

**Criminal Justice Committee
Pre Budget-Scrutiny Follow Up Points
October 2022**

SFRS Response

1. Details of the number of fire stations currently not meeting the basic cleaning/decontamination facilities required to ensure fire fighters can wash/shower and decontaminate their person when returning to base from a fire event, especially in light of the SFRS's statutory duty of care to its employees and the newly emerging scientific evidence of the carcinogenic properties of fire particulates?

1.1 SFRS currently have responsibility for some 1100 built assets, owned or leased, over 422 sites. Our total land holdings comprise of circa 281 acres; our gross internal area comprises of circa 167,000 square metres of which the operational (fire station) part of the estate is circa 137,000 square metres. The Service provides an operational response from 356 locations across Scotland.

1.2 However, we have inherited a very mixed portfolio of buildings and leases, with a number of these being unsuitable for a modern community fire station.

1.3 In addition, we have a high number of, by modern standards, poorly designed and aged fire stations. In our most recent analysis of the estate some 220 stations were assessed as poor or bad with regards suitability.

1.4 There are a number of requirements specific to fire stations which are assessed under our suitability criteria. Specifically, we note below some basic requirements associated with these assets as places of work;

- 11 fire stations do not have a water supply
- Over 100 fire stations have no rest or canteen facilities
- Over 150 fire stations do not have sufficient showering facilities
- Over 100 fire stations do not have minimum toilet provision
- 120 fire stations do not have a dedicated locker room
- Over 100 fire stations do not have dedicated drying facilities
- 282 fire stations do not have dignified changing areas
- No fire stations have a first aid room or space for nursing mothers

2. Similarly, as above, the number of fire stations currently not meeting the basic cleaning/decontamination facilities required to ensure firefighting equipment (appliances, clothing, breathing apparatus, tools etc) can be safely decontaminated for future use?

2.1 The Service recently met with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and its subject matter expert Professor Anna Stec of the University of Central Lancashire; our work with the FBU and Professor Stec is at an early stage. We have a Contaminates Working Group to steer this vitally important piece of work on behalf of the Service. We are currently assessing the requirements for contaminate control we will require in light of the findings from Professor Stec's research.

2.2 We have yet to fully determine the detail of the physical control measures required within our operational stations. The nature and age of the inherited fire station estate will require bespoke solutions to be developed at the majority of sites to accommodate any necessary changes.

2.3 Our ability to adequately develop the existing buildings is restricted by type and size of many of our buildings and the capacity of many of our sites to accept an extension. In a significant number of instances improvement of existing facility will likely not be possible.

3. The capital cost of bringing these fire stations up to the necessary minimum safe standard for cleaning/decontamination facilities in both cases;

3.1 The approach we have developed to address this issue means for each fire station we need to take cognisance of its age, condition, suitability and building size to determine our ability to make changes to each premises. We also need to consider the site size to determine each station's capacity to be reconfigured, refurbished and/or extended.

3.2 It is not feasible or practicable in most instances to address individual elements without impacting on others and as such costs associated with remedying of the fire station estate are calculated at £444M over a 10-year period.

4. The locations of the 14 fire stations referred to as having urgent capital maintenance requirements because of the defective RAAC concrete panel issue, and the estimated costs of addressing this. It would also be helpful if you could specify which are the costliest and/or most pressing stations from a structural safety issue, and may need to be closed if sufficient capital resources are not provided to address this.

4.1 In May 2019 a safety alert was issued by the building and civil engineering industry's Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) following a (2018) failure in a flat roof constructed from Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) planks. The RAAC system was used extensively in the construction of flat roofed schools and similar buildings between the 1960s and 1980s.

4.2 SCOSS is a body jointly funded by the Institution of Structural Engineers, the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). SCOSS was established to maintain a continuing review of building and civil engineering matters affecting the safety of structures.

4.3 The SCOSS report stated that "the 2018 collapse was sudden, with very little noticeable warning". This roof failure did not conform to the findings from previous investigations into the continued use of RAAC panels by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in the 1990s and 2002, which had concluded the planks gave adequate warning through visual deterioration before failing.

4.4 The nature of failure experienced due to these built elements as noted in the SCOSS report does not allow us to prioritise station replacement based on condition.

4.5 The service has undertaken extensive inspection and assessment of the estate and identified 14 sites which have RAAC plank roofs.

4.6 These 14 sites have been subject to survey to identify their condition and temporary works have been designed and installed.

4.7 The 14 sites confirmed to have RAAC roofs have been surveyed with regards to addressing the roof and assessed in relation to age, existing condition of all built elements and infrastructure and the development required to address suitability issues and compliance with our standardised station design.

Station	Estimated Cost
Crewe Toll	£7,585,000
Cumbernauld	£7,033,000
Dalkeith	£5,505,000
Galashiels	£3,080,000
Hawick	£7,585,000
Helensburgh	£7,033,000
Huntly	£3,688,000
Liberton	£5,505,000
Livingston	£7,033,000
Marionville	£5,505,000
Milngavie	£7,033,000
Portree	£3,209,000
Stewarton	£2,515,000
Tranent	£2,515,000
Total	£74,824,000

4.8 The 14 sites remain subject to an ongoing quarterly inspection regime to monitor their condition and any further signs of deterioration.

4.9 The above early estimate costs were developed late in 2020 and must be considered subject to substantial inflationary and market specific increases. These developments exclude land costs for replacement sites of anything between £100,000 to £700,000 per site which is highly dependent upon each station's location.

4.10 Furthermore, while existing station sites would then be disposed of, the values for station disposals are likely to be significantly less than the purchase price of new sites as they will be valued at the land value minus demolition and remediation costs as fire stations don't have noted alternative uses.