

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	22 JULY 2024
SUBJECT	ESTATES MINOR NEW WORKS CAPITAL SPEND APPROVAL
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BROOKS, HEAD OF ASSETS
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR SHEPHERD-DUBEY
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Minor capital projects on the estate are identified within the Fire Authority's 10-year Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) to cover essential lifecycle works and/or minor new works upgrades or improvements. For 2024, four sites have been identified for projects covering Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and contaminants focussed improvements and life safety systems upgrades which aligns to the Estate Development Programme's priority objectives. Notably, because of this investment the Estate will meet the EDI and contaminants minimum standards set by the Service. This achieves the challenging and ambitious target set in the accelerated programmed approach adopted.
- 1.2 The SAIF 2024 has provision for an investment of £200,000 for financial year 2024/5 which is sufficient to cover the proposed programme of works, including adequate contingency provision.
- 1.3 The projects will not impact on the Authority's response standard performance.
- 1.4 The total budget for the combined projects of £171,350 is within the provision in the SAIF meaning the full cost of the project can be funded from internal resources that have been set aside to fund these types of minor capital projects. The projects represent good value for money, delivering better working environments for current staff and investing in estate infrastructure.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the release of £171,350 from the SAIF to meet all costs for estate related minor capital projects, as defined in 3.4, to cover professional services,

design, planning, contractor costs and construction costs along with ancillary works and other fees.

3. **REPORT**

Background

- 3.1 Minor capital projects are identified within the Fire Authority's 10-year SAIF as a critical and prudent aspect of estate management to cover essential lifecycle works and / or priority minor new works upgrades.
- 3.2 Four sites have been identified as the focus for this activity during financial year 2024/25, as follows in priority order.
- Windsor – EDI, LED lighting and fixed fire alarm upgrades
 - Wokingham – EDI and contamination control upgrades
 - Lambourn – fixed fire alarm installation
 - Mortimer – fixed fire alarm installation
- 3.3 The investments proposed in the programme builds on other, larger, recent estates development projects at Slough, Bracknell and Maidenhead, seeking to refresh working environments and supporting the strategic intent of extending the life and utility of existing buildings through refurbishment where appropriate.

Scope of improvements

- 3.4 The scope of works at each site is as follows:
- 3.4.1 **Windsor.** The size and configuration of Windsor station means it is not possible to achieve the minimum standards for EDI without significant alterations to the building. A costed plan to deliver the minimum EDI standard has been prepared by our professional consultants with an upper limit estimate of £100,000, which includes a provisional allowance for alterations to the fire alarm system, the mechanical and electrical (M&E) installation, and LED lighting.
- 3.4.2 **Wokingham.** To achieve the minimum standard for EDI, a partition wall is required to convert the existing dormitory into one male dormitory and one female-priority dormitory. To facilitate this change, minor alterations to the lighting system, fire detection and sprinkler system, and the M&E installation is also required. Further, to facilitate the creation of a new contamination control amber area near the breathing apparatus room, a partition wall needs to be erected. The costed plan has been prepared by our building fabric facilities contractor and is estimated to cost £30,000.
- 3.4.3 **Lambourn and Mortimer.** These stations have been grouped together as the scope of works for each are similar. Both stations currently rely on domestic smoke detectors to protect the buildings from fire, which is not deemed acceptable or tolerable. The existing fire protection configuration does not support remote monitoring, so it is not possible to know whether a smoke detector has been activated when the buildings are unoccupied. In the past, passing pedestrians hearing an alarm sounding have contacted RBFRS to raise the issue, which is not

acceptable for a professional organisation such as ours. The latest fire risk assessments for both stations have also flagged these as risks, with remedial action recommended. The budget has been derived from estimates previously obtained, and the work will cost £19,000.

- 3.5 Once the projects are funded, the Estates team will expedite design and planning to ensure completion of all works by March 2025. In all cases, the final designs will be aligned to all of the Authority’s four estates development priority objectives as described in the SAIF, which are:
- 3.5.1 **Improving equality, diversity and inclusion.** Creating facilities that support, encourage and promote a more diverse workforce now and into the future.
 - 3.5.2 **Improving contamination control.** Addressing the growing risk of contaminants by providing better facilities for decontamination and contamination control.
 - 3.5.3 **Sustainability.** making the estate more environmentally friendly by carrying out upgrades and initiatives to reduce our carbon output and realise potential revenue savings by doing so.
 - 3.5.4 **Improving building infrastructure.** Investing in the infrastructure of the buildings to ensure longevity of our current estate and to provide fit-for-purpose workplaces for our staff.

Procurement and anticipated costs

- 3.6 The SAIF made an original provision for an anticipated investment of £200,000. The total project costs are expected to be £149,000 plus a contingency of £22,350 resulting in a total budget of £171,350.
- 3.7 The anticipated project costs are further clarified in **Table 1**.

Project Title	Estimate	Contingency (15%)	Total
Windsor EDI, LED lighting and fire alarm upgrades	£100,000	£15,000	£115,000
Wokingham EDI and contaminants upgrades	£30,000	£4,500	£34,500
Lambourn and Mortimer fixed fire alarm upgrades	£19,000	£2,850	£21,850
Total	£149,000	£22,350	£171,350

Table 1 – Anticipated project costs.

Project timelines

- 3.8 Subject to Authority approval, it is anticipated that all projects will be completed by December 2024, with key milestones in **Table 2**.

Project	Estimated start date	Estimated completion date
Windsor EDI, LED lighting and fire alarm upgrades	16 September 2024	31 March 2025
Wokingham EDI and contaminants upgrades	19 August 2024	31 December 2024
Lambourn and Mortimer fixed fire alarm upgrades	30 September 2024	30 October 2024

Table 2 – Anticipated project milestones.

4. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 **Commitment 3: Response.** We will ensure that our people are trained, and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.2 **Commitment 5: Sustainability.** We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.3 **Commitment 6: People.** We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The total budget for the combined projects of £171,350, which is in line with the provision in the SAIF of £200,000.
- 5.2 The full cost of the project can be funded from internal resources that have been set aside to fund capital projects. The Authority will therefore not need to increase its debt levels or call on reserves to fund this project.
- 5.3 The projects represent good value for money, delivering both a better working environment for current staff as well as investing in estate infrastructure.
- 5.4 The Windsor landlord has given permission for the building alterations but has indicated that they are not willing to contribute any funds to the proposed work in their property.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications of note, but appropriate legal advice will be sought on procurement, planning and construction aspects if required.

6.2 As indicated above, the Windsor landlord has given formal written consent to make alterations to their property.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 One of the key project outcomes for Windsor is to improve the equality of facilities for current and future staff groups making a positive and enduring impact at that site. Notably, the completion of these two EDI projects will mean the entire estate will meet the minimum standards set by the Service.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There is a high degree of confidence of project costs based on preparatory work to date and budget overruns are not considered probable, but the risk always remains, particularly when considering the age of the buildings and limited investment on the sites over several years. The multi-project approach and proposed contingency provision of 15% will offset this risk.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 Not applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Head of Finance and Procurement were consulted during the preparation of this report.

10.2 The Monitoring Officer and Lead Member for Strategic Assets and Sustainability were consulted during the preparation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 [Strategic Asset Investment Framework \(rbfrs.co.uk\)](http://rbfrs.co.uk)

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Not applicable.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Paul Brooks, Head of Assets (Estates, Fleet & Equipment) brooksp@rbfrs.co.uk

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13.3 Fiona Cooper, Capital Projects Officer cooperf@rbfrs.co.uk