

**ECFRS Property Services** 

**Progress Against Strategy** 

September 2024

# About

This pack has been prepared by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for the purpose of provision of background information to the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner ahead of the round table debate on the same topic. It should be read by all key stakeholders ahead of the meeting. This also offers the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner that activity linked to 'we will' statements detailed in the Fire and Rescue plan is underway and achieving improvement

# 1.0 Fire and Rescue Plan 2019 to 2024 extract

The Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Property Strategy is aligned with the priority outlined in the PFCC Fire and Rescue Plan of 'Making the best of our resources.'

Our property strategy aims to optimise the utilisation of our facilities, assets, and infrastructure to enhance operational effectiveness, cost efficiency, and community safety. By strategically managing our resources, we ensure that our properties serve their intended purposes effectively while minimising waste and maximising value."

Priority	We will do this so	
Make the best of our resources	The people of Essex can be reassured their money is being used efficiently and effectively.	
The more efficiently we use the resour	rces we have, the more we can invest in services	
that have a direct impact on people's l	lives	
We Will:		
changing risks they face, in line	people of Essex to stay safe and mitigate the with the priorities in this plan.	

- Plan the deployment of resources based on strategic priorities, evidenced need, articulated benefits and measurable outcomes.
- Benchmark our performance with other fire and rescue services and leading public and private sector bodies to improve our own performance •
- Ensure our investment in prevention work has measurable targets and achieves agreed outcomes.
- Use new technology and business processes to improve service efficiency.
- Ensure there is an effective risk management process in place

# 2.0 Background

The ECFRS estate comprises of 60 sites and buildings across the County of Essex, supporting one of the largest fire and rescue services in the country, serving a County with a wide variety of risks, covering an area over 1,400 square miles and a population of 1.8 million. The estate includes 51 fire stations staffed by whole-time and on-call firefighters, a Headquarters at Kelvedon Park, and other buildings which are utilised for workshops, offices, training, and command centres.

The ECFRS Estate Strategy 2021-26, outlines the forward-looking vision, ambition, and commitment for the fire estate in Essex. Its key objectives include providing a fit-for-purpose, efficient, and environmentally friendly estate that supports the fire service at both the county and community levels.

The strategy aims to keep the workforce and people of Essex safe and recognises the following key areas:

### **Dynamic Demands**:

• The nature of the fire service is constantly evolving, and the demands across prevention, protection, and response delivery are dynamic. Engaging communities, working with other agencies, and supporting personnel require high standards for today and the future.

#### **Emergency Response:**

• The fire service sector continues to respond to a broad range of emergencies with skill and professionalism. Modern facilities allow firefighters and support staff to meet public needs effectively.

#### Innovation and Technology:

• Advances in technology enable agile service delivery, flexibility, and evidence-based decision-making. The goal is to provide a resilient, effective, and cost-efficient service to Essex communities.

#### **Recruitment and Priorities:**

• As new firefighters are recruited and priorities align with the Fire & Rescue Plan, developing workspaces becomes essential. Effective, sustainable, and collaborative facilities are crucial.

#### **Community Engagement:**

• Fire stations aim to be at the heart of communities, accessible and engaging for the public, maintaining visibility and confidence.

#### **Strategic Direction:**

• The strategy aligns with the government's Fire Reform agenda, emphasising efficiency, accountability, transparency, and representation of the served communities.

#### Investment Importance:

• Essex County Fire and Rescue Services Estates Strategy represents a significant financial investment. Buildings and facilities must provide efficient, effective, and productive environments for employees to achieve the vision.

Overall, the strategy focuses on creating a modern, adaptable fire estate that meets the needs of Essex residents and ensures the safety and well-being of all stakeholders.

#### 3.0 Estate Strategy Vision

Our ECFRS Property Vision is for:

"An Estate That Contributes to Keeping the People of Essex Safe"

Our vision centres around three core principles:

Strategic Investment:

• We commit to purposeful investments that enhance safety. Whether it's modernising fire stations, upgrading equipment, or optimising response, every decision aligns with our mission: to protect lives and property.

Improved Efficiency:

• Efficiency isn't just about doing more with less; it's about doing better with what we have. Streamlined processes, data-driven insights, and resource allocation ensure that our estate operates at peak efficiency, maximising our impact.

Embracing New Ways of Working:

• The fire service landscape evolves rapidly. By embracing innovation, technology, and collaboration, we adapt to changing needs. Our estate becomes a hub for creativity, learning, and community engagement.

### 4.0 Update against Strategy

The below table highlights our progress against our core principles detailed within our estate strategy. For each "We Will Statements", this report details the progress, RAG Status and rationales:

We Will Statements	Update / Progress	RAG	Rationale
Utilise collaboration opportunities for land sharing in addition to the sale of assets to invest in the improvement of our buildings. We will start with those buildings with the greatest need, that deliver the best value and benefit for both the public and our staff.	<ul> <li>Sale of Dovercourt to Essex Police £350k</li> <li>ECFRS Service HQ, shared use of building with multi agency partners for training, exercising and meetings</li> <li>EEAST Base Stations &amp; Welfare Facilities</li> <li>Terrance Higgins Trust, use of Harlow Station for monthly HIV testing</li> <li>EEAST Servicing, at our Fleet Workshops we are currently servicing and maintaining 39 Ambulances.</li> <li>Collaborative arrangements with HM Coastguard using South Woodham Ferres</li> <li>Community Safety Rooms at Stations</li> </ul>		ECFRS seeks to further maximise its assets through collaborative opportunities and the potential of income generation.

	Joint Fleet workshops Project	
	SAMP Grays Fire Station Project	
Keep a flexible approach to our portfolio. Our operational bases change to reflect need and opportunities for sharing and collaborating with partners in the locations where we need to be. We will own properties where it makes sense and will look to share with partners where we can.	<ul> <li>As above detailed above and with addition work to explore a Rochford Community Safety Hub</li> </ul>	
Address our high priority operational issues caused by poor condition of the estate and the associated deteriorating resilience.	<ul> <li>Commissioning of Industry Standard Condition Survey 2024 through OCG, with contract award in January 2025</li> <li>Workplace Improvement Programme (Wholetime Modernisation Programme,</li> <li>Completion of Orsett Fire Station in July 2024, with contract award for Southend in early 2025 and planning for Leigh commencing June 2024 for delivery during 2025.</li> <li>Delivering a Maintenance Programme</li> <li>Scoping of options to expedite Workplace Improvement Programme with an expressed timeline for completion</li> </ul>	The 2024-25 Condition Survey will be awarded in Jan 2025 Funds and Timeline of Workplace Improvement Programme
Implement a robust approach to the analysis of the priorities, costs, and benefits of our investments, ensuring that any opportunities to 'invest to save' are fully explored. This will be delivered through	<ul> <li>Agreed Productivity and Efficiency Returns for 2024/25</li> <li>LED Programme for commencement in 2024</li> <li>Net Carbon Zero Roadmap</li> <li>Heat Decarbonisation Plans for estate being completed</li> <li>Recruitment of Property, Fleet &amp; Technical Services Analyst due to commence in September 2024</li> </ul>	

the governance of our investment programmes Incorporate energy reduction technologies in line with the environmental Strategy 2020 – 2030 and with investments to improve health and safety, security, equality, and diversity.	<ul> <li>Building Management Systems</li> <li>Considerations for Green Electric</li> <li>Programme of alternative heating solutions</li> <li>Heat Decarbonisation Plans for estate being completed</li> <li>Environmental considerations automatically programme into improvement programmes</li> <li>Environmental Roadmap</li> <li>Identification of Grants to access wider funding</li> </ul>	
Monitor the condition of the estate, identifying appropriate requirements to ensure the portfolio is fit for purpose. Identifying asset improvement and asset protection works separately to ensure that we are making best use of our resources	<ul> <li>Commissioning of Industry Standard Condition Survey 2024</li> <li>Capital Programme</li> <li>Workplace Improvement Programme (Wholetime Modernisation Programme)</li> </ul>	Capital Investment capped at £1m. Capital investment is directed at Wholetime Station Modernisation Timeline to deliver Workplace Improvement Programme (Wholetime modernisation) to all assets – 7 years.
Maximise our approach within the Digital & Data Strategy to ensure that we are introducing new technologies that allow our estate to function in an agile, flexible and collaborative way.	<ul> <li>Building Management Systems</li> <li>Carbon Net Zero Roadmap collaboration with LASER</li> <li>Governance Structures</li> <li>Renewable Energies</li> <li>EV Charging Infrastructure &amp; launch of Monta System</li> </ul>	

<ul> <li>Develop a Roadmap that details the cost, timelines and resource requirements to deliver the Strategy and feed into our Reserves Strategy and Capital Programme.</li> <li>Detailed Costings with industry stakeholders to estimate costs accurately.</li> <li>Detailed Capital Management Plan.</li> <li>Clear Timelines &amp; Milestones</li> <li>Alignment with the overall ECFRS Property strategy and project dependencies &amp; resource requirements:</li> <li>Integration with Reserves Strategy and Capital Programme</li> <li>Robust governance processes for effective execution.</li> <li>Development of ECFRS's first environmental roadmap.</li> </ul>		
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# 5.0 Current Work

Over the past six months, the Property Department has significantly intensified its focus on data insight and evaluation. By analysing historical data spanning the last nine years, we've gained valuable insights into the demand for property services.

This rigorous examination has allowed us to identify trends, anticipate customer needs, and adapt our strategies accordingly. Moving forward this insight will be utilised for the future realignment of the property team, to ensure it meets organisational needs and adapts a more project commissioning-based approach.

% of Increased Tickets Raised from 2015-16 to 2023-24	51% Increase	Approx: 2600 tickets per year over 9 years.
From an initial peak in 2017-2018, tickets raised have shown a steady increase from 2021		

From an initial peak in 2017-2018, tickets raised have shown a steady increase from 2021 to current year, it is predicted ticket levels during 2024-25 will exceed the peak.

# Key initiatives and activities

This section outlines the key initiatives and activities of the Property Department. It provides an overview of the capital program delivery for 2023-24, where the service successfully achieved projects up to £1 million. Additionally, it includes details of the 2024-25 capital program for ECFRS property.

# Capital Programme Summary 2023-24

The 2023-24 ECFRS Property Programme delivered capital projects up to the value of £965,908 against a budget of £1 million. In this period twelve projects were completed, with two further projects being partially completed including asbestos removal works at

Basildon Fire Station at £55k and Wivenhoe Fire Station against a budget of £34k. During this period modernisation works were nearing completion on Orsett Fire Station (£365k invoiced) with a balance of £181k.



# 6.1 Capital Programme 2024-25

As highlighted in the April 2024 Capital Highlight Report, the below table outlines the summary of the Land and Building and Asset Improvement report for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service:

Project	Detail	RAG
Fleet Workshops Relocation	Carry Forward 2023/24: Not	
(Consultancy fees):	specified	
	Budget 2024/25: £246,900	
	Actual Spend: £246,900	
Hot Fire Training Relocation	Carry Forward 2023/24: Not	
(Consultancy fees):	specified	
	Budget 2024/25: £250,000	
	Actual Spend: £250,000	
Training works/BA Chambers:	Carry Forward 2023/24:	
	£326,158	
	Budget 2024/25: £175,842	
	Forecast - Current: £502,000	
	Actual Spend: Not specified	
Totals:	Carry Forward 2023/24: £326,158	

# Property Team – PMO - ECFRS Capital Programme

Budget 2024/25: £672,742
Forecast - Current: £998,900

Overview of projects detailed within the Capital Programme:

Fleet Workshops:

- We are actively engaged in a commercial review with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) to address the legal and financial implications of the Fleet Workshops project.
- A comprehensive business case is underway and is scheduled for completion by Winter 2024.

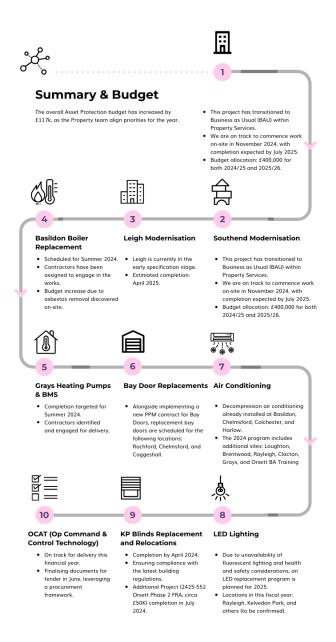
Hot Fire Training Facility:

- Our Operations Training Team is currently reviewing the design for the Hot Fire Training Facility.
- Two value engineering workshops are in progress to ensure the design aligns with our operational requirements.
- Following this, a decision sheet for the next RIBA stage will be prepared for Q3.

OCAT:

- Finalisation of documents for the OCAT project is underway this month.
- We have identified a framework for the project, which will be structured into three distinct lots.
- Current Status: Preparing for tender

The graphic provides a concise summary of the Asset Protection projects for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service:



# 6.0 Workplace Improvement Programme (Wholetime Station Modernisation Programme)

In summary, the ECFRS strategic approach balances investment in critical areas while managing risks associated with the broader estate. The commitment to modernisation reflects a long-term vision for enhanced service delivery and firefighter safety.

ECFRS has strategically allocated a significant portion of its capital investment toward the Workplace Improvement Programme (Wholetime Station Modernisation Program). This deliberate shift in funding represents a balanced risk, aiming to enhance operational capabilities while addressing critical challenges. The focus lies on wholetime stations, where private accommodation (replacing dorms), improved welfare facilities, training spaces, and decontamination areas are key components. By investing in these areas, ECFRS aims to improve firefighter well-being, operational efficiency, and overall service delivery. While prioritising wholetime stations, ECFRS acknowledges the risk associated with the remainder of its estate. The remaining stations will receive essential proactive maintenance, ensuring operational readiness and compliance. Delivering the Wholetime Station Modernisation Program is a substantial undertaking due to the complexity of each station's requirements. Given available funds, the program is projected to extend until 2030.

ECFRS recognises the broader cultural challenges faced by fire and rescue services (FRS) across the UK. Despite the extended timeline, it's crucial to address compliance with modern standards. Full compliance may take 6 to 7 years.



# **Expediting the Timeline for Workplace Improvement**

ECFRS is current assessing options to expedite the Improvement Programme from 6 to 7 years to a potential 3 years. This approach alongside both ECFRS Property, Procurement and Finance will identify options for delivery and Strategic Funding Allocation.

ECFRS recognised the cultural challenges faced by FRS across the UK and the benefits of workplace improvements to address these, balanced with the challenges and complexity of modernisation efforts, additional funding required and resourcing challenges to complete this.

Whilst Orsett Fire Station was completed in July 2024, Southend Fire Station looks to provide the service template for workplace modernisation and will provide a financial model for station improvements for the future. With the contract for Southend likely to be awarded in early 2025, it is projected this project will cost approximately £850,000. Therefore, it can be expected that the remaining stations will need similar funding in place.

### 7.0 Contaminants

In summary, ECFRS's commitment to safety extends beyond operational protocols. Through thoughtful station design, we enhance protection for our employees, ensuring they can serve the community effectively while minimizing exposure to hazardous materials.

As ECFRS progresses with Workplace Improvement, we recognise the critical importance of safety for our firefighters. One key aspect of this effort is the deliberate design of our fire stations to incorporate clean and dirty zones.

### **Clean and Dirty Zones:**

- Clean zones are designated areas where personnel can operate without contamination. These spaces are crucial for maintaining hygiene and preventing cross-contamination.
- Dirty zones, on the other hand, are where contaminated equipment and clothing are handled. These areas minimise the risk of spreading hazardous substances.

#### **Downstairs Washing Facilities:**

- In addition to Firefighters adhering to the disrobing of PPE following an incident at scene.
- As part of station modernisation, ECFRS is incorporating downstairs washing facilities. These areas allow firefighters to further decontaminate immediately upon returning from incidents.
- By having washing facilities conveniently located, we further reduce exposure to harmful substances and enhance overall well-being.

#### **Complementing Scene Disrobe Protocols:**

- While ECFRS already follows a process of disrobing at the scene, the inclusion of clean and dirty zones adds an extra layer of protection.
- Firefighters can transition seamlessly from contaminated areas to clean zones, minimising risks during critical moments.

#### **Employee Safety as a Priority:**

- Workplace improvements provide a unique opportunity to embed safety features directly into our infrastructure.
- By prioritising clean and dirty zones, we create a safer environment for our dedicated workforce.

### 8.0 Feasibility of Commercial Washing Machines

The Protecting Our People Board, with research both National and insight including Anna Stack, and ECFRS Health & Safety has identified the presence of minimal contaminants on firefighter undergarments. While ECFRS awaits further research and guidance, the Protecting Our People Board has recommended exploring a proactive solution of installing commercial washing machines at all stations.

### **Property Feasibility Study:**

- ECFRS Property has conducted a thorough feasibility study to assess the viability of this initiative.
- The goal is to mitigate the risk of contaminants on clothing, ensuring firefighter safety.

#### **Contract Extension Constraints:**

- For several months, ECFRS extended a washing contract to address this issue.
- The current contract will cease on 8 October 2024

#### **Cost Considerations:**

• The feasibility work estimates that installing commercial washing machines will cost approximately £350k.

Next Steps

- ECFRS Property Commissions Turnkey Solution for Commercial Washing Machines
- ECFRS will install commercial washing machines in all feasible stations by March 25.
- The project will kick off with the installation of commercial washing machines at the initial five stations: Chelmsford, Basildon, Harlow, Colchester, and Grays. These installations are scheduled for completion in October 2025.

#### 9.0 Whats new on the Horizon

#### **Estate Management System (Concerto)**

In 2024, ECFRS made a strategic investment by implementing a cloud-based version of Concerto, our property management system. This modernised system seamlessly integrates with the new ECFRS Finance System, eliminating the need for remote desktop access and hosted solutions. The move to the cloud enhances efficiency, accessibility, and data synchronisation, positioning ECFRS for streamlined property management and financial operations.

#### **Re packaging of Contractors**

As a property department we are embarking on an initiative to consolidate existing Facilities Management Contracts. By packaging these contracts together, we aim to achieve several key objectives:

### **Supplier Reduction:**

- Streamlining suppliers will enhance efficiency and reduce administrative overhead.
- Fewer suppliers mean clearer communication channels and improved accountability.

### **Efficient Job Allocation:**

- Our goal is to allocate jobs directly onto the Concerto systems.
- This streamlined process ensures timely execution and accurate tracking.

#### **Direct Supplier Involvement:**

- Suppliers will be directly allocated works from the system.
- They can input data seamlessly, improving transparency and collaboration.

#### **Benefits and Challenges:**

• While packaging contracts is a significant task, the benefits—such as cost savings and process efficiency—are substantial.

The procurement and property team are actively evaluating current contracts to pave the way for this strategic transformation.

#### **Performance Management**

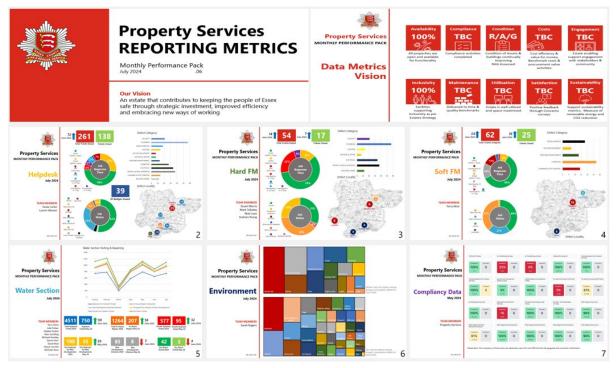
The ECFRS Property Department has successfully launched a comprehensive monthly performance dashboard. This report is presented to the Corporate Services Directorate Board, providing critical insights into various aspects of property management. Key components covered in the dashboard include:

Area	Metric	Status
Availability of Buildings:	Tracking building availability ensures efficient resource allocation and operational readiness.	Live
Compliance:	Monitoring compliance with regulations and standards is essential for safety and legal adherence.	Live
Condition Assessment:	Evaluating the condition of properties helps prioritise maintenance and upgrades.	Development
Cost Analysis:	Detailed cost breakdowns aid in financial planning and resource optimisation.	Development

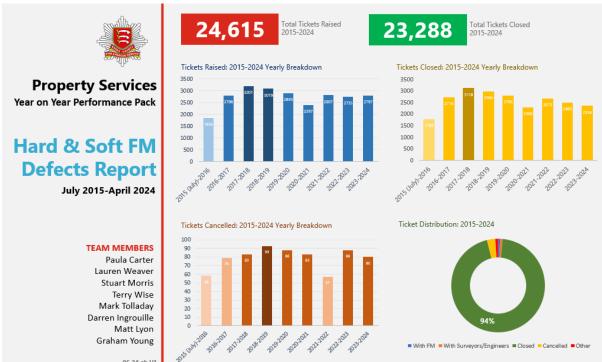
Engagement and Inclusivity:	Assessing stakeholder engagement and inclusivity initiatives contributes to a positive work environment.	Development
Maintenance Metrics:	Tracking maintenance activities ensures timely interventions and asset longevity.	Live
Satisfaction Levels:	Gathering feedback from users helps improve service quality and user experience.	Development
Sustainability Measures:	Environmental impact and sustainability efforts are integral to responsible property management.	Live
Helpdesk Metrics:	Monitoring defects, response times, and allocation streamlines issue resolution.	Live
Facilities Management and Compliance Reporting:	Comprehensive reporting ensures transparency and accountability.	Live

In summary, this performance dashboard enhances security and oversight, allowing the ECFRS Property Department to deliver its services effectively and proactively.

Property Reporting Metrics for July 2024



# Property Reporting Metrics for 2015-2024



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#### 10.0 Property Intention

#### **Previous Structure**

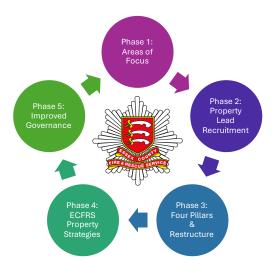
In 2023, the Head of Property Services Role was removed from the ECFRS Property Structure. As part of this change, an additional responsibility allowance was granted to the most senior member of the team, extending until the end of June 2024. Additionally, an external consultant was brought in to assist with Capital Projects until March 2024. Furthermore, the recruitment process for the Assistant Director of Asset Management (Fleet, Property & Technical Services) began in February 2024. To formalise these adjustments, a Strategic Property Lead is now required to oversee the delivery of the ECFRS Property Programme.

#### **Current Structure**

To ensure that the Property Services team can support the organisations priorities in the future it is considered that a new operating model should be adopted that puts strategic asset management at the centre of its vision and aims.

#### Intention

Implementing the ECFRS property intention will require careful planning. This report outlines a 5-step phased approach designed to ensure a structured and effective implementation. Each phase builds upon the previous one, creating a solid foundation for the property intension initiative.



This phased approach ensures that each step is given the attention it deserves, paving the way for a successful implementation of the property intension strategy.

#### **Strategic Property Lead**

The commissioning of a Strategic Property Lead aims to transform the property department, ensuring it meets the future needs of ECFRS. Recruitment for this pivotal role is scheduled for September 2024. Recognising the critical importance of securing an experienced and dynamic Strategic Property Lead, ECFRS has taken decisive action. A specialist recruitment company will be engaged to manage the end-to-end recruitment process. Their expertise will ensure that every effort is made to identify and attract the right candidate who can drive the modernisation of our property department and provide the best service to our employees, partners and the public of Essex.

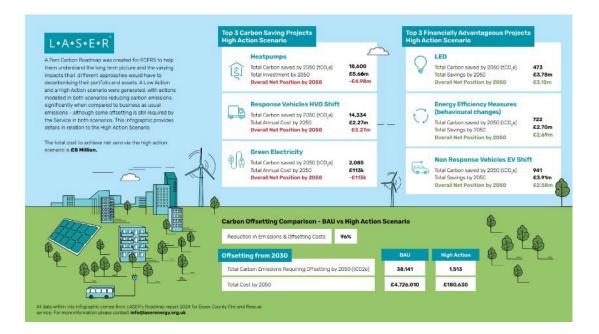
# Strategies

To achieve a robust, modern, and fit-for-purpose Property Department, ECFRS will develop the following strategies:

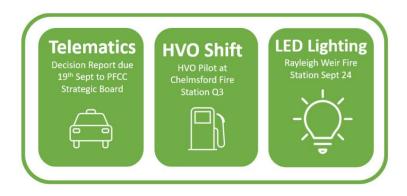
Strategy	Why
Estate Management Strategy	The ECFRS Estates Management Strategy aims to create a modern, adaptable estate that supports the fire service's mission while prioritising safety and community engagement. The strategy will aim to provide a fit-for-purpose, efficient, and environmentally friendly estate that supports ECFRS's work at both the county and community levels. The strategy will explore the long-term demand for the built environment to assess potential options for change (including maintain, renovate and disposal), and will describe the overall approach to managing the estate including governance. The strategy will outline how the service will optimise the estate, detail plans for implementation ensure efficient allocation of resource. A key factor of the Estate Management Strategy will be maximising our estate by understanding our data, through the introduction of KPIs.
Facilities Management (FM) Strategy	The ECFRS Facilities Management Strategy will outline how the services physical assets and environments will be managed and maintained to support core operations. The strategy will include the following components including Hard & Soft FM, Space Optimisation, Energy Management, Safety and Compliance and State of the Estate.
Property Maintenance Strategy	The property maintenance strategy will incorporate compliance reactive and preventative maintenance, and procurement aspects. Ensuring that all ECFRS buildings and facilities comply with relevant regulations, safety standards and legal requirements. Addressing reactive and preventative maintenance to ECFRS assets preventing major failures or costly repairs. Scheduled inspections, servicing, and preventative measures to increase the lifespan of buildings. Development of robust procurement processes for Maintenance.

# 11.0 Net Zero Decarbonisation Road Map

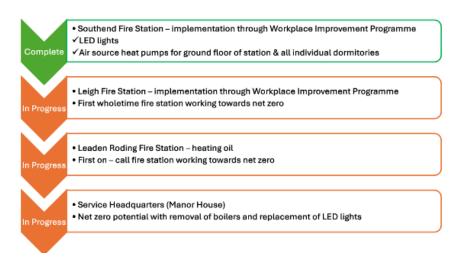
ECFRS is committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, aligning with the PFCC Environmental Strategy and UK Government Target. ECFRS has collaborated with LASER to develop a Zero Carbon Roadmap. By Analysing consumption data from 2022-23 (property) and 21-22 Fleet, we have assessed our carbon footprint. Our modelling scenarios include No Action, High Action and Low Action tasks to guide our transition towards a sustainable and environmental responsible future.



As a service, whilst we continue to evaluate options within the Carbon Net Zero Roadmap we are pursuing the following projects.



**Heat Decarbonisation Plans** 



# 12.0 Risk

#### Workplace Modernisation Pace and Funding:

- The current pace of Workplace Modernisation, spanning a 6 to 7-year program, poses risks.
- Delays or insufficient funding could impact project timelines and overall success.
- Mitigation to be developed around expediting the timeline and funding

#### **Contaminants Solution:**

- The need to address garment contaminants is critical.
- The backdrop of the October 2024 laundry contract end date adds pressure.
- Funding for installing commercial washing machines must align with this requirement.

#### **Property Lead Recruitment and Realignment:**

- Recruiting a Property lead is essential for effective strategy execution.
- Realigning the property structure to meet service needs and design involves risks related to organisational change and resource allocation.