

## HAMPSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

### Report

<b>Date Considered:</b>	4 October 2013	<b>Item:</b>	7
<b>Title:</b>	Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire – Estates Review		
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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide Panel members with further detail of the Commissioner's estate: the drivers for and outcome of the Estates Review announced by the Commissioner on 22 May 2013; progress since the Commissioner's announcement; and next steps to provide an estate that best supports the operational requirements of Hampshire Constabulary, community safety and policing.

#### 2. Contextual Information

- 2.1 Upon taking up office, on 22 November 2012, the Commissioner inherited an estate comprising of some 140 freehold and leasehold sites. The estate programme had been subject to a full review in 2007 by the previous policing governance body and a number of subsequent adjustments.
- 2.2 At the end of 2012 the Estate Development Programme comprised the following major projects, anticipated to be delivered over a period of around five years.
- a. The relocation into suitable accommodation at the heart of the community of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT), from police stations already scheduled to close.
  - b. 4 new Police Investigation Centres (PICs) providing modern custody units.
  - c. Alpha Park – originally purchased in 2008 as a large police headquarters but subsequently planned to be used for co-location of a number of force-wide units.
  - d. Provision of a modern headquarters building in Winchester for a small HQ staff (Mottisfont Court).
  - e. The re-provision of Eastleigh police station on a part of the existing site.
  - f. Major and minor maintenance and refurbishment work to a number of police buildings including Alton, Basingstoke and Netley.
  - g. Continuing disposal of a number of police stations, from small former police houses no longer required, to the planned major disposal of the current HQ site at West Hill, Winchester.

- 2.2 The estimated cost of this investment programme as at late 2012 was some £83 million; no revaluation of the whole programme was done in 2013 although costs are likely to have increased.
- 2.3 In January 2013, taking into account comments made by partners and members of the public about the overall programme and certain key elements such as the cost of the planned major redevelopment of Alpha Park, the Commissioner announced a strategic review of the estates investment programme he had inherited to ensure that it supported the future operational needs of the police in the most cost-effective way.
- 2.4 At its meeting on 5 July 2013, the Police and Crime Panel took a paper on the headline outcomes of the estates review and asked for further information to help with the transparency of the Commissioner's decisions.

### **3. Approach to and recommendations from the estates review**

- 3.1 The review took as drivers for change the following factors and developments since the last major estates review in 2007:
  - a. The Police and Crime Commissioner's agenda of reducing offending and re-offending, restorative justice, and of working more closely with partners on these strategies.
  - b. Recent joint partnership working and office-sharing with other public sector partners, especially Hampshire Fire and Rescue (HFRS), Hampshire County Council (HCC), and Thames Valley Police.
  - c. Developments in smarter working including mobile working allowing more effective space utilisation.
  - d. The impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review including on police numbers, reducing the overall space requirements
  - e. Reductions in other public sector numbers that was increasing the over-provision of public estate across Hampshire more generally, and the consequential availability of good-quality partner estate.
  - f. The increased importance, given the likelihood of future reductions in public spending, of protecting investment in front line policing, especially by minimising or removing any requirement for long-term borrowing for estates investment.
  - g. The Chief Constable's revised operational requirement.
- 3.2 Taking account of these factors, the following sets out the main recommendations of the review, progress since the review, and next steps:
  - a. The review concluded that the programme to embed SNTs within the local community, already started, should be continued and if possible accelerated. This programme, drawing in particular on partner accommodation, has the potential to improve the visibility of SNTs within communities as part of the agenda of reducing offending and re-offending, and to deepen partnership working with other community-facing organisations. It allows those stations that no longer serve the operational

needs of the Constabulary to be sold and receipts reinvested into the estates programme.

Since May the project team has been strengthened to allow the programme to be concluded within 18-20 months and to increase community and stakeholder engagement on the plans. Work is well in hand on each of the moves.

- b. The review concluded that plans to replace the majority of existing custody cells by building new PICs had merit. The objectives of closing very old blocks expensive to maintain and of co-locating investigation units with custody provision remains valid. It is not possible to use partner accommodation due to the specialist statutory requirements for custody. However, the review concluded the scale of build, which would have increased the number of cells available, would risk over-provision (as has happened in other constabulary areas) and did not reflect the Commissioner's emphasis on reducing re-offending and restorative justice. Therefore; the review recommended the programme should be scaled back to two new PICs, the first at a site already identified on the edge of Basingstoke off the M3 and the second in the Portsmouth area (site yet to be identified). Together with custody at Southampton Central and some other relatively up-to-date custody blocks, this scaled-down new build programme would meet the operational requirement and avoid the risk of nugatory spend. Further research should be carried out into crime and arrest trends as a firm basis for further decisions about the longer-term number and location of existing custody units.

Since May 2013 plans have been progressed at Basingstoke with the submission of a pre-planning application, and work has been commissioned to engage with and allow the local community to have their say in the detailed plans for and delivery of the PIC. Contractor engagement is in hand through the formal tender process.

A possible site for the second PIC has been identified in the Portsmouth area, off the M275, but needs feasibility testing and will be subject to price and contract negotiations. The outcome of the work on the Portsmouth area PIC may have implications for existing police land and property in the area, which will be worked through in due course. In the meantime the closure of the Southsea police station has been put on hold.

- c. The review concluded that given the merits of partnership working and sharing, it should no longer be an aspiration for the police estate to be entirely or largely freehold owned. Instead, other than in specialist cases such as the PICs, the default option in considering options for re-provision or major refurbishment should be to review the availability of good quality and cost-effective partner accommodation.

This principle has been applied to the previous plan to build a new police station at Eastleigh. Co-location with Hampshire Fire and Rescue in their Eastleigh HQ is instead the preferred option, providing a significantly more cost-effective solution than the previous plan to build a new station in the car park of the existing police site.

Similarly, the plan to redevelop the Alpha Park site was reviewed from first principles. The review concluded that while there were some advantages to co-locating units with a force-wide responsibility on one site (eg ICT and vehicle servicing), these were not sufficient to merit the significant up-front redevelopment cost (estimated at over £15 million). Following testing of the current and future operational requirement, the estates review concluded the units earmarked to move to Alpha Park could either stay in their current locations or move to other police/partner accommodation. West Hill and Eastleigh police stations could still be vacated and sold, and other, leased accommodation could be released in due course. Work on refining the longer-term options for the dozen units in question is still in hand and staff will be consulted once this work has been carried out.

- d. The review concluded that all necessary refurbishment work should be tested against smarter working principles to maximise space utilisation. As part of the estates strategy review a detailed examination was carried out of the refurbishment work at Mottisfont Court and Alton police station. This has allowed the scope and cost of the work to be reduced at both sites. Figures for this work and other work can be provided once contracts have been let; to provide figures in advance would risk achieving best value for money.
- e. The review concluded that the over £40 million gap in funding in relation to the previous estates programme that had planned to be filled through long-term borrowing could be eliminated. The balance between the cost of the revised investment programme on the one hand and the combination of disposal receipts and revenue savings on the other hand should be kept under close review through rigorous contractor negotiation, good marketing, and keeping further rationalisation options open including in discussion with partners on accommodation sharing. Since May it has been agreed that discussions should take place with partners on a cost-sharing model, drawing on the agreement reached between HCC, HFRS and Hampshire Constabulary in relation to sharing accommodation in the HCC HQ in Winchester.
- f. The review did not examine the existing disposals programme in detail but concluded it should be pursued with the twin objectives of making rapid progress while achieving the best price for the constabulary for re-investment in the estate. Alpha Park should be added to the disposal list, which would bring major disposals to some 25 sites. The review noted that the 'community right to buy' has potentially added an element of delay into the timing of disposals.
- g. The review concluded that deeper partner engagement should be a priority for the new Estates Strategy and Delivery Director, to seek to align estates requirements to best effect and achieve best value for money for the constabulary and taxpayer. Engagement with HCC is already strong and should extend to area-based strategy work in key locations for the constabulary, for example in the Portsmouth, Southampton, Basingstoke, Winchester, New Forest, and Isle of Wight areas.

- h. Finally, the review concluded that this programme of work should be delivered within four years. Critically, it would be important to stick to the plan to avoid slippage and cost over-runs which had in the past resulted from constant re-examination and changes, but it should also be recognised that this represented the first phase of a long-term estate strategy. Further phases would need to be sensitive to changes in the external environment, underpinning research on the operational need, and developments with partners.
- 3.3 As recommended by the review, the financial model for the programme continues to be based on the principles of the programme being as far as possible self-funding from receipts and cost-savings coupled with the use of the constabulary's 'transformation' reserve especially for short-term cash-flow adjustments. Cost figures for the individual elements of the programme are commercially sensitive while contract and sale negotiations continue as revealing specific figures for the overall programme and its key elements at this stage could jeopardise best value for money; once negotiations are concluded figures can be publicised.
  - 3.4 An Estates Strategy and Delivery Director has been recruited and took up office on 23 September 2013.
  - 3.5 A map showing the key estate sites across Hampshire and Isle of Wight is at Annex A.

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None