

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY INFORMATION & PROTECTION  
SELECT COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 2001 AT 10.30 AM**

**SELECT COMMITTEE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**RELOCATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF FIRE STATIONS**

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Local members: Ivor Ambrose, Janet Anderson, Mary Bayes, David Beatty, Graham Burrow, Frances Button, Rashid Choudhrey, Geoff Churchard, Michael Colne, Jill Gipps, Derek Hills, Jane Hobday, Bernard Lloyd, Roma Mills, Michael Moore, Julia Price, Rosie Sanderson, Iris Tarry, Maureen Tomlinson, Chris White

**1. Purpose of the report**

To provide information on the provision of replacement fire stations as identified in the Capital Programme to enable members to consider whether or not this should be the subject of scrutiny.

**2. Background**

The Service Property Strategy, approved by the Protection Committee on 14 July 2000, included three strategic goals relating to the relocation and redevelopment of fire station sites. These goals, and the fire stations to which they relate, are outlined below.

**2.1 To site fire stations in locations that ensure Home Office minimum standards for fire cover are met.**

Reviews of Fire Cover in 1993 and 1997 identified two specific areas of Hertfordshire where the attendance times laid down by national standards could not be achieved. These were: to the south of St Albans, particularly London Colney; and South Oxhey.

A number of options to address the shortcomings have been pursued in both the St Albans and Watford areas. However, to date, for reasons relating to lack of suitable sites, planning difficulties and objections from local communities and representative bodies, it has not been possible to relocate the fire stations or find alternative means of meeting the fire cover requirements.

Currently potentially suitable sites for the relocation of St Albans fire station are being identified and following further work it is anticipated that an outline planning application will be submitted early in 2001.

Officers of the Fire and Rescue Service and Hertfordshire Property have met with officers from Watford Council and identified possible sites for which feasibility work is now under way. Studies to identify alternative solutions to meet the requirements in Watford will be considered in the next financial year.

**2.2 To encourage commercial interest in redeveloping existing fire station sites and providing new fire stations at no cost to the county.**

In the past the Service has received a number of approaches from commercial interests who wish to build developments on existing fire station sites. Their proposals either include the provision of a fire station with their development or on an alternative site, at no cost to the County Council.

Such approaches are clearly encouraged by the Service as they provide improved accommodation without the need for capital investment. Whilst traditionally the Service has reacted to approaches from the commercial sector, it may now be appropriate to actively seek commercial opportunities for specific sites.

**2.3 To develop or replace those fire stations where it is no longer cost effective to carry out major works.**

There are a number of fire stations which are, due to their age, deemed “not fit for role” and unsuitable for major refurbishment. Those stations considered to be priorities are Bovingdon, Bushey and Much Hadham. As outlined below, proposals to fund the redevelopment of Bovingdon are included in the Capital Programme for 2002/2003.

**3. Capital Programme**

Indicative figures for the replacement of Watford and St Albans fire stations are included in the Fire and Rescue Service capital programme. Once costed schemes have been developed and funding packages finalised, schemes will be presented to Cabinet for approval and subsequent scrutiny. Provision is also included within the proposed capital programme for the upgrading of Bovingdon fire station in 2002/03.

**4. Acquisition and Construction**

Once a suitable site for a new fire station has been identified and agreed, acquisition of the site and contracts relating to the design and construction of the fire station are the responsibility of the Hertfordshire Property Division of Corporate Services. The service is, of course, consulted at every stage of the process to ensure the specification and building meet the needs of the service.

***Background papers used by the author in compiling this report:***

Service Property Strategy Report to Hertfordshire County Council Protection Committee, 14 July 2000.

Resource Budget report to Hertfordshire County Council Community Information and Protection Select Committee 16 January 2001.