

## **Briefing Note on Estates Strategy (Including Custody Provision)**

### **Background**

This briefing note is to provide an update to Police and Crime Panel members on the development of a new estates strategy for Devon and Cornwall Police. It includes the current position in relation to the review of custody provision and the Police and Crime Commissioners own security of this area of work.

The existing strategy covers the period to 2030, however, it is essential that this key strategy remains current to the direction of travel.

### **Summary**

The Police and Crime Commissioner as a corporation sole owns all of the policing estate across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The arrangements for the management of the estate functions also rest with the Commissioner (which is not the case in other PCC areas) in that the estates team is line managed by the OPCC Treasurer and accountable to the Commissioner.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is responsible for occupation in 146 buildings located across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This covers 88 freehold, 40 leasehold and 18 co-location opportunities with partners. Over 6,000 Devon and Cornwall Police (DCP) officers and staff colleagues, occupy these safe, secure and accessible buildings, delivering a range of critical Policing services to our communities and partners.

The estates portfolio comprises a wide range of different types of buildings:

- our overall headquarters site in Exeter, which includes a police college and accommodation, one of our contact centres, a firing range, dog training facility, sports hall and a wide range of office and meeting facilities
- we have a two operational county headquarters, one at Exeter and one at Bodmin which provide overall leadership support, public enquiry offices and a range of specialist policing functions. Our site at Exeter also includes a new custody facility build as part of the £29 Million development of the new Exeter Police Station.
- We operate a separate contact centre from one of our Plymouth buildings.
- There are numerous police stations right across the two counties and islands, 27 of which have public enquiry facilities.
- The estate portfolio includes a state of the art records management facility; four vehicle repair workshops, six custody centres, discreet and covert buildings and officer training locations. We also own regional assets as part of our shared services arrangements for specialist regional capabilities such as forensics laboratories and regional and organised crime services.

- We also hire buildings and locations for specific training needs or to run specific legal processes such as misconduct panels on an ad hoc basis.

Each year we spend approximately £13m to £14m capital funding on improving the estate and our annual revenue cost is £17m. One of our biggest challenges is the age of the estate with over 79 % of our estate being over 20-years-old. Whilst we aspire to replace all of our buildings with newer more modern facilities, this is cost prohibitive and the costs of businesses rates for new buildings is not cost effective. Policing does not receive any capital funding from the government.

We are currently in the process of refreshing our estate strategy and intention to provide more focus on the immediate needs of the estate as well as setting out a road map for future development over the next twenty five to thirty years. We believe this will be best achieved by developing a framework under which a number of inter-related strategies will sit, as ultimately the estate needs to meet the operational needs of the Chief Constable and his team, be cost effective and be efficient for a service which covers the largest geographical policing area in the country with both coastal, rural and urban policing responsibilities.

## **Custody Provision**

Devon and Cornwall Police currently operates a six-centre custody model plus a small holding facility on the Isles of Scilly. This model is geographically dispersed across the two counties. The current custody suites form part of other police station facilities i.e. at police stations which have a front desk for public access associated with them. The six custody centres are:

- Exeter Police station (new build 2020)
- Torquay, Devon (50+ years old)
- Plymouth (Charles Cross), Devon
- Barnstaple – temporary planning permission and location with custody provision through a Wernix temporary solution, Devon
- Newquay, Cornwall (50-60 years old)
- Cambourne, Cornwall (50-60 years old)

There are resourcing challenges associated with maintaining all six custody centres in the medium and long term to ensure that they remain compliant with custody standards. The current staffing allocations do not allow the system to operate at capacity (and as a consequence most of the custody centres are never fully occupied) and they close their doors to new detainees when risks out way staffing capabilities.

The Commissioner has made £1m available for custody centres during 2025/26, with a further £500k per annum thereafter, just to maintain compliance. However, recent estimates suggest that these compliance costs will be in excess of the funding allocated.

In order to better understand all of the pressures on this area of business there are two parallel pieces of work underway. The first is piece of work supported by PWC looking at the costs and operating models of the current custody provision which is due to report back in late 2025. The second, is a piece of scrutiny work being led by the OPCC looking into

detainee safety and welfare provisions, and the equity of these provision across the whole of the custody estate. This is due to report back in a similar timeframe.

There are of course other sources of information in relation to custody and the Police and Crime Commissioner operates an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme which provides regular oversight of this area of work.

If Panel members have a particular interest in the custody provision and some of the variances across the two counties then we can arrange a site visit to one or more of the custody suites for them to see firsthand what happens within a custody environment.

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