



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**

TRAINING CENTRES STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHT REPORT

Strategic sponsor	ACO Jill McCrae, Director for Service Support
Period covered	July 24 – December 24

OVERALL PROJECT STATUS	Slippage
SUMMARY	<p>The Service received a positive planning determination on 24 October 24 for the Weymouth site. As expected, this came with conditions, which the Service is currently working to fulfil. This includes providing more detailed drawings and specifications, which require further submission and ratification. We understand from Dorset Council that the timescales for discharging the conditions should be fairly short.</p> <p>Given the need for the additional work to meet these conditions, and noting the Christmas period, it is expected that the Service will begin procurement in late January 2025. A revised timeline for project delivery will be developed at this stage.</p>

PROGRESS	<p>The planning application for the Weymouth site was submitted to Dorset Council Planning team in October 2023. Following the public consultation process the Service was advised that no public objections were raised. However, during the external agency consultation two minor objections were raised. This has resulted in the Service engaging closely with the Environment Agency and Wessex Water to design agreeable drainage solutions and with the Highways Agency, to agree the route that car transporters visit the site, delivering/collecting cars for road traffic collision training, and providing start and end times for courses along with student numbers.</p> <p>During September, the Service received further questions in relation to the drainage strategy, which needed further adjustments to the design. Our external consultants, along with the Service’s project team, worked with partners to adjust the design to meet the additional needs highlighted.</p>
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	<p>Following this, design updates and information was resubmitted to the Planning Officer, which enabled the Service to be granted the planning permission for Weymouth on the 24 October 2024.</p> <p>The planning permission has been granted with conditions, which the Service's project team is currently working to ensure full understanding. Detailed drawings and specifications are being undertaken to be returned to the Planning Officer and partners for ratification.</p> <p>The Service understands the timescales for discharging the conditions should be fairly short, however, this needs to be achieved prior to the final procurement documentation being delivered.</p> <p>The Service's project team has continued to develop the documentation for building regulations and prepare for the procurement process for both sites. Taking account of the work required to fulfil the planning conditions and the approach undertaken by the construction industry over December and the Christmas period, it will be prudent not to begin the procurement process until January 2025.</p> <p>It is anticipated that a revised timeline will be developed and confirmed early in the new year. This should allow for a more accurate timeframe to be established. It is currently anticipated, that subject to any further delays, that site work will commence at both sites in late Summer 25.</p> <p>The Service is planning to provide communications to stakeholders during December, now the planning decision has been confirmed. This will include an update to all local councillors and members of the public. The Service will also organise a session with all new Fire Authority Members early in the new year.</p>
<p>BUDGET</p>	<p>Members are aware that the initial budgetary provision, agreed for the project, was approved in September 2022. Since this initial budget agreement, time, construction and material costs had increased by an average of 40%.</p> <p>Due to this, a preliminary review of the costs and budget requirements was undertaken in Summer 2023, which highlighting a predicted budgetary increase of 16.5%. Following this a further comprehensive examination of the pre-tender designs was undertaken in October 2023 by an independent Quantity Surveyor, with input from key project leads and the Deputy Assistant Chief Officer for Financial Services & Treasurer. This robust and comprehensive budget review was undertaken, considerate of the designs at this stage, including enhancements, increased construction materials and labour costs and future inflationary rises.</p> <p>The revised predicted budgetary requirement to deliver the two training centres was reviewed by the Finance & Audit Committee at their meeting in December 23, with the committee supporting a recommendation to the Fire Authority to increase the budgetary provision for the project.</p> <p>The Authority approved this recommendation, at their full Authority meeting later in December 2023, and approved the delegation to the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to award contracts for works following the procurement process, subject to the overall project cost not exceeding an agreed value.</p> <p>Funding for the project is mainly through the use of earmarked capital development reserves. Further earmarked reserves are available that can be used to support the increased costs of the project. Dependent on the final procurement outcome, there may be a need for some additional long-term borrowing, particularly if the final cost is towards the upper cost range. The Treasurer continues to be content that the project remains</p>

	<p>affordable and in our prudent approach to revenue expenditure. Furthermore, as appropriate the Treasurer will recommend to the Authority when underspend should be used to support the capital programme, to avoid additional borrowing.</p> <p>To date the Service has spent £160,951 on specialist consultancy fees to support the planning stage of the project. This includes the Planning Application fees and external reports for biodiversity, air monitoring, acoustic engineering and drainage strategies. In addition, external specialist consultants have been engaged for structural and civil engineering design works, mechanical and electrical design works, and cost estimate reviews with Quantity Surveyors. This spend is aligned to the £232k forecasted costs budgeted for.</p> <p>The Service continues to deliver cost savings to the project, by utilising the skills of our internal staff, including our Senior Building Surveyors and our previous Estates Manager, who is leading the project.</p> <p>Whilst the budgetary review and agreement in December 2023 provided a more accurate cost estimate, certainty over the requirements will only be known upon completion of the procurement process, when tender bids are received. Furthermore, the impact on the market, from the increase in National Insurance contributions for employers, is not yet fully known. However, this has the potential to increase tender bids.</p>
<p>RISKS</p>	<p>This project covers all the mitigations identified for reducing strategic risk ‘Sustainability of Operational Training’ (risk number 529).</p> <p>As part of the project management governance the project has a detailed risk register that is reviewed monthly by the Project Manager and Project Sponsor.</p> <p>A summary of the overall project risk is provided in the table within the report. There are no strategic issues or risks to be brought to the attention of Members at this stage.</p> <p>The budgetary requirement has increased, and the Authority agreed a budgetary provision at their meeting in December 2023, reflective of the current economic climate. In support of this final design requirements will continue to be closely monitored. The revised costing includes a 20% design and risk contingency, along with a further inflation allowance.</p> <p>Whilst the project has been impacted by slippage there are no significant barriers to raise at this time. Although, these delays do have a financial impact on the project, as detailed within this report. This also includes protracted lease costs, as the use of the currently leased sites are extended.</p>

<p>NEXT STEPS</p>	<p>The priority at present is to ensure the production and delivery of detailed documentation to achieve the discharging of the planning conditions. This requires close engagement with the Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency and the Planning Officer.</p> <p>In achieving this the designs, building regulation credentials and procurement documents, can be finalised with the plan to begin the procurement process in January 25. This will also allow for an updated project timeline to be produced.</p> <p>As per the paper, presented to the Fire Authority on the 12 December 2023, Members approved the delegation to the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to award contracts for works following the procurement process, subject to the overall project cost not</p>
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exceeding a defined value. Subject to the procurement being published in January 25, it is expected that contract awards will happen July/August 2025.

RISK STATEMENT

Strategic Risk. This Strategic Risk will be reduced following positive approval of planning permission applications.

Strategic Risk No.	Risk Name	Risk Description	Residual (Current) Risk Score	Risk Mitigations	Mitigation progress	Direction of Risk
529	Sustainability of operational training provision.	The Service must have tenable and appropriate operational training, with sufficient resources and provision to ensure a safe and suitable response to emergencies. Furthermore, this must be flexible to meet future challenges and need, whilst also meeting environmental responsibilities.	16	Continued positive relations and contract management of leased sites.		→
				Delivery of a training provision review to identify opportunities to meet future needs.		
				Ongoing awareness and development of environmental opportunities to meet organisational expectations.		
				Planning permission granted for both sites		

Overall Project Risk Position

Overall risk rating		Direction	→
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Failure to deliver	Residual (Current) Risk Position	Issues	Mitigations
On-time		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed Planning Application timeframe increase Delay in discharging planning conditions Supply issues Delay to the commencement of the procurement process Lack of response to the procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project governance and oversight Procurement & contractual arrangements Site management and oversight Positive engagements and relations
To budget		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant inflationary rises for material and labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project governance and oversight Budget reviews with Quantity Surveyor and DACO Financial Services & Treasurer

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chain issues • Project delays • Potential impacts of employers' national insurance increase on the market 	
With quality		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time pressures • Budgetary pressures • Expertise of external contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project governance and oversight • Procurement & contractual arrangements • Site management and oversight