



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE**

# TRAINING CENTRES STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHT REPORT

<b>Strategic sponsor</b>	ACO Jill McCrae, Director for Service Support
<b>Period covered</b>	June 25 – February 26

OVERALL PROJECT STATUS	On Track
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<p>During March 2025, taking account of final designs, an independent Quantity Surveyor provided final estimated costings for the project, which was reported to the full Fire Authority in June 2025, with budgetary approval provided.</p> <p>In preparation for procurement the Service developed a significant number of detailed documents and drawings, along with thorough specifications for each project.</p> <p>Following a review of options, the Service committed to using the Procure Partnerships Southwest framework and undertook appropriate pre-procurement engagement, aligned to the new Procurement Act. The tender process went live in August 2025 and ran until mid-October 2025.</p> <p>Following a thorough evaluation process contracts have been awarded for both sites, through two different contractors.</p> <p>Whilst a final timeline for the projects is being finalised with the contractors it is expected that Devizes will take 16 months and Weymouth will take 20 months.</p> <p>The Service is finalising plans to provide training at other venues and through alternative opportunities, whilst sites are being developed.</p>

## PROGRESS

As Members are aware, throughout the progress of this project the Service has brought in independent Quantity surveyors to support the project and ensure that our financial planning is kept up to date, in line with the inflationary changes and designs.

Prior to procurement it was important for the Service to review budgetary provisions aligned to the final designs. Therefore, in March 2025, an independent Quantity Surveyor provided final estimated costings for the project, which was reported to the full Fire Authority in June 2025. At this meeting the Authority approved the revised budgetary requirement and provided delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice of the Authority and the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, to award contracts for works.

Following this approval the Service spent time preparing for the procurement process, this included reviewing frameworks to identify the most appropriate to meet the needs of the project. Through this the Service decided the use the Procure Partnerships Southwest framework. Through the framework appropriate pre-engagement activities were undertaken, where a number of contractors confirmed their intention to tender for the contract. Throughout this process, aligned to the procurement and framework rules, the Service responded to questions and clarifications received.

As part of the preparations for the tender process, significant and detailed design work and documentation were prepared. The procurement packs included over 80 documents and detailed drawings for each site and a comprehensive specification for each project.

The tender process began in August 2025 and ran until mid-October, with separate procurement processes, under the framework, undertaken for each site.

Through November and December, the Service undertook the evaluation process for the tenders received. This included requesting clarifications from the contractors, through the In-Tend procurement portal, and reviewing documents with an independent Quantity Surveyor to ensure financially items were as expected and to reduce the risk of items being missed.

At the end of December 2025, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, the contract for Devizes was awarded. Subsequently the contract for Weymouth was awarded following the same approach at the end of January 2026.

In addition to this, throughout this time the Service has received confirmation from both Local Authority planning teams that approval has been awarded for the addition of gas tanks at both sites, to enhance gas supply provisions. Furthermore, updated documents, drawings and specifications were prepared and returned to the planning officers, aligned to the planning condition for each site, with approval received for both sites.

Lastly, following the development of appropriate documentation, the Service has recently received conditional approval from building control, for both sites, where building regulations and fire safety arrangements have been confirmed and will be monitored and signed off by Building Control as the work progresses on each site.

It is anticipated that site work will commence from March 2026 for 16 months at Devizes and April 2026 for 20 months at Weymouth. Full

		<p>project timelines are currently being finalised with the contractors and internal continuity arrangements for the Service being confirmed.</p> <p>The Service is planning to provide stakeholder updates shortly, which will include communication with all local councillors and members of the public.</p>
<p><b>BUDGET</b></p>		<p>As is prudent with a project of this size, the Service undertook a comprehensive and independent pre-tender examination of budgetary requirements, during March 2025. As part of this an independent Quantity Surveyor delivered an updated position, taking account of the final designs, changes and adaptations required to secure planning permission, gas supply requirements, increased contractor costs, associated with employer national insurance increases, and up to date inflation, labour and supply chain costs. This was reported to the Fire Authority during their meeting in June 2025, where Members approved the budgetary provision.</p> <p>During this meeting Members also approve a delegation to the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of Finance &amp; Audit, to award contracts for works, for the training centre project, following the procurement process.</p> <p>Whilst the project delay had led to increased costs, the delay in expenditure has enabled the Authority to take advantage of the higher interest rates available throughout 2024/25 to maximise the return on investments. The Authority has made several fixed term investments throughout this period, with rates ranging from 4.61% - 5.45%, which would not have been possible from a cashflow perspective if the project had progressed as initially planned.</p> <p>Independent Quantity Surveyors have been appointed to support the delivery phase of this project. This is to ensure that appropriate oversight of the costs continue, and any concerns are quickly identified and reported for resolution.</p>
<p><b>RISKS</b></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 June 2025, reflective of the current economic climate and final designs. The revised costing includes a 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>

**NEXT STEPS**

The project timelines are being finalised to ensure a clear picture is provided, to manage expectation and allow appropriate continuity arrangements to be in place, across the Service's training provision.

Stakeholder engagement and communication will also be a focus as we begin the delivery phase.

## 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		
				Planning conditions met for both sites		
				Building control provisions confirmed and accepted		
				Clear provisions for project timeline/continuity planning		

### Overall Project Risk Position

Overall risk rating		Direction	Reducing ↓
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Failure to deliver	Residual (Current) Risk Position	Issues	Mitigations
On-time		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply issues</li> <li>Project delivery issues</li> <li>Weather issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project governance and oversight</li> <li>Contract Management</li> <li>Procurement &amp; contractual arrangements</li> <li>Site management and oversight</li> <li>Positive engagements and relations</li> <li>Engaged legal team and construction specialists</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged construction specialists and internal post Timeline being finalised with Contractors</li> </ul>
<b>To budget</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inflationary rises for material and labour</li> <li>Supply chain issues</li> <li>Project delays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project governance and oversight</li> <li>Contract Management</li> <li>Budget reviews with Quantity Surveyor and Director of Finance &amp; Treasurer</li> <li>Engaged construction specialists and internal post</li> </ul>
<b>With quality</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time pressures</li> <li>Budgetary pressures</li> <li>Expertise of external contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project governance and oversight</li> <li>Contract Management</li> <li>Procurement &amp; contractual arrangements</li> <li>Site management and oversight</li> <li>Engaged construction specialists and internal post</li> </ul>