

**Strategic Policing and Crime Board
3 February 2015**

Coventry estates update

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Coventry estates proposals following the previously agreed period of public engagement.

BACKGROUND

2. The Coventry Local Policing Unit (LPU) estates review recommendations were presented to the Board in September 2014. The recommendation in that report was for a period of public engagement to take place and the results of that to come back to the Board. The public engagement exercise has now been completed and the preferred option is presented in this report.
3. The proposals were split into two phases, with stage 1 specifically focussed on Radford, Tile Hill and George Poole House; which are smaller buildings or houses that are no longer fit for purpose for delivering an effective policing service.

Stage 1:

- Consolidate Till Hill (into Canley), Radford (into Foleshill and Coventry Central) and exit George Poole House.
- Starting to explore co-location opportunities with West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) for service re-provision of the relevant NPTs.

Stage 2:

- Rationalise the LPU Headquarters (Coventry Central): move to a single site for custody; re-provision of the Public Protection Unit; Response; and the administrative functions.
- Explore rationalisation opportunities for Foleshill and Bell Green; with possible re-provision of Radford, Bell Green and Foleshill NPT within WMFS Radford site.

4. It should be noted that approval for only stage 1 changes is sought at this point. Whilst work will continue to develop stage 2 options, this will need to be aligned more closely with the WMP 2020 Blueprint over the coming months.
5. Stage 2 of the review has identified the re-provisioning proposal for the rationalisation of Coventry Central, as well as Foleshill Police station and Bell Green Police base. The existence of the current front office at Foleshill along with the front office and custody provision at Coventry central illustrates interdependencies with the relevant strategic programmes. As a result it has been recognised that the front office at Coventry Central should be retained in the medium term while the custody provision is still in place there.

ENGAGEMENT

6. Councillors received a detailed overview of the proposals and this was followed by input in to ward forums by senior officers. This comprised of all ward forums covering all of the areas affected by the proposals (Radford, Holbrooks Woodlands, Sherbourne and Bablake) incorporating 30+ ward councillors. Neighbourhood watch have been consulted as well as KIN and CCF members, the Coventry Community Forum and the Local Police and Crime Board. The engagement ran through September to December with the findings included with this report below. During the engagement stakeholders were asked their views on the outlined proposals and were given the opportunity to comment on perceived service impact and on ideas that they may have around service provision.
7. The engagement exercise proved to be a good opportunity to provide the community with information in relation to how the various services are provided across the LPU and how the estate is currently used. In overall terms, communities were keen to discuss the issues and were prepared to listen to the explanations around the current state and the reasons for the anticipated changes. The main concerns expressed relating to perceptions about reductions in service levels resulting from reductions in estate footprint, which were addressed by senior officers. A summary of the engagement is shown in appendix 1.
8. Discussions have continued with colleagues from West Midlands Fire Service to identify opportunities for co-location, and whilst there are no specific proposals at this stage it is anticipated that further options will be considered through the WMP 2020 Blueprint changes over the medium term.
9. Therefore, it is recommended to proceed with stage 1 changes that would result in the disposal of Tile Hill, Radford and George Poole House.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The preferred option will see a reduction in annual revenue costs of £52,000 and potential capital receipts of £260,000. Any costs associated with stage one disposals will be met from existing devolved budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Schedule 1, paragraph 14, sub-section 1 of the PRSRA 2011 provides for the PCC to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the PCC which includes by virtue of sub-section 2(b) acquiring and disposing of property including land.

RECOMMENDATION

12. The Board is recommended to support the Coventry LPU estate changes.

Engagement Feedback

Radford and Holbrooks

Residents in Radford and Holbrooks organised a 738 signature petition, and a number of letters were also sent from businesses in the area to the Police and Crime Commissioner stating their concern about the potential closure of Radford Sector House. A summary of these concerns is detailed below:

- The sector house is seen as a safeguard for both the public and business and closure would have a dramatic detrimental effect on businesses in the area.
- It is felt that the sector house is an important deterrent against offenders and those intent on committing crime and that there won't be a local police presence to deter incidents.
- There are concerns relating to public safety, crime, the impact on small businesses and the overall sense of local community.
- There is concern that crime in the locality will go up as it will take longer for officers to come from another location.
- Residents are not in favour of removing sector house for its impact on community and crime control.

Holbrook's Ward Forum took place on the 4th December 2014 and the Radford Ward Forum took place on the 16th December 2014. The feedback from these meetings is an understanding from the public that there will a reduction in the Force estate but they are also aware that these changes will not affect the net amount of officers in the area. There were suggestions from attendees about the possibility of consolidation and co-location with other similar organisations. The leader of Coventry City Council of Holbrook Ward suggested that the library/community centre in Jubilee Crescent could be refurbished to accommodate officers and a number of attendees suggested co-location within the fire station.

Foleshill

The feedback from the Foleshill Ward Forum is that the community is aware of the financial constraints of the Force and suggestions were made that attendees would write to the Council and MPs to petition for increased funding. There is an awareness that Foleshill station is old and not necessarily operationally fit for purpose but there was also a request to retain a police base in this area to accommodate a greater number of officers (and to include traffic officers). It was noted that the community are keen to be involved and want to make sure that they are kept fully updated on decisions and progress and suggested that the Force website needs to be developed to successfully enable this communication.

Tile Hill

The feedback here was very similar to Foleshill and Radford with attendees welcoming any changes that reduce the cost of services, whilst ensuring that the cost reduction does not have a negative effect on service provision. It is important that where costs need to be reduced that changes are made which will not result in a reduction in resources. A major concern of local residents is that if there is an emergency that we can respond in the appropriate time and they need to be confident that any of the proposed changes will not have a detrimental effect on this.

Henley

The consensus of the Henley ward forum was that this process results in a reduction in buildings rather than a reduction in officer and staff levels. A few people thought that response teams were based in Willenhall and were surprised to learn that they are in fact based more locally and also expressed concern that they felt that response to incidents in the north east is poor. There was support for keeping Bell Green sector house until a new one is found in North East of the city; coupled with concern that there will be no front office other than Willenhall resulting in possible access difficulties for residents reliant on public transport

Bablake / Coventry Central

This was a well-attended meeting with issues relating to the national 101 number raised on a number of occasions. These discussions did however prompt a positive response as well, leading to some attendees questioning the need for "Police Stations" at all. There was feedback to suggest that we should not be looking to lose the front office but close smaller underutilised stations instead with a strong indication that they felt that they want the city centre base to stay. As with other forums they were keen to understand what any closures would mean to the service provision and how they would still be able to access all of the services that they need without being hindered in anyway.

Residents also enquired in relation to our plans for engagement with the University in relation to a change to the police presence in the city centre and also with Warwickshire Police as there is a belief that Bedworth station is closing.

Allesley Park Residents Association

A letter was sent following a committee meeting where there was a discussion about estates closures and the possibility of Coventry Central closing. It was expressed in the letter that there was a wish to keep Coventry Central open and have a police presence in the city centre.

Coventry final position

