

**POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR
THE WEST MIDLANDS**

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

NOTICE OF DECISION

[039/2021]

Contact Officer: Mark Kenyon

Telephone Number: 0121 626 6060

Email:

mark.kenyon@westmidlands.police.uk

Title: Estates Programme 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2018 an estates strategy was approved to deliver a police estate that was suitable for the future needs of West Midlands Police. Since the approval of the 2018 estates strategy there have been developments that required the strategy to be reviewed. This includes the introduction of the Police Office uplift programme that will result in an extra 1,200 police officers in the West Midlands and the COVID-19 pandemic that has required the Force to look again at its estates requirements.

A review of WMP's estates strategy was undertaken by the Chief Constable and the results of the review were presented and discussed at the Strategic Policing and Crime Board (SPCB) in September 2021 and November 2021. The respective reports are included as background papers to this decision.

At the September 2021 meeting the Chief Constable presented the principles detailed below that have been used to review the estates strategy. A key priority of the Commissioner as detailed in his Police and Crime Plan is to rebuild community policing. This means local neighbourhood teams being located within or as close as possible to the communities they serve which is line with principle 2 below.

Principle 1	We will continue to provide locally accessible Public Contact Offices
Principle 2	Neighbourhood teams should be located in or very close to their communities. Where we can share a site with partners this should be our preferred option
Principle 3	Our emergency response services need to be located so that they can meet our urgent requests for help
Principle 4	We seek to create a specialist high density custody estate to improve detainee safety, efficiency and support modern services to investigate crime
Principle 5	We have resilient command and control locations (Force Contact Centres)
Principle 6	We aim to support a safe and healthy workforce

Principle 7	We aim for a modern learning approach and estate to support this
Principle 8	We will co locate strategic policing services with national partners where possible
Principle 9	We require high quality estate to meet forensic regulation requirements
Principle 10	We will seek best value when disposing of surplus estate, having tested alternative uses for unwanted sites
Principle 11	We will deliver modern, efficient, flexible, agile accommodation

I am supportive of the above principles. In addition, as part of the estates programme, I expect WMP to use all reasonable endeavours to provide specialist facilities for children held in police custody, to ensure they are fit for purpose and suitable for the needs of children. This should include, but not be limited to, proper consideration of what form such facilities could take at the new Coventry custody site, in consultation with the OPCC and young people, and also proper consideration as to whether WMP could co-locate with specialist children's support or therapeutic services in those locations where children may be kept in police custody.

Also, in relation to principle 10, I require WMP to give proper consideration to social value when disposing of surplus estate. Therefore principle 10 requires amending to read as follows:-

We will seek best value when disposing of surplus estate, having tested alternative uses for unwanted sites and giving proper consideration to wider social value, including crime prevention and/or reduction.

The paper considered by SPCB in November 2021 included the Chief Constable's recommendations for each individual building across the estate. The recommendations are based on the above principles and will be delivered through a combination of new-builds, refurbishments, co-location with partners and disposals. The aim of the programme is to deliver a fit-for-purpose, modern, flexible estate supporting operational policing into the future.

The introduction of the 2021 estates strategy will result in the occupancy levels of police buildings increasing and the running/maintenance costs of the Force estate will reduce. This will maximise the resources available to retain and employ police officers.

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.

All individual changes to the estate will only take place following individual decisions by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Commissioner will only consider the retention of any police building designated for disposal by the Chief Constable if the following 5 tests are met: community support; operational policing need; value for tax payers' money; central government provision of the necessary designated investment; and a guarantee of no loss of front-line police officers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The sale of buildings indicated and improved efficiencies of the future retained estate identified in the SPCB papers in September and November 2021, still project a reduction in annual revenue costs of £5m, a reduction in backlog maintenance costs of in excess of £24m and potential capital receipts in excess of the 2018 quoted figure of £40m. Any costs associated with the disposal of these buildings will be met through existing devolved budgets. The release of revenue savings from the estates programme will maximise the resources available to retain and employ police officers.

The programme will be funded from a combination of capital receipts from site disposals, earmarked reserves and additional long-term borrowing. Decisions on borrowing will be made in line with the Treasury management strategy, which is annually reviewed by the Joint Audit Committee and timed to achieve the lowest rate available.

The release of buildings and extensive refurbishment/re-build of the remaining estate, together with the effective elimination of the current backlog maintenance was to have a net cost of approximately £56m in the 2018 strategy financial model.

However, the delay of over 18 months caused by the pandemic means that costs will be inflated more than originally planned. There will also be lease charges for particular estate which will be dealt with on a case by case basis. More detailed analysis of individual site costs against the affordability envelope will be undertaken as each project is approved.

DECISION

Authorise the implementation of the estates strategy as set out in the September 2021 and November 2021 Strategic Policing and Crime Board reports. This includes the principles as amended by this decision paper. Further individual decisions will need to be made by the Police and Crime Commissioner in regards to the disposal of particular properties. In addition, decisions could include renewal of particular leases, investing in buildings, purchase of land and the purchase of buildings. This decision is in accordance with Schedule 1, paragraph 14, sub section 1 of the Police and Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. This provides the PCC may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of a commissioner, which includes by virtue of sub-section 2 (b), acquiring and disposing of property including land.

Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in this decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for the Police and Crime Commissioner of the West Midlands. Any interests are indicated below.

Signature:



Date 23/11/2021

Background Papers

SPCB - Estates Strategy Review 2021, 21 September 2021

<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SPCB-28.09.21-Agenda-Item-6-Estates-Strategy-Review-2021.pdf?x52165>

SPCB - Estates Strategy Review 2021 – update, 23 November 2021

<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SPCB-23.11.21-Agenda-Item-5-Estates-Strategy-Review-2021-update.pdf?x52165>