

## **INTEGRATED ASSET DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority has committed to support the development of the facilities of the Service to ensure that they meet the demands of a modern Fire and Rescue Service. An Integrated Asset Development Strategy (IADS) is being prepared which provides firstly for a new build element which is intended to be funded through the Private Finance Initiative approach, supported by Government funding and secondly a programme of refurbishment funded by the Authority.

The IADS Programme comprises two distinct Projects: the Private Finance Initiative (New Build) Project which is initially focussed on the submission of an Outline Business Case to Department for Local Government and Communities by the end of July, and a Refurbishment Project. Project Managers have been appointed for both Projects and they have a Project Board structure. The two projects are overseen by the Director of Assets and Resources, acting as Programme Co-ordinator.

### **Private Finance Initiative (New Build) Project**

The PFI Project comprises:

The building of new stations for:

- H Tamworth.
- H Cannock.
- H Newcastle.
- H Hanley.
- H Uttoxeter.

- The relocation of resources from Burslem to a new site in the Sandyford area.
- The creation of a new response base in Stafford and the conversion of Tamworth and Kidsgrove/Burslem into response and retained locations.

Work is underway to identify sites for replacement stations in Tamworth, Sandyford and potentially Uttoxeter. Preferred sites have already been identified in two areas and discussions are underway with the relevant planning authorities. The Department for Local Government and Communities is keen to see land issues resolved when they are considering the Outline Business Case, and much work has been done (and continues to be done) in this area, particularly in relation to planning requirements.

### **Information Gathering and Briefing**

In addition, work has commenced on identifying the key elements of a community fire station. This work is being carried out in conjunction with the development of a national framework, and in collaboration with the other Fire and Rescue Services preparing PFI schemes. An initial briefing with the senior operational managers within the Service has taken place and work has begun on the preparation of a design brief.

It is clear from discussions and work that has been already undertaken that there will be some scope for tailoring facilities to their proposed locations and that scope exists for a number of different models of partnership and community use. It is important that the future ambitions of the Authority, in terms of partnership and community working are developed alongside the IADS process and that policy development give direction to the IADS to ensure that the buildings reflect current expectations and are to a degree, 'future-proofed'.

As part of the overall strategy, Project Team members are completing an exercise designed to gather as much information as possible about the existing property portfolio. This includes a wider range of surveys, and in the case of new sites and those likely to be redeveloped, topography and ground condition surveys. Legal searches are also being completed. This information is key for the Refurbishment Project and also to inform the PFI process.

As a result of the PFI replacement of Hanley Fire station, Service Workshops arrangements require review. The Authority has commenced a Best Value study to be completed during the summer, which will advise the future strategy.

### **Consultation and Marketing**

The Programme Board has considered a Communications Strategy for the Project and this is actively being developed. As well as focussing on consultation with staff representative bodies and Members, community partners will also be involved. Detailed consultations will take place over the next four to six weeks.

A key element of a successful Outline Business Case submission is the ability to demonstrate market interest in the project. Informal meetings have already been held with interested parties, and a "Market Day" is scheduled for 6 June 2006. In addition, information associated with the Integrated Asset Development Strategy will be placed on a specific 'portal' within the Authority website.

### **Community Fire Stations**

As indicated earlier, IADS must deliver fit-for-purpose Community Fire Stations. This is a new concept for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority, although it is a developing approach across the country. It reflects the increasing preventative and protection activities of the Service and aims to provide, by design, facilities in the community to facilitate the professional delivery of proactive services, along side the traditional training and response requirements of Fire Stations.

The design concept for all new and refurbished Fire Stations will include community safety/education facilities, but will be subject to local assessment of requirements and in most circumstances be constrained by the existing site limitations. Local partnership opportunities will, where appropriate and as previously identified, be factored into the final proposals.