allocation has included for several scope changes and variations to accommodate the ambitions of the Authority including: additional garages, the inclusion of two additional classrooms, an additional refurbished training tower, a new fire behaviour unit and electric vehicle training simulator and dealt with some unforeseen ground conditions.

10. As with any major capital building programme, as the programme progresses several design amendments and changes are necessary to keep both the build programme on schedule as well as to ensure the design meets the requirements of the end user/fire service.
11. Additional requirements arose during the end of the project such as the transportation and offloading of the donated train carriages, additional power to the rail tunnel, improved security measures, additional external water supplies for firefighting, additional access control measures and additional upgrades to the uninterruptible power supply, to ensure critical ICT infrastructure stays operational. As a result, an additional £275k draw down from Capital Investment Reserve is required to be to complete the project. This will take the overall cost of the project to **£41.433m**. Members are asked to note that the capital receipts for the old Aintree and Croxteth sites total was £3.75m this was £1.550m more than was anticipated, thereby reducing expected borrowing
12. This additional spend detailed above has been used in a phased approach as designed to allow the Authority to approve and manage its fiscal resources over the past two years and to bring back in key elements of the scheme and enhance the final product.
13. The new Aintree fire station opened and went operationally live as planned on the 1st May 2024 representing the first phase of this exciting and forward-thinking project with both the Chief Fire Officer, Chair of the Authority, and Officers from across the Service there to welcome crews as they arrived at the new site. This completed the merger of Station 18 – Aintree and Station 19 – Croxteth, into a new Station 19 – Aintree.
14. The station has been fully operational since 1st May with very positive feedback received from both staff and visitors to the station. During the consultation for the merger of Aintree and Croxteth fire stations we predicted that overall, our response to life risk incidents throughout Merseyside within 10 minutes would be achieved 93.9% of the time, with an average attendance time of 5m 50 seconds (from alert to in attendance).
15. Since opening between 1st May and 31st August 2024, there have been 49 life risk incidents (covered by the 10-minute Standard of Fire Cover) in – Aintree’s area. MFRS appliances attended 95.9% of the incidents within the standard with an average response time of 5m 40 seconds, Based on the 1st appliance in attendance. By concentrating on attendances by appliances from Aintree, they have attended 96.9% within the standard with an average response time of 5 minutes 20 seconds. This shows good performance within the Aintree area and further analysis will take place against a full 12 month’s data for the whole of Merseyside to compare fully against the consultation data.
16. Staff transitioned into the new Training and Development Academy in a phased approach as and when areas became finished. There was a slight delay on the completion date, however this was managed within the transition

period with all areas handed over to the Authority prior to the official opening on 27TH June 2024.

17. With state-of-the-art facilities and cutting-edge technology, the Training and Development Academy provides Merseyside's firefighters with the knowledge and skills they need to face the challenges of a modern fire and rescue service. From simulated fire scenarios to advanced medical training, MFRS staff will be equipped to handle any situation with skill, adeptness, and professionalism. It is also home of the National Resilience (NR) Assurance Team, International Search and Rescue team (ISAR) and NR Fire Control, embedding national and international work into Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. The multifunctional site will allow MFRS to deliver a multitude of incident scenarios at the same time, improving the Service's ability to train against foreseeable risk and emerging threats in conditions as close to real incidents as possible.
18. In addition to the official opening, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire - the Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE, MP officially opened the National Resilience Centre of Excellence part of the new TDA site on the 18th July 2024. Government partners, Chief fire officers and fire service leaders from across the UK attended.
19. National Fire Chief Council Chair, Mark Hardingham, said: "The launch of the National Resilience Centre of Excellence marks a significant advancement in our capacity to train and prepare firefighters for the most challenging and catastrophic events which are the effect of climate change, flooding, wildfires, and conflict - whether through terror or the increasing risk of war. This unique facility – delivered in Merseyside in collaboration with every fire and rescue service in the UK - will ensure our firefighters are exceptionally well-prepared to protect the public and further strengthen our National Resilience framework."
20. The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP said: "Congratulations to the National Resilience Team and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, who have brought this bold vision to life through their ongoing dedication and commitment to public safety. This facility will go a long way in making our communities safer, and ensure our brave firefighters are trained to the highest standards to continue their heroic efforts saving lives. Today marks the beginning of meaningful improvements to fire services across the country, and I am looking forward to building strong relationships with the sector to drive change and consistency within all communities."
21. The opening of the new site has been welcomed by staff and visitors and brought numerous benefits to the Service. The layout of the site allows MFRS to facilitate simultaneous training events for multiple users at the same time. Recently the site hosted a First Responder Emergency Care course, fire fighter assessment centre, a fire safety course, and a commercial course, all within the multiple classroom facilities. Meetings were also taking place within the site, whilst outside there was USAR training, a recruit course, High

Volume Pump training, driving assessments, a BA course and well as a commercial fire extinguisher course.

22. The multi-level building is a one-of-a-kind facility providing the latest up to date fire fighter facilities, this became even more important with the release of the Grenfell Tower phase 2 report and recommendations. The service ran an 8-pump exercise utilising the multi-level building, instructing staff were able to develop the fires and building behaviour based on the actions of the crew creating realism and staff buy in. In addition to operational fire fighters, the benefit of the fire safety facilities within the structure provides us with the opportunity demonstrate and educate our Fire Safety enforcement teams with operation of both compliant and non-compliant systems.
23. Feedback from the operational crews has been extremely positive with one officer stating, 'it's the best fire service exercise they have attended' and another impressed that they were allowed to tackle the fires and extinguisher them as at the old site, the live fire had to be kept burning to provide the conditions.
24. A wheelchair user attending the National Resilience opening event, commented that it was the best and most considered facility he has visited. Multiple accessible bathrooms, wide doors, level access across the site and easy and accessible parking.
25. The new TDA site provides the opportunity to expanded further our commercial opportunities and to build partnerships with external organisations on a local, national and international level.
26. For example, the TDA recently hosted a 5-day USAR familiarisation training course. Feedback received was extremely positive "The course was well-organised, with practical sessions that effectively reflected the theoretical aspects. Participants found the experience of using the tools excellent, and all instructors were friendly and knowledgeable. It was an unforgettable experience with the best company". "The venue was outstanding, capable of recreating real-world scenarios and incidents, making the training experience even more realistic".
27. The site also facilitated and hosted the conclusion of a large military exercise - , with over 100 Ministry of Defence and Emergency Services staff involved in the one-day exercise. The exercise created major interest from other MOD depts and organisations who expressed an interest in using the site for future training needs.
28. The current recruit course also has three firefighters for the Isle of Man represented on it which strengthens our support and relationship with colleagues.

Equality and Diversity Implications

29. The EIA for the new TDA has been reviewed and updated at 6-month intervals throughout the project to ensure that any impacts identified have been recorded, and adjustments have been made whenever possible.
30. As part of the project the Building Accessibility Reference Group have also been consulted and have been able to provide advice to the project team on issues that they have identified, such as the material being considered for the paths in the garden/pond area which would have made the area inaccessible for wheelchair users.
31. A final review of the EIA is underway as part of the closure of this project.

Staff Implications

32. There are no staff implications directly arising from this report, However, future staffing implications arising from the use of new TDA site will be considered and managed by the Transition group and brought to members as required.
33. A considerable amount of work has been completed in a relatively short time scale to bring this project to fruition. Staff from all areas of the service have contributed to ensure the final product exceeds expectations.

Legal Implications

34. If Members approve the report today, the final financial account can be agreed and completed with Wates Construction Ltd. MFRS still hold a considerable retention to ensure any minor snags or defects which happen in the first 12 months are dealt with. There is also a further 12 years latent defect period with the main contractor for inherent defects.
35. There remains some additional contractual obligations that are in the process of being completed and are now business of usual activities.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

36. Expenditure	
Final Project Total	<u>£41.433m</u>
Approved budget	£41.158m
Additional budget required	<u>£ 0.275m</u>

The additional £0.275m budget will be taken from the Capital Investment Reserve.

37. Income

Members have approved the sale of both the old Aintree Fire Station (report CFO/058/23) and the sale of the old Croxteth site (report CFO/055/24). The capital receipts from both sites have been significantly higher than previously anticipated in the financial model by an additional £1.550m.

	Forecast Sale Income	Actual Sale Income
Old Aintree Fire Station	£0.200m	£0.650m
Old TDA & Croxteth Fire Station	£2.000m	£3.100m
Total	£2.200m	£3.750m

38. Both the Ritchie Avenue (old stores) property and Vesty 5a (office accommodation) property will soon be placed on the open market for sale with the use of Vesty 5b still being evaluated.

39. The additional income from the above sales will be used to reduce borrowing within the capital programme.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

40. There are no outstanding risks from the project, operating and maintenance manuals have been handed over from the contractor. Any future risks and the management of health and safety will form part of business as usual for the TDA management team.

Environmental Implications

41. Several environmental improvements have been included in the new site, increasing the Biodiversity Net Gain of the site along with decarbonising the site. The planting of mature trees, use of sustainable drainage system, staff wellbeing garden and pond and the use of renewable energy have greatly improved the feel of the new facilities for staff and visitors.

42. Between 1st May to 31st August 2024 the site has consumed 158,311 kwh of electrical energy from the grid with a further 70,000kwh of electricity energy provided by the photo voltaic panels. Therefore, a third of the energy used on site has been generated by renewable energy, it is anticipated that the usage may have been higher than normal due to the commissioning/training and construction works that have taken place during this period. The site has no natural gas with heating/cooling and hot water provided by air source heat pumps which are included in the above figure, totalling £45,000 in costs for the period.

43. In comparison, the old TDA site and old Aintree Fire Station which combined are almost half the size of the new site but consumed a similar amount of electrical energy of 139,328 kwh as well as a further 109,151 KWH of gas during the same period of the previous year - 1st May to 31st August 2023. Totalling £73,627 in cost.

The price per Kwh of electricity has reduced over the year which has increased the financial saving, however, the net effect of the above will reduce our net carbon output assisting our journey to Net Zero, with the infrastructure in place to further increase renewable energy on the site.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

44. The Capital scheme at Long Lane, Aintree was an integral component of the IRMP 2021-24. The building of a new Training and Development Academy, National Resilience Centre of Excellence and Search and Rescue Superstation is intrinsic to our Vision.
45. The scheme has significantly improved the street scape of the local area.
46. The Crown Commercial Service framework had strict social value targets which Wates Construction have achieved and exceeded on several key targets, the overall accumulative achievement was 116% of targets as per Appendix A. Key highlights: -
- a. 37 full time equivalent local people employed.
 - b. 523 local people on a contract within 30-mile radius
 - c. £16.4m spent with local supply chain
 - d. 411 volunteering hours completed.
 - e. 995 weeks of apprenticeships working on the contract

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/039/21	IRMP 2021-24 Post Consultation report
CFO/040/21	Station 18 & 19 Merger Long Lane site
CFO/045/21	Appointment of main contractor for new TDA Pre Construction works
CFO/058/21	Outcomes from consultation – Croxteth and Aintree Fire Stations
CFO/061/21	Formal Planning application for Long Lane
CFO/031/22	Construction of a new Multi-pump Superstation, Training and Development Academy / National Centre of Excellence at Long Lane
CFO/063/22	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority Budget and Financial plan 2023/2024 – 2027/2028
CFO/032/23	New TDA and Fire Station Long Lane- Progress update report
CFO/053/23	Financial Review 2023/23- July to September
CFO/058/23	Sale of Aintree Fire Station
CFO/013/24	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority Budget and Financial plan 2024/2025 – 2028/2029
CFO/052/24	Revenue & Capital Outturn 2023/24
CFO/055/24	Sale of Croxteth Fire Station and Training and Development Academy Storrington Avenue

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CFO	Chief Fire Officer
DCFO	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
KWH	Kilowatt Hours
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
TDA	Training and Development Academy