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## AF&RS Property and Estates Strategy

2020 - 2030

**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

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Avon Fire & Rescue Service is committed to ensuring our documents are accessible to all members of the community. If you have difficulty reading this document because English is not your first language and you would like a translation, please contact:

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# Our Values

## Our vision

**To provide the highest standard and best value service to the community**

Be the best fire and rescue service we can be, working hard to ensure our communities are at the centre of what we do. We are committed to keeping people safe, improving quality of life and making our area a better place to live, work and visit.

## Our mission

**To improve public safety through prevention, protection, response and resilience**

Making our communities safer and meeting the needs of the people we serve, by identifying, understanding and tackling the risks that exist within our area. We will be accessible and provide a high standard of service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## Our values

**Respectful, honest, courageous, ambitious, inclusive and transparent**

Guided by the standards of behaviour captured in our values, we will support our staff to embrace challenges, recognise achievements and live out our values in making our communities safer and exceeding expectations. The public expect their emergency Services to be there when they need us, but also role model the very best standards of behaviour. When we make decisions and work together, our values are the things we keep in mind every time. They are important to us, and non-negotiable.

# Introduction

This Strategy sets out the arrangements and approach for the management of our property and estate assets. It adopts many of the core principals already embedded in our approach to managing our estate, and also delivers on our new Vision, Mission and Values and the Service priorities emerging from this.

An effective strategy requires a long term view of our property and estate needs and therefore a 10 year planning period has been adopted which will incorporate two Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) cycles. This reflects the need for the major changes required throughout our estate, the time required for planning and construction of major projects and refurbishments and the level of investment required to deliver this. A long term strategy is needed to ensure:

- We understand the property and estate asset needs to deliver our Service Plan  
**(What our Estate looks like and the facilities we need)**
- The best location for our buildings and facilities are identified  
(Where our property and estate assets need to be located)
- Priorities are agreed and works planned to deliver change  
**(When projects will be planned and delivered)**
- Sufficient resources are allocated to achieve our objectives  
**(How we will resource and deliver our strategy)**

Property is a core asset alongside people, vehicles, equipment, technology and communications, all of which are required to deliver an effective service to the community.

Our estate is a community asset which must deliver our **Vision:**

To provide the highest standard and best value service to the community,

And our **Mission:**

**To improve public safety through prevention, protection, response and resilience.**

The priorities, decisions and actions taken relating to property and land must not be considered in isolation, but as part of a holistic approach which ensures that all our assets are fit for purpose, used effectively to deliver our service, represent value for money and are focussed on delivering tangible benefits to building users and our communities.

The Strategic Property and Estates Plan sets a clear framework and will be used to ensure;

- AF&RS provides and maintains property that meets the needs of the Service and our Community
- All property is designed, constructed and used efficiently including our use of energy and commitment to achieve Net Zero Carbon emissions
- Property and estates planning is consistent with our Service wide priorities and integrated into Service planning processes
- Sufficient resources are provided to maintain and invest in our property and estate whilst demonstrating value for money.

This document is set out in four parts

:

**Part 1**      **Overview of the current Property Estate**, which sets out a review of our current portfolio, costs, condition and performance.

**Part 2**      **Strategic Aims and Objectives**, highlights the organisational objectives for managing our property and land.

**Part 3**      **Property and Estates Priorities**, establishes the current priorities and themes; **what** we will focus on throughout the period of this plan.

**Part 4**      **Delivering our Plan**, focusses on **how** we will deliver our priorities, the necessary resources finance and the Property & Estates Action Plan for the initial phases of this strategy.

Under Review





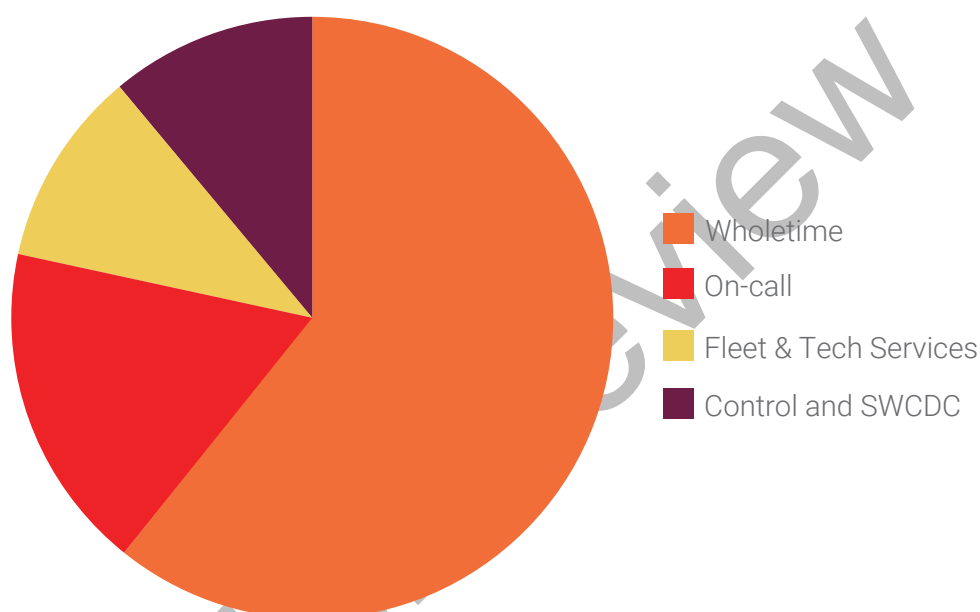


# Part 1 - Overview of the current Property & Estate Assets

## Our Property

Avon Fire & Rescue Service operates from 24 sites including 21 Fire Stations (made up of Whole Time and On Call), Control Facility and additional support buildings for training, logistics & fleet and offices throughout the West of England. We also share a combined Fire & Police Headquarters, and Joint Training Centre (JTC) with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services.

**Figure 1 – Property & Estate by Gross Internal Area**



The current value of our estate is approximately £47.5million (as valued in 2019).

## Property Condition

Our sites are supported by an effective planned and reactive maintenance regime, with a number of locations recently benefiting from an upgrade of facilities. This includes the refurbishment and redevelopment of a number of Fire Stations as part of the Investing for the Future programme.

Many of our other Fire Stations were built between 1950 and 1970, some of which are not only expensive to maintain and operate, but lack many of the facilities suitable for a modern fire and rescue service. In particular, a number of our properties lack sufficient space for modern fire appliances and equipment and do not provide appropriate facilities to support a diverse workforce and meet some of the welfare and wellbeing needs of our staff.

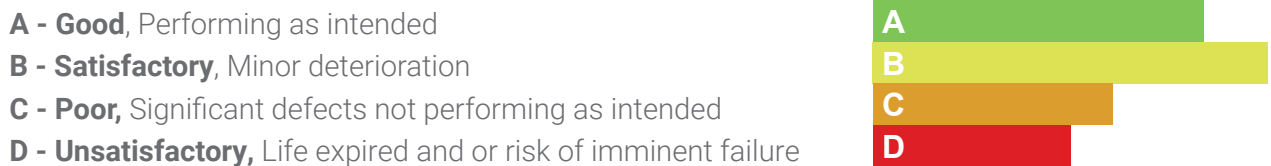
In order to ensure that our property assets are effectively maintained and remain fit for purpose, a regular assessment of condition and ongoing suitability is carried out. This helps to determine the priorities for our ongoing Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programmes, establishes the backlog and project maintenance costs, and also highlights those buildings which need to be considered for redevelopment and major refurbishment.

The most recent full condition survey of all sites was completed in 2015. This has since been maintained and updated when backlog works have been completed.

Our current backlog maintenance has been estimated at approximately £3million.

An overall assessment rating is also periodically produced for each site, which includes further details of the running costs, energy performance, condition of training facilities and the effective use of the buildings and site. Each location is ranked A – D as detailed in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2 – Property Condition Assessment as of 2019 by number of sites in each category**



The current assessment shows that the majority of our sites are either Satisfactory or Good (15 of our 24 Sites), however a total of 4 sites have been assessed as Unsatisfactory i.e.;

- **Avonmouth Fire Station**
- **Bath Fire Station**
- **Bedminster Fire Station**
- **Weston – Super - Mare Fire Station**

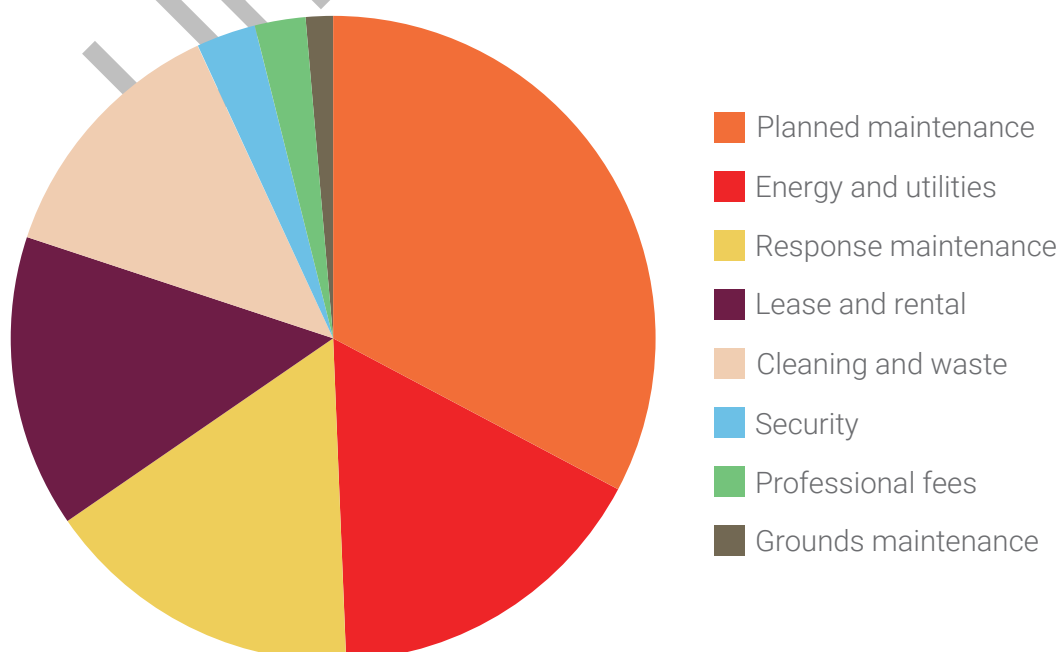
All of the sites listed above have already been identified as priorities for redevelopment or refurbishment, with construction of a new facility commencing at Avonmouth in January 2020. The remaining sites are the primary focus of the current Property and Estates Capital Programme (2020 – 2023).

## Property Maintenance

The Property Services Team manages and maintains the estate. There is only a limited staff resource within the team to carry out maintenance, inspection and servicing activities, therefore the vast majority of statutory, planned and reactive maintenance is carried out by a range of specialist contractors.

The annual cost of running our estate is in the region of £2.5million, which is funded from our revenue budget. The diagram below summarises this and shows the proportion of this cost.

**Figure 1 – Property & Estate by Gross Internal Area**

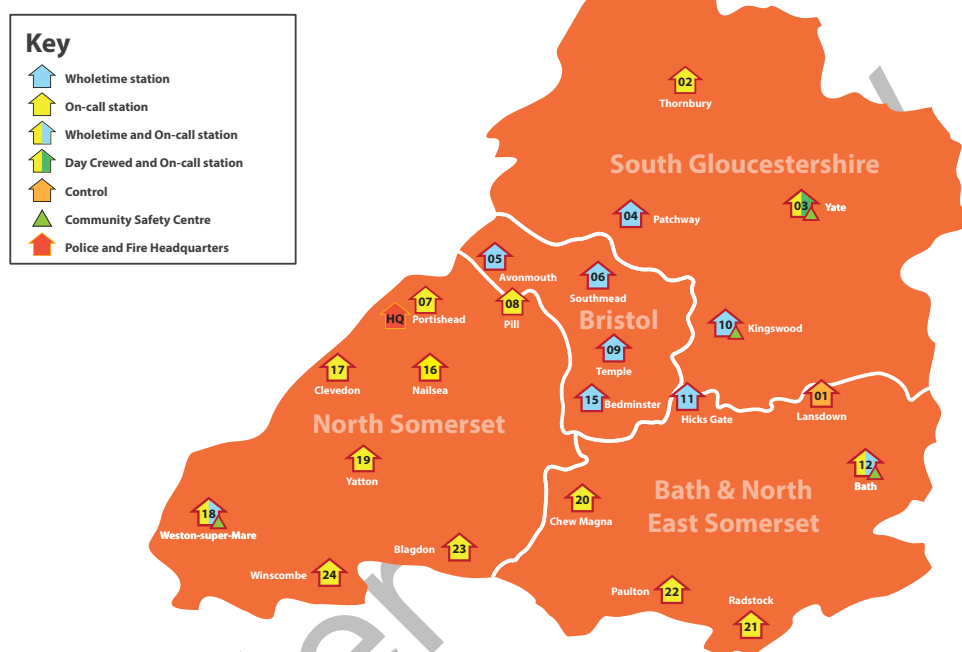




## Property Location

An understanding of whether we operate from an appropriate number of sites in the right location is fundamental to our Property and Estates Strategy and Service Plan, which includes our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). For some time, modelling and analysis has been carried out to assess the incidents AF&RS has responded to in order to build a comprehensive picture of demand and risk. This work also looks in depth at individual locations where there is a potential to redevelop, which includes the potential impact on surrounding sites and the Service as a whole. Our Service Plan is regularly reviewed in order to establish if there are any implications for the strategic planning of our estate and property.

**Avon Fire & Rescue Service station map**



## Achievements

Significant investments have already been made in our property over the last 10 years. This has included the refurbishment and extension of Nailsea and Kingswood Fire Stations and the construction of new flagship facilities at Temple and Hicksgate. Overall this accounts for approximately 50% of our operational footprint.



**Hicks Gate Fire Station, Keynsham – Completed in 2015**



**Temple Fire Station, Bristol – Completed in 2016**

More recently we have moved to a newly refurbished Headquarters facility which is leased from Avon & Somerset Constabulary. This has allowed us to dispose of our former Headquarters, which in turn is funding the next phase of our Strategic Plan “Reinvesting for the Future” which is focused on the redevelopment of Avonmouth, Bath and Weston Fire Stations.

A number of our buildings have been repurposed to accommodate partner organisations, this includes the provision of community policing facilities at Nailsea and Southmead Fire Stations, and the accommodation of Ambulance vehicles and staff at Avonmouth and Bath (as part of temporary works at their own adjacent site). We also provide space for a number of community and charity organisations including St Johns Ambulance, Search and Rescue Assistance in Disasters (SARAID) and the Avon Community Resilience Team.

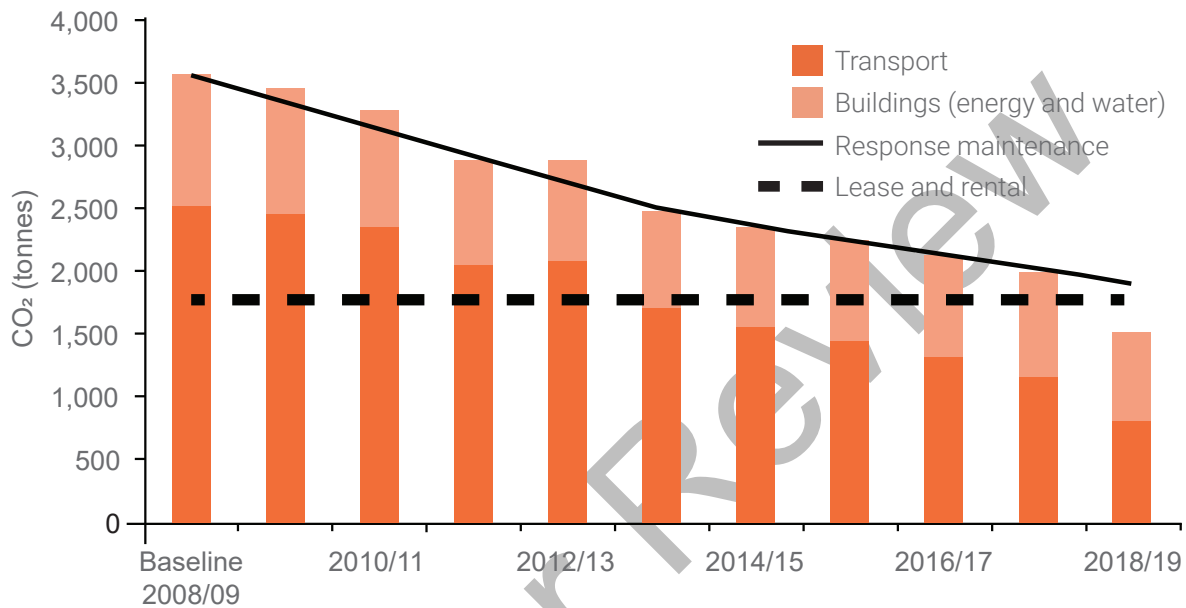


**Nailsea Fire & Police Station – completed in 2018**

AF&RS has also delivered sector leading reductions in our Carbon Emissions, cutting emissions by 57% from our 2008/9 baseline. The vast majority of this Carbon Reduction is as result of our investment in Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, including:

- Building Fabric and Insulation
- Heating and Hot Water Systems and Controls
- LED Lighting and Controls
- Solar PV generation - 47 % of energy total demand generated (on and off site)

**Figure 5 – AF&RS Reduction in Carbon Emissions**





## Part 2 - Strategic Aims and Objectives

Ultimately, the future of our property and estate will be determined by operational needs, financial resources and our service response to the risk in our communities. We therefore need to provide a dynamic and flexible approach to the management of our property and estate which continues to deliver and improve our operational effectiveness, whilst responding to our changing risks and resources.

As a Service we have two strategic priorities which will focus our work activity, these are:

### **Making our communities safer**

### **Making our Service stronger**

The following objectives will inform both the decisions made about our Property and Estate Assets and the priorities we determine over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan.

#### **Objective 1 - To provide fit for purpose facilities**

Functional and Fit For Purpose facilities, built, refurbished and maintained to agreed standards.

#### **Objective 2 - To respond to changing staff and resource demands**

Understand and respond to changing staff needs and new ways of working, cater for new appliance and equipment resources, technology and the digitalization of our service, and plan for the long term.

#### **Objective 3 To match our resources to risk**

Use a risk and demand modelling approach to establish the best locations for our fire stations, community engagement and support functions, and take account of development, growth and risk priorities in our communities. Our Property and Estates Plan needs to reflect our service Response Standards and ensure that our buildings enable excellent operational performance.

#### **Objective 4 To provide a foundation for effective collaboration**

Deliver better services and efficiencies through collaboration including the co-location of public services and delivery functions, community resilience and engagement.

#### **Objective 5 To provide facilities which deliver and enable improved skills and training**

Ensure our property and estate supports skills and training for both our staff and community resilience, providing suitable training and educational facilities.

#### **Objective 6 To realise value and efficiency**

Make the most efficient use of our property assets and manage our work spaces effectively, reduce running costs and environmental impact and generate income including strategic rationalisation.

## Part 3 - Property and Estates Priorities

The following broad priorities have been established following consultation with the Service Leadership Team (SLT). Both long and short term actions will be identified within these priorities and are detailed in the Property and Estates Action Plan which will be reviewed annually alongside our Service Plan.

### 1. Staff Safety, Welfare and Dignity

We will provide safe workspaces for our staff with adequate bathroom and changing facilities reflecting a more more diverse workforce.

We will ensure good quality domestic accommodation for Fire Stations including rest and wellbeing spaces.

We will consult with staff over the design and standards of their work spaces including

- Local Staff groups and Building users
- Research & Development teams (e.g. Contamination Research)
- Technical Advisory Groups (Fleet and Equipment)

We will take account of the current work being undertaken locally and nationally on Fire Fighter contamination and address the issues for our estate including:

- Decontamination Requirements for equipment, Uniform and Staff
- Zoning of Building space and functions to reduce the potential for contamination
- Building environment and conditioning (e.g. ventilation, surfaces / finishes, internal air quality)

### 2. Training

We will work with the Learning and Development Team to identify a long term plan for the provision of Operational Training Facilities beyond our current contract with external providers. The key strategic priorities are facilities for:

- Incident Command
- Hot Fire and Breathing Apparatus
- Rescue (incorporating Heavy Rescue and USAR)
- Core Skills (New Recruits and Refresher Training)

We will review the potential for improved and additional training facilities within all new developments and refurbishments (this may include identifying spaces for future development).

We will work with the Learning & Development and Technical Services Teams to ensure an effective PPM Programme is in place for all training facilities including Gyms.

<b>3. Community Engagement</b>	<p>We will ensure that our Fire Stations remain at the heart of the community and provide a platform for engagement with our Prevention and Protection work, and also give an insight into our operations and capabilities.</p> <p>We will ensure that our Property and Estate Assets provide community resilience, and that where need arises can support the local area (e.g. working with Community Resilience Teams)</p> <p>We will establish the requirements for dedicated community community and education facilities and identify the best location(s) for this.</p>
<b>4. Business Continuity</b>	<p>We will work with the Service Delivery Team to ensure that all work places have a robust Business Continuity Plan in place which includes the identification and response to any local vulnerability (e.g. flood risk).</p> <p>We will continue to develop our onsite energy generation and storage capabilities.</p>
<b>5. Community Engagement</b>	<p>We will ensure that our Fire Stations remain at the heart of the community and provide a platform for engagement with our Prevention and Protection work, and also give an insight into our operations and capabilities.</p> <p>We will ensure that our Property and Estate Assets provide community resilience, and that where need arises can support the local area (e.g. working with Community Resilience Teams)</p> <p>We will establish the requirements for dedicated community community and education facilities and identify the best location(s) for this.</p>
<b>5. Effective Space Management</b>	<p>We will implement a new space management function within the Property Services Team to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Flexible Office Hub locations throughout our Estate</li> <li>• A review of On Call Station Space to provide improved storage, welfare and fitness facilities</li> <li>• A service wide logistics and central storage plan</li> </ul> <p>We will work with Fleet and Technical Services to ensure that estates requirements are incorporated into our plans and that the long term Strategies for Estates, Fleet and Equipment are aligned.</p> <p>We will ensure that we provide flexible multifunctional spaces meeting the needs of both our operational response and support functions, and incorporate a high degree of flexibility into the design of our buildings. This will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spaces that can easily be repurposed as our needs change (e.g. flexible office space)</li> <li>• Shared space</li> <li>• Integrated training facilitie</li> <li>• Flexible furnishing and layout</li> </ul>



<b>6. Environment and Sustainability</b>	<p>We will identify further opportunities for a reduction in our Carbon Emissions arising from our Property &amp; Estate Assets, both in Construction (New Build and Refurbishment Refurbishment) and Operational Energy (buildings in use). This will be a fundamental element of our Net Zero Carbon Target and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep retrofit of energy efficiency measures in our existing buildings</li> <li>• Further investment in renewable energy generation and zero carbon technologies</li> <li>• Ensuring Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure is in place throughout our estate to support the transition to EV's within our Fleet.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Collaboration</b>	<p>We will deliver on the Key Principals of our Collaboration Strategy and continue to identify and review the potential for co-location.</p> <p>We will continue to identify opportunities for collaboration with Blue Light and Local Authority partners focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Tri-Service Facilities</li> <li>• Set down locations for Ambulance Crews within Fire Stations</li> <li>• Community Police facilities within Fire Stations</li> <li>• Shared Training Facilities</li> <li>• Shared Office Facilities</li> </ul> <p>Where possible we will provide opportunities for community and voluntary groups to access and use our facilities, especially where our Service Objectives and capabilities align including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Resilience Teams</li> <li>• St Johns Ambulance</li> <li>• Search And Rescue Assistance In Disasters (SARAIID)</li> </ul>
<b>8. Security</b>	<p>We will review physical security arrangements at all locations and establish a common set of standards aligned to national guidelines.</p>
<b>9. Property Standards</b>	<p>We will establish a set of Property Standards to define the function, use of space and specification of Property Assets.</p> <p>We will apply the lessons learned from recent new build projects, and the consultation we have been undertaking with building users as part of the Reinvesting For The Future Programme.</p> <p>These standards will primarily be used for major refurbishment and new development projects, but will also apply where possible to our existing buildings.</p>

## 10. Generating Income

We will continue to identify opportunities to generate income and recover costs, where appropriate, from our property and estate assets. This can be achieved by.

- Utilising any excess capacity within our buildings through lease and license arrangements
- Further collaboration with key partners
- Renewable Energy Generation
- Telecoms agreements
- Strategic asset disposal and rationalisation

Under Review

## Part 4 - Delivering Our Strategy

There are three broad phases to our long term Property and Estates Strategy. Whilst we will continue to address the priorities outlined in Section 3 throughout the life of this strategy, particular focus will be given to the initiatives outlined in each phase below.

### Phase 1 (2020 – 2023) Reinvesting For the Future

The Reinvesting For the Future programme is made up of 4 key projects:

- Redevelopment of **Avonmouth Fire Station**
- Redevelopment of **Bath Fire Station**
- Refurbishment of **Bedminster Fire Station**
- Redevelopment of **Weston Fire Station**

These projects are a significant part of the delivery of this strategy and will go a long way towards reducing our existing maintenance backlog and predicted future maintenance and running costs. All projects are now underway with construction commencing at Avonmouth and detailed feasibility and design work in progress for the remaining projects. We anticipate that construction will commence for all projects within Phase 1.

#### On Call Station Improvements

A programme of improvement works will be carried out at On Call Fire Stations focusing on facilities for Health, Fitness, Wellbeing and Staff Welfare. A priority plan of works will be agreed which takes account of both the condition and operational use of the building. We will establish a preferred space and function model for On Call stations as part of this work and implement solutions, likely to be building extensions, major refurbishment or modular design for at least two On Call Fire Stations. This will continue into Phase 2 of this strategy from 2024.

#### Flexible Office Spaces

Flexible office space will be provided at all Whole Time Fire Stations, enabling better agile working locations for staff throughout our area.

### Phase 2 (2024 – 2027)

#### Training Facilities

The long term provision of Training Facilities to meet the demand of our operational staff (both maintaining skills and new recruitment) will be the primary focus of this phase of our strategy. AF&RS currently uses facilities at the Severn Park Training Center, which were provided as part of a PFI contract in partnership with a number of neighboring Fire & Rescue Services. This arrangement is due to end in 2028/29, and alternative facilities will need to be established.

We have also identified a requirement for better community educational facilities (including a lecture and demonstration facility for larger groups). This will be incorporated with our planning for training facilities under this phase.

### Phase 3 (2027 – 2030)

#### Additional Fire Station Development

Local Authorities are planning and delivering significant housing developments throughout our operational area which will increase the population and can result in a greater demand on our services. This includes "Master Planning" work to reshape a number of town centers, including Yate



and Patchway where we have a significant presence at the heart of the community. We will engage with this work and consider the options to redevelop our sites and understand the longer term spatial planning implications for our operational presence in these locations.

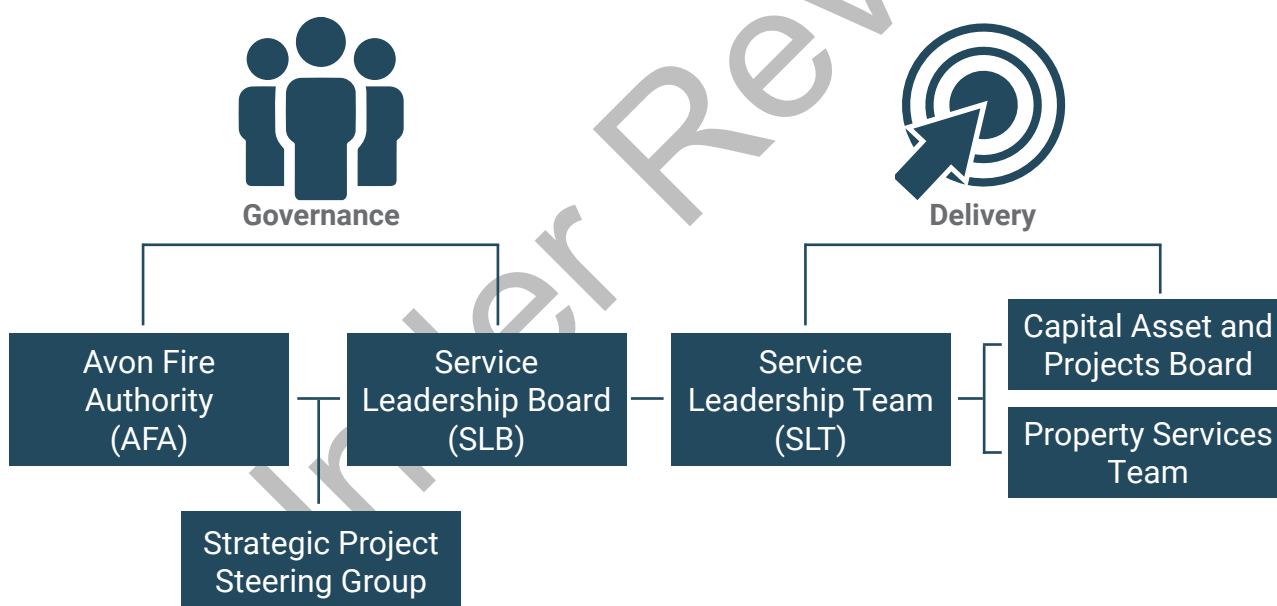
Whilst it is difficult to predict the later phase of this strategy and we do expect a number of external influences will begin to shape this over the next few years including:

- Ongoing review of our IRMP / Service Plan changing our risk profile and identifying new ways of working.
- Changes to Service Governance and potential for regional and national influence shaping the agenda for Fire & Rescue Services.

## Governance and Responsibilities

The AF&RS Service Plan, approved by Avon Fire Authority sets out our contract with community, responds to the risk in our operational area and provides the foundation for all other plans and strategies for the delivery of our service including this Property and Estates Strategy.

This strategy is owned by SLB who set the strategic objectives and agree the priorities and Action Plan with SLT who in turn will ensure that that this strategy continues to be relevant and reflects the priorities of the other plans and policies that govern our Service. All Major Capital Projects and initiatives which are beyond business as usual are first considered by SLT.



The **Service Leadership Board (SLB)** ensures that sufficient resources are in place in order to deliver this strategy, and will also provide strategic direction to SLT to ensure a holistic and service-wide approach is taken to decision making on our Property and Estates Assets and the prioritisation within our Action Plan.

The implementation of this strategy and the delivery of the Action Plan will be undertaken by the **Property Services Team**. Delivery and performance will be monitored via SLT, with updates and progress reports taken to SLB and the Avon Fire Authority as required including Major Capital Projects.

The **Capital Asset & Projects Board** is made up of service managers with responsibility for Capital Projects and Asset Management including Property, Fleet & Equipment, ICT, Procurement and Finance. This group considers the financing of capital projects, procurement and the ongoing management of assets throughout the Service.

A new Strategic Projects Steering Group has been formed which is made up of service managers and members of the Fire Authority. This group acts as a conduit between the Service and the Fire Authority to provide strategic direction to project teams, provide effective communication throughout and also to ensure our projects are aligned with relevant Local Authority plans and strategies (e.g. Housing, Transport and Climate Change).

## Finance

The Property and Estates Strategy establishes a long term view which needs to be aligned with the resources of the organisation so that the Objectives, Priorities and Action Plans can be delivered, and are achievable rather than aspirational.

There are always uncertainties regarding long term funding and resourcing within the public sector. This strategy establishes a realistic view of the financial resources needed based on the assumptions contained within the MTFP as agreed by Avon Fire Authority.

A capital programme which includes the Reinvesting for the Future projects, the Refurbishment of Bedminster and an allocation for the priorities outlined in this strategy has been agreed as outlined in figure 6 below.

Investment Area	2020/21 £*000	2021/22 £*000	2022/23 £*000	2023/24 £*000
Reinvesting for the Future	4,459	3,280	9,194	2,500
Bedminster Refurbishment	784	700		
Property & Estate Priorities	491	250	250	250

**Figure 6 Approved Property and Estates Capital programme (2020 – 2023)**

A Whole-life costing approach is central to the development of our Capital Investment Business Cases. Whole-life costs must strike a balance between the costs to build (or refurbish) and the costs to run and maintain the property asset over its life. We are therefore targeting a reduction in the revenue costs to maintain our Property Assets following the delivery of the Reinvesting for the Future Projects. In addition to this we have identified additional potential savings through the amalgamation of a number of maintenance contracts, and joint procurement with other Public Sector organisations, both locally e.g. Neighbouring Authorities, and Nationally via the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

**We are targeting revenue savings of £269,000 over the next 4 years.**

Revenue Budget	2020/21 £*000	2021/22 £*000	2022/23 £*000	2023/24 £*000
Property and Estates	2,502	2,419	2,250	2,200
Savings Target	139	169	50	50

**Figure 7 Property and Estates Revenue Budget and Target Savings (2020 – 2023)**

We will continue identify opportunities to generate income and recover costs where appropriate from our property and estate assets. We already have a number of Lease and Licence agreements in place where we have excess capacity, and also benefit from Feed In Tariff income for existing renewable energy installations across our estate. Overall this accounts for an annual income of approximately £60,000.

Longer term we recognise that continuing to deliver on the priorities outlined in this strategy will require further significant investment including a long term capital investment plan. This will include:

- Provision of Training Facilities
- Sustainability, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation measures
- Further Fire Station Redevelopment

As more detailed plans develop around these themes in the later phases of this strategy we will review the MTFP including any change to our funding (Comprehensive Spending Review and Fair Funding Formula) and refresh this strategy.

## **Property and Estates Data and Performance**

We have been monitoring key performance data including property costs, condition and energy consumption for a number of years. We are now working with the NFCC Property Group to agree a set of common indicators which will enable us to better assess our performance in comparison to similar organisations.

We will also commission a further full stock condition survey in Phase 1 of this Strategy which will provide current data to highlight any immediate issues and emerging priorities for further investment in Phases 2 and 3. This will include a more detailed analysis of the condition of our Building Services (Mechanical and Electrical installations).



Under Review



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