



**Strategic Policing and Crime Board  
1 December 2015**

**WMP Estates Strategy Update**

**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board an update of the paper submitted in October 2015.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The WMP Estates Strategy review recommendations were presented to the board in October 2015. The recommendation in that report was for a period of public engagement with the results of that to be reported back to the Board. The public engagement exercise has now been completed and the feedback is presented in this report.

**NON-CORE BUILDING ESTATE REVIEW**

3. The Estate Portfolio Plan was reviewed following the publication of the WMP 2020 Blueprint. In consultation with local commanders a schedule of proposed non-core building closures was identified.
4. Non-core buildings are defined as not essential to support service delivery; they are either used for archive storage or office space. These buildings are poorly utilised and are close to other police facilities.
5. The schedule of 28 sites proposed for disposal will provide an annual saving of £1.3m in revenue costs (a 7.9% saving against current estate revenue costs), an estimated £7.3m in capital receipts and reduce our overall estate footprint by 22,254 m<sup>2</sup> (a 10.4% reduction). We will also remove our exposure to £3.1m of backlog maintenance remedial works.

Table 1

Balsall Common NPT Base	Jewellery Quarter	Tanhouse Centre
Bartley Green	Kings Heath	Shirley
Dudley (inc 3 x car parks)	Kings Norton (inc Masshouse Lane Annexe)	Sparkhill
Billesley	Kingswinford	Staveley House
Canterbury Road	Longbridge	Stourbridge
Castle Vale	Netherton	Tettenhall
Graisley	Oxley	Warstock
Halesowen	Pennwood Court	Windmill House
Handsworth West	Perry Barr	
Heath Town	Sheldon	

6. These sites are not identified as designated Public Contact Offices and are not open to the public. None of them have custodial facilities and are not used for response policing. These police buildings are not classed as fundamental to service delivery; they are used as bases for officers to carry out administrative functions, which will diminish in importance as more mobile technology is introduced.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

7. The public engagement exercise has been co-ordinated through Local Policing Units ensuring that a detailed overview of the plans is provided to Members of Parliament, Local Councillors, Community & Ward Forums, Key Individual Networks, Community Safety Partnerships and other key stakeholders.
8. During the engagement period stakeholders were asked their views on the outlined proposals.
9. 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 Force area and how the estate is currently used. In overall terms, the main concerns expressed related to perceptions about reductions in service levels resulting from reductions in estate footprint, which were addressed, locally, by senior officers.
10. LPU Commanders have not expressed a need to review the building closure plan following the feedback received as a result of local engagement.
11. A detailed summary of the engagement feedback is shown in appendix 1.

## **NON-CORE BUILDING ESTATE CLOSURE PLAN**

12. In conjunction with the local commanders this tranche of disposals will look to be delivered by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 (see Appendix 2), with agreed detailed implementation plans.

13. The timeline for the implementation programme has considered a number of different interdependencies, these include:
  - Local Operational requirements discussed and agreed with LPU Commanders
  - Buildings Lease-end dates
  - Estate and Legal timeline considerations
  - WMP building projects, including new Custody blocks, Walsall and Coventry estate projects and development of Lloyd House
  - WMP2020 requirements
14. Current occupants will be relocated to existing WMP estate, either in close proximity to the current building or for improved service delivery (as defined by the local commander) elsewhere on the estate. Therefore these closures will not have a detrimental impact on the service currently provided.
15. As part of the wider WMP 2020 programme the remaining estate will continue to be reviewed and further disposals are anticipated over the next 5 years as the new operating model develops.

## **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

16. West Midlands Police will keep the public, our partners and staff informed of the process via an agreed communications plan. This plan will ensure that the public are sighted on future changes to the police estate and kept informed of key decisions through a process of managed local engagement.
17. Partners across the West Midlands will be briefed on the plans with a view to maximise efficient use of joint space through opportunities to work collaboratively. Staff and internal users of the estate will be kept informed of project delivery.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. The closure of 28 buildings identified in this paper would yield a reduction in annual revenue costs of £1.3m, a saving in backlog maintenance costs of £3.1m and potential capital receipts of £7.3m.
19. There will be costs associated with the disposal of these buildings which will be met through existing devolved budgets or netted against the savings to be realised. These costs are estimated to be in the region of £500,000 (4% of the anticipated capital receipts and revenue savings) and will cover legal, marketing, dilapidation and external contractor support costs.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

20. Schedule 1, paragraph 14, sub-section 1 of the PRSRA 2011 provides for the PCC to do anything which includes by virtue of sub-section 2(b) acquiring and disposing of property including land.
21. In accordance with the Policing Protocol, while decisions relating to the operational use of police premises rest with the Chief Constable and those under his or her direction and

control, decisions relating to the disposal of assets held by the Police and Crime Commissioner rest with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

22. The Board is recommended to support the proposed closures.

Engagement Feedback

**Birmingham East** (Kings Heath, Sheldon, Billesley, Sparkhill)

**Comms Plan** included:

LPU Commander phoned the MPs from the affected constituencies and they feedback directly to him. The constituency Inspectors informed the councillors from the affected wards when the proposals were announced. Four weeks later they phoned them back and collected their feedback from discussing they were party to within their communities; Proposals were also circulated to KIN list and reported any feedback they sent back. They were also discussed with local IAG.

**Feedback received** included the following:

Letter sent to PCC by a local MP commented “that the closures would undermine the PCC’s attempts to keep as many officers on the street as possible” and that “even if the stations are not open to the public, they are part of the local community and are actively engaged with combatting crime and wrongdoing”. The MP did appreciate the savings that have to be made from the overall budget.

The LPU commander stated that the local MP did not feel the closure of Sheldon would have a major impact on the community.

Further comments were received<sup>1</sup> that suggested there was concern that the closure of buildings would see an end to neighbourhood policing and ease of accessibility to police officers and that the community weren’t fully sighted on what communication channels there were to contact local police, particularly where the local station may be. A plan, that ensured a base was in the area and that patrols were still visible and there was an opportunity to appropriately “respond to events”, should be in place.

**LPU response:**

The LPU responded to the feedback by providing an overview of the challenges faced and opportunities presented to the force, and our changing requirements based on a smaller workforce.

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<sup>1</sup>Local Councillors, Neighbourhood Watch, Residents association, KIN, IAG, Senior Ranger BCC

## **Birmingham North** (Castle Vale)

### **Comms plan** included:

LPU have engaged with key individuals, local MP, Councillors, CVCHA, Neighbourhood Manager, within the area. There were also discussions raised at the local Tasking Group.

### **Feedback received:**

Very little feedback or queries from the community other than re-assurance around what actual local re-provision will be in place post closure. The issue was also an agenda item at the local CVNPB meeting, and again there has not been any significant feedback.

### **LPU response**

LPU Commander responded by stating this would be clarified and communicated when confirmed and Local SLT met with CEO of CVCHA, and discussed various issues including possible deployment sites for police staff to work at during their tours of duty.

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## **Birmingham South** (Bartley Green, Kings Norton (inc Masshouse Lane Annexe), Longbridge, Warstock)

### **Comms plan** included:

LPU have engaged with local MPs, councillors and KIN and other key stakeholders.

### **Feedback received**

Feedback, from the community, around the closures of buildings has been negligible and the only questions asked were in relation to future of PCSOs and Neighbourhood policing.

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## **Birmingham West and Central** (Perry Barr, Handsworth West, Jewellery Quarter)

### **Comms plan** included:

Contact was made with the relevant people highlighted at NPT level as adjudged by the sector inspectors, in addition to relevant LCT contacts.

### **Feedback received** included the following:

- Jewellery Quarter

Local MP says local businesses require re-assurance about the policing that will continue and is happy to explore alternative sites/locations. A survey/questionnaire has been forwarded to people within the community to canvass their views on it. No results have yet been received and no timescales have been set for completion. There has also been an online petition via the Big Peg Twitter account with 92 signatures collected as of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.

A letter from a local business owner has also been received expressing a desire for the PCC to reconsider the decision to close Jewellery Quarter, ACC Lamour has replied advising that they should see no change in policing provision with the closure.

- Perry Barr

Local MP states they are not picking up concerns from local residents and they don't see it as an issue. Discussions with community, local councillors and partner agencies have centred more on when the move will take place not the closure.

- Handsworth West

Very little comment, with people asking more around the future of Thornhill Road not Handsworth West.

### **LPU Response:**

No specific feedback required on the basis nothing of any major concern was raised. Any conversations that needed to take place were conducted at the time the feedback was received as it was all face to face or telephone based conversation. The only issue that is a little different is the one re the questionnaire survey currently being done by the local MP which has not yet been finalised.

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**Dudley** (Dudley (inc 3 x car parks), Halesowen, Kingswinford, Netherton, Stourbridge)

**DY Comms plan** included the following:

The message went out to all MPs, Councillors, Neighbourhood watch, KIN and was made publically accessible via comms and social media

**Feedback received:**

- Halesowen

Local MP has created an online petition on their website with around 700 signatures and support from local traders. There have been some comments raised around policing numbers and access to neighbourhood teams not the closure of buildings.

Another local MP made contact the day after the announcement.

**DY response:**

Local MP spoken to and were resigned to the closures and the conversation spoke about the importance of focusing on the service remaining, rather than the buildings

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**Sandwell** (Tanhouse Centre, Windmill House)

**Comms Plan** included;

LPU has engaged with local MPs, councillors and KIN and other key stakeholders

**Feedback received:**

There has been no public feedback received on the closure of buildings within Sandwell.

**SW response:**

Local Commander stated they will provide formal consultation on any further closures as part of the wider discussions about neighbourhood policing in Sandwell once the local details of the Next Generation Local Policing project are known.

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**Wolverhampton** (Graiseley, Heath Town, Oxley, Pennwood Court, Staveley House, Tettenhall)

**Comms plan** included the following:

MPs were spoken to by Local Commander, as well as Ch.Exec and LA Director of People. The Leader of the Council was also briefed. KIN letter was sent to all Councillors, KIN, NHW Coordinators and all Local Police and Crime Board members.

**Feedback received** included the following:

Local MP states they will be “campaigning with their constituents to WMP to keep police bases open”. Local councillor stated that the new funding formula means that WMP should now “be able to keep those stations that were earmarked for closure”. (This new funding formula has subsequently been scrapped and any changes to the funding formula will be delayed for at least a year).

Some other comments in relation to cuts but not about building closures have been put on social media.

Outer Neighbourhood Inspector has had no significant level of feedback albeit inevitably people will say it’s a concern and not ideal.

**LPU response:**

Local MP spoken to by Local Commander and they certainly understood the logic and rationale. Similarly the opposition lead had a couple of comments in the local media however no other response has been received.

WV LPU ran a Local Police and Crime Board in early November and the issue of station closures did not come up from any of the community, voluntary or political reps in the room.

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**Solihull** (Balsall Common NPT base, Shirley)

**Comms plan** included the following:

Meetings and email communications were had with MPs, key Local Authority stakeholders, Councillors and elected members and the KIN. Also the issue was part of the agenda at key Partnership and Strategy boards.

**Feedback received:**

The following responses have been received. A director from Solihull BID, asked “ is there any lobbying the BID can do”. They were also concerned around possible reduction in response times.

A local councillor expressed concern more around police cuts and not closure of buildings, whilst a local Associate Pastor, was happy to discuss “the Bridge” as a possible “hub” for the police to use when needed.

**LPU response:**

Local pastor was met by local Supt and it was agreed the “bridge” would make a suitable touchdown space for officers although only accessible 4 days a week.

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**Proposed Buildings Closure Timeline**

Location	Target Date – Leased	Target date – Freehold
Tanhouse Centre	January 2016	
Netherton		January 2016
Heath Town	January 2016	
Merridale Ct. Graiseley	February 2016	
Oxley	March 2016	
Pennwood Ct	March 2016	
Staveley House		March 2016
Canterbury Road		May 2016
Castle Vale		July 2016
Bartley Green	August 2016	
Dudley		August 2016
Balsall Common	December 2016	
Kings Heath		January 2017
Halesowen		January 2017
Windmill House		February 2017
Tettenhall		February 2017
Sheldon		April 2017
Warstock		April 2017
Handsworth West		April 2017
Stourbridge		May 2017
Longbridge		May 2017
Shirley		May 2017
Kings Norton		June 2017
Billesley		June 2017
Kingswinford		July 2017
Sparkhill		July 2017
Perry Barr		August 2017
Jewellery Quarter	March 2018	