

Police launch strategy to develop sustainable property estate



Police Scotland has set out a strategy to develop a sustainable, modern and demand-led property estate that enables excellence of service to communities.

The Scottish Police Authority at its board meeting on 22 May, approved the Estate Strategy 2019 which sets out their intention to increase community bases for local officers and to identify more opportunities to co-locate and collaborate with key partners.

The estate is a key component of Police Scotland's infrastructure. It is where officers and staff work and the Estates Strategy is clear that it must be fit-for-purpose and reflect and support the workforce who often have to deal with the most traumatic and challenging of events. The strategy sets out a commitment to create working environments for staff and officers that are compliant, secure, comfortable, modern and well maintained. The well-being of staff is central to future design requirements.

Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr said: "Our buildings are

among the most visible symbols of police presence across Scotland and provide significant points of public reassurance and contact. Our workspaces are also vital for the wellbeing of our officers and staff.

“At the heart of this strategy is a transition to a modernised, demand-led and co-occupied estate where we can work most effectively with partners in, for example, other blue light services, Local Authorities and other justice agencies.

“It also supports our plans to enable officers to spend more time out in communities, such as the roll-out of mobile devices.

“This Estate Strategy offers an unprecedented opportunity for Police Scotland to deliver something fundamentally different and innovative, but less expensive and more effective, for our people and for our communities across Scotland.”

The Estate Strategy highlights the limitations of Police Scotland’s current building portfolio and capital budget.

DCC Kerr added: “Scotland’s policing estate has been built up over the course of several decades and has suffered from a historic lack of investment, as well as poor investment decisions.

“Some buildings are no longer in the right place, operationally fit for purpose or designed in a way which allows us to work alongside key delivery partners.

“Our capital allocation challenges are well rehearsed and we have a duty to invest in the right areas to achieve as much as we can. As this strategy shows, doing nothing is not an option.”

The strategy outlines an intention to re-invest a further £150m worth of sales back into Police Scotland buildings as

part of the £400m investment required.

While setting out Police Scotland's long-term strategic plans, the document does not identify specific buildings for disposal at this point. Any specific proposals will be subject to further Divisional consultation and engagement with local communities and key stakeholders.

The Strategy outlines that Divisional Commanders will take the lead in their own Divisions to plan and shape the future local and national estates in conjunction with National functions and the Estate Transformation Team. From that planning exercise, we will have prioritised Divisional and National Plans that will inform our annual budgeting cycles, with a number of prioritised projects expected to commence from as early as 2020/21.

Delivery of the Strategy will be a long-term programme of work, and continued availability of funding, combined with the maturity of co-location opportunities with partners, will dictate the scale and pace of change.

Deputy Chief Officer, David Page said: "At the same time as delivering our estate transformation, we will remain committed to on-going prioritised building improvements and lifecycle maintenance across our existing estate to ensure it remains in a compliant, habitable and reasonable condition for our officers and staff."