

Strategic Policing and Crime Board

20 March 2018

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Building a Modern Police Service

Title: Estates Programme 2018

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PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the board with an update of the paper submitted on 20 February 2018 on West Midlands Police Force's proposals for a new Estates Programme.
2. This paper is for discussion, with a decision point for the Police and Crime Commissioner due.

BACKGROUND

3. The WMP Estates Strategy review recommendations were presented to the board on 20 February 2018. A 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.

THE NEW ESTATES STRATEGY

4. The new strategy will delivery several benefits. These include:
 - Supporting increased partnership working with other organisations allowing for cash savings to be delivered by the force and other organisations
 - A fit-for-purpose, modern, flexible estate supporting operational policing
 - The provision of improved working conditions for WMP staff
 - Delivery of buildings to support specialist new requirements such as Firearms and a new Event Control Suite

- The potential to release land which could be used for community benefits, including residential housing
 - New and refurbished sites will lend heavily on the flexibility and efficiencies afforded by the New Ways of Working approach applied to Lloyd House, Bloxwich and the New Custody Blocks
5. In delivering on the strategy, the approach will be to support the WMP operating model, not drive it, retaining ten Public Contact Offices (as per the current arrangements) and locating Neighbourhood policing at the heart of the community. This includes the continued provision of Public Contact Offices in Sutton Coldfield and Solihull.
 6. The new Estates Strategy follows on from the previous 2015 strategy which sought to reduce the amount of non-core buildings within WMP, the review itself being borne from the WMP2020 Blueprint.
 7. The report to board in February 2018 set out that the existing estates strategy now requires an update; following the earlier reduction of a number of smaller properties and the NWoW modernisation programme, this refresh will focus on supporting the operational policing model defined by WMP2020. Refreshing the Strategy now also provides the opportunity to look again at WMP's estate cost base with a view to considerably reducing the on-going cost of maintaining the police estate and also consider options for maximising receipts to enable investment in local policing, whilst ensuring there is wider value to the West Midlands. Social value will be an important consideration in this project, through appropriately utilising surplus properties in partnership with other organisations, whilst ensuring value for money is obtained.

SURPLUS ESTATE

8. The new revised strategy will mean there are 24 sites that are no longer needed by the Force to deliver policing across the West Midlands. Coupled with improved running efficiency of the refurbished retained estate the disposal of these sites is expected to show a reduction in annual revenue costs of £5m which includes an estimated outlay of lease charges for partner estate. The sites that determined to be surplus are detailed below. Some of WMP's larger police buildings have occupancy rates between 10 and 30 percent. Therefore the current arrangements are an inefficient use of public money. The sites that determined to be surplus are detailed below.

NPU	Site	NPU	Building	NPU	Site
BE	Acocks Green	BW	Digbeth	DY	Sedgley
BE	Balsall Heath	BW	Handsworth	SH	Solihull
BE	Kingstanding	BW	Harborne	SW	Oldbury
BE	Shard End	BW	Nechells	SW	Smethwick
BE	Sutton Coldfield	BW	Quinton	SW	Tipton
HQ	Edgbaston	CV	Canley	SW	Wednesbury
HQ	Prouds Lane	CV	Foleshill	WS	Aldridge
HQ	Princip Street	CV	Willenhall (Chace Ave, Coventry)	WV	Wednesfield

Table 1: Sites deemed no longer needed to deliver policing

9. A number of future sites have been designated 'New Build', 'Rebuild', or 'Enhance' according to the level of activity required to deliver them; this is outlined in Table 2.
- **New Build** Sites will involve purchase of land and the erection of a new building
 - **Demolish & Rebuild** are retained locations where the existing building is life expired or cannot be appropriately repurposed
 - **Refurbishments & Enhancements** (inc. *New Ways of Working* - NWoW) are retained locations that require refurbishment – the extent of refurbishment varies according to site. These may attract little building work

NPU	Property Name	Future state	NPU	Property Name	Future state
BW	Bournville	New build	BE	Moseley	NWoW
CV	Willenhall (Coventry South) TACT	New build	BE	Stechford	NWoW
DY	Brierley Hill	New build	HQ	Ladywood	NWoW
BE	Erdington	Rebuild	HQ	Ridgepoint House	NWoW
BW	Newtown	Rebuild	SH	Chelmsley Wood	NWoW
CV	Coventry Central	Rebuild	SW	West Bromwich	NWoW
Ops	Park Lane site	Rebuild	WV	Wolverhampton Central	NWoW
BW	Summerfield	Enhancement	SH	Winchcombe Road	Enhancement
CV	Bell Green	Enhancement	WV	Low Hill Sector	Enhancement
Ops	Dog Training Centre	Enhancement	WV	Bilston	Enhancement

Table 2: Building schedule for Rebuild, New-build and Enhancement (inc NWoW)

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

10. An engagement exercise has been co-ordinated through Neighbourhood Policing Units. Information packs were prepared including FAQs and an overview, and a letter to send to local contacts to encourage feedback.
11. During the engagement period stakeholders were asked their views on the outlined proposals.
12. The engagement exercise was an 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. Queries raised are being addressed, locally, by senior officers, but may require additional communication to ensure clarity and rationale of strategy.
13. During the detailed planning for individual building solutions, further local engagement with partners, stakeholders and the local community will be undertaken.
14. NPU Commanders have not expressed a need to review the overall plan following the feedback received as a result of local engagement.
15. A summary of the engagement feedback is shown at Appendix 1.

ESTATES PLANNING

16. The initial planning has produced a 6-year plan, ending in 2024 (see Appendix 2 for estimated delivery dates). Each location will have its own agreed detailed implementation plan which will include ongoing engagement and communication.
17. In planning the programme, a number of different contributors have been considered, these include:
 - Local Operational requirements discussed and agreed with NPU Commanders
 - Buildings Lease-end dates
 - Other WMP change programmes
 - Estate and Legal timeline considerations
 - Experience from WMP building projects, including new Custody blocks, Walsall and development of Lloyd House
18. Buildings earmarked for closure may be used as decant locations whilst current existing locations are refurbished/rebuilt.
19. The overall strategy will not have a detrimental impact on the service currently provided.
20. Occupancy of the estate continues to be reviewed to align to any developments to the operational model.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

21. West Midlands Police will keep the public, our partners and staff informed of the process via a communications plan. This plan will ensure that the public are sighted on future changes to the police estate and are engaged prior to disposals.
22. Partners across the West Midlands will be briefed on the plans and opportunities to work collaboratively, so as to maximise efficient use of joint estate. Staff and internal users of the estate will be kept informed of project delivery.
23. As detailed in this report, after consideration by the Board on 20th February, there has been a period of public engagement, co-ordinated through Neighbourhood Policing Units.
24. During the engagement period stakeholders were asked their views on the plan. There was an opportunity to comment on perceived service impact and to offer ideas around service provision.
25. During the planning to be undertaken by WMP to vacate a property, engagement will take place to identify any opportunities relating to social value. The disposal of any WMP property will be undertaken only after specific sign-off by the Police and Crime Commissioner, once he is satisfied that opportunities for social value have been explored and police presence has been protected.
26. The current WMP estate has a number of memorial plaques, gardens and dedicated rooms. As part of a planning process, the programme will contact families and interested parties in order to deal with these locations sensitively in a manner similar to that undertaken for Lloyd House.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

27. The releasing of the 24 buildings detailed in this report and improved efficiencies of the future retained estate identified in this paper coupled with an estimated outlay of lease charges for partner estate would yield a reduction in annual revenue costs of £5m, a saving in backlog maintenance costs now significantly in excess of £20m and potential capital receipts of £44m. Any costs associated with the disposal of these buildings will be met through existing devolved budgets.
28. The release of buildings and extensive refurbishment/re-build of the remaining estate, together with the effective elimination of the current backlog maintenance will have a net cost of approximately £56m. The programme will be funded from a combination of earmarked reserves and additional long term borrowing. As at March 2017, the usable reserves for the force were £94m. In comparison to similar size forces the West Midlands currently has a very low level of borrowing.
29. Decisions on borrowing will be made in line with the Treasury management strategy which is considered annually by the Joint Audit Committee and timed to achieve the lowest rate available. The current long term borrowing rates (i.e. 50 year) are at 2.61%. The annual revenue cost of borrowing will be factored into the WMP medium term financial plan and offset against the reduced property running costs.
30. In addition, discussions are taking place in relation to funding and costs relating to the Commonwealth Games in 2022, in particular in relation to the building of a new Event Control Suite (ECS).
31. This estates strategy is designed to pay for itself, with a payback period estimated at 12 years. The revenue savings realised by this programme will be used to preserve Police Officer Numbers. Capital cost outlay will not impact on the protection of 100 officer posts.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. Schedule 1, paragraph 14, sub-section 1 of Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 provides for the PCC to do anything which includes by virtue of sub-section 2(b) acquiring and disposing of property including land.
33. In accordance with the Policing Protocol, while decisions relating to the operational use of a 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

34. The Board is recommended to note the proposed strategy ahead of a decision point for the Commissioner.

Appendix 1 INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

WMP's approach was to ask NPU commanders to engage with local MPs, councillors, community contacts etc. to ensure awareness of the strategy and invite comment. Summarised comment by NPU is shown below.

Engagement material was shared widely with contacts including elected MPs and Councillors, partner agencies, community contacts, Information Advisory Groups (IAGs) and Key Individual Networks (KINs).

Points that have been shared during engagement include:

- The intention to provide alternative, and/or improved, public facing offices
- Buildings are under-occupied, are not fit for modern day policing requirements and are expensive to run
- There will be improved Partnership working with other agencies, such as Councils, Fire and NHS
- Neighbourhood officers will remain local, working more efficiently and effectively with partners in a co-located building
- There will be dialogue with the Local Authorities and other partners to consider alternative options of co-location
- Enhanced mobility capability will allow more agile working/ deployment

Solihull NPU

Proposed closure of Homer Road has caused a significant level of discussion, with concern at the potential loss of the building. This was also debated in Parliament.

When the rationale is explained, many tend to say they understand why building closures are necessary and would like to focus on positive outcomes.

Councillors and Members of Public who are opposed to the closure of Solihull have commented:

- Concern about absence of the building at Solihull, lack of notice and consultation
- Concerns about rising crime
- Feeling of vulnerability
- Where will officers be based? – will it take longer to respond
- Will there be no buildings in the south as Shirley also closed – concern at where the nearest station would be
- Queries about the length of the engagement period

Dudley NPU

There has been very little returned during this engagement, mainly community comment at the closure of Sedgley.

Sandwell NPU

No direct negative comments about the closures of the buildings has been received.

Walsall NPU

- Emails received from a local MP and a local Councillor
- The MP has raised additional questions which are being addressed by the NPU commander
- The Councillor has raised concerns regarding Police visibility in the town as well as questions around response times and the future status of buildings. The NPU Commander is addressing these points

Birmingham NPUs (BW and BE)

Comments have been received from Councillors and MPs reflecting:

- Opposition to closures, particularly Acocks Green and Quinton
- Concern at loss of visible presence of Police and Police buildings
- Requests for a public meeting to discuss concerns over the closure of police buildings
- Concern for use of former police building post disposal
- Support for the use of Castle Vale police building for housing
- Discussion about the provision of a Public Contact Office at Sutton
- Concern for elderly and vulnerable citizens and those without internet access.
- The potential to explore opportunities for different ways of working – officers more accessible locally
- Concern about closing buildings without clearly communicating how citizens can access neighbourhood policing

Wolverhampton NPU

- One MP raised disappointment in the short engagement period and believes a period of consultation should be held
- There is concern at the closure of Wednesfield Police Building with associated negative impact on residents and degradation of service
- The MP has begun a survey of residents with a large proportion opposed to the closure. A series of questions have been posed that will be addressed by the local Commander in a meeting with the MP
- A councillor stated that they remain unhappy with a local closure and concern that it takes police even further away from the public

Coventry NPU

There is a general empathy towards the police and the financial constraints that the force faces however there are concerns regarding the closures.

- Several partner agencies feel they have seen the police numbers drop dramatically; to reduce the number of police stations in addition to this, would lead to reduced trust and confidence between the police, partner agencies and our communities
- Concern that the loss of Willenhall (Cov) Police building will be felt by partner agencies and the community
- A desire to retain a city centre location for the main police building and front office to offer reassurance, advice and support for people most in need
- Concerns over Coventry's custody provision, in terms of capacity and transportation and Officers time
- Several partner agencies have asked for the ability to input into the decision making process

Appendix 2 Target Building Release Dates

NPU	Building	Planned Release		NPU	Building	Planned Release
BE	Acocks Green	Late 2020		CV	Canley	Spring 2019
BE	Balsall Heath	Autumn 2019		CV	Foleshill	Spring 2023
BE	Kingstanding	Spring 2019		CV	Willenhall (Chace Ave, Coventry)	Spring 2023
BE	Shard End	Late 2020		SW	Oldbury	Early 2020
BE	Sutton Coldfield	Late 2020		SW	Smethwick	Summer 2021
BW	Digbeth	Summer 2021		SW	Tipton	Summer 2020
BW	Handsworth	Spring 2024		SW	Wednesbury	Summer 2022
BW	Harborne	Spring 2021		WS	Aldridge	Spring 2020
BW	Nechells	Early 2019		WV	Wednesfield	Summer 2020
BW	Quinton	Spring 2019		HQ	Edgbaston	Autumn 2021
DY	Sedgley	Summer 2019		HQ	Prouds Lane	Summer 2018
SH	Solihull	Late 2020		HQ	Princip Street	Summer 2021