

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

7 SEPTEMBER 2022

ESTATES STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Recommendation

1. Members are invited to note this report.

Background

2. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) published his Draft Estates Strategy on the 27 April 2022. The Strategy was informed by engagement with senior officers in West Mercia Police and sets out plans for the police estate over the coming years to support and enable the best possible policing services for communities.
3. An online survey consultation was launched alongside the draft Strategy and closed on the 11 August. The purpose of this survey was to provide local communities and the wider police force within West Mercia the opportunity to have a say on the proposals set out in the Strategy.
4. A range of communication tools were used to promote the consultation to communities across West Mercia. A number of press releases were issued for the consultation, these were shared on social media via the West Mercia PCC Facebook and Twitter pages. Regularly issued PCC Newsletters also highlighted that the survey was open. The survey was also promoted internally within West Mercia Police, with all staff encouraged to submit their views via the survey.
5. Press releases were covered by a number of media outlets and generated some correspondence from concerned members of the public about the proposals to close some police buildings. For example, the proposed closure of Dines Green, Worcester led to correspondence to the PCC and received local media coverage.
6. In total, 197 responses were received from the online survey.
7. West Mercia Police submitted a separate response offline providing a comment on every current operational police building. The force response was generally supportive to most of proposals but made further comments on Dines Green, South Wye, the Northern Hub and Wellington.

Summary of findings

8. The first question asked if the proposals in the Strategy would make it easier to access police services. The majority of respondents disagreed (56%) with this whilst 41% agreed.
9. When asked whether it was important that savings made on police buildings would be reinvested back into operational policing, over half of respondents (53%)

agreed. Around 30% disagreed.

10. The majority (78%) agreed that police and partners should work together where possible to achieve good value for money.

11. 51% of respondents did not feel reassured that police stations would not be closed until an alternative had been provided and agreed with the community, whilst 33% did.

12. More than half (56%) of respondents agreed that it was helpful to know about the core principles underpinning decisions made about the estate, with only 11% of respondents disagreeing.

13. The last two questions provided respondents the opportunity to give further comments in a free text box.

14. The first free text question asked if there was anything further relating to the PCC Estate Strategy that respondents wanted to highlight. It should be noted that a number of the comments referred to more than one theme and that there is a degree of subjectivity in the interpretation of each comment.

15. Key points identified from responses are listed below;

- a. A lack of clarity around the new Northern Hub including where it would be located and how it would service and impact policing for residents.
- b. Buildings not being fit for purpose due to being run down or at capacity.
- c. Closure of Dines Green, South Wye and Wellington police sites. Concerns relate to the impact removing police stations could have on local crime and anti social behaviour (ASB) levels, and perceptions of safety for communities.
- d. General comments were made around the need for police to be visible and accessible in local areas.

16. The second free text question asked *'How do you think I should be prioritising the resources I have available'*? Common themes are listed below;

- a. **Police visibility and accessibility** - most comments relating to the need for greater police presence and more police stations/ front counters.
- b. **Estates** - comments relate to buildings no longer being fit for purpose or being in a state of disrepair and keeping police stations open.
- c. **Resources** - these comments cover a number of different topics but relate to using budget efficiently, location of officers/staff and IT systems.
- d. **Crime** - a number of comments reference specific crime types, namely CSE, Drugs, ASB and community crime.

Next Steps

17. The PCC is currently reviewing the feedback from the consultation and will engage further with West Mercia Police around operational requirements.

18. Feedback from the consultation will be used by the PCC to inform any amendments to the draft Estates Strategy prior to its publication.

Contact Points for the Report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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