

MSP suggests moving the police into Victoria Quay

Ben Macpherson MSP wrote to Justice Secretary Angela Constance on Thursday following the session just ahead of First Minister's Questions.

He had not had the chance to put his own question to the Cabinet Secretary with his suggestion that if the Scottish Police Authority go ahead with the closure and sale of Leith Police Station the best alternative site would be The Scottish Office at Victoria Quay.

This would have followed the query put by Sarah Boyack MSP for Lothian who asked what discussions Ms Constance has had with Police Scotland about the potential closures.

Ms Constance replied that any specifics are the responsibility of the Chief Constable Jo Farrell, but added: "Police Scotland's 2019 estate strategy outlined plans to replace outdated, underinvested and underused properties with modern ones so that it could develop modern premises that are capable of delivering effective and efficient public services to meet the needs of the people and staff who use them.

"We are supportive of that and I agree with Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham, who said that the presence of policing in communities

"is not defined by buildings but by the officers and staff who work there".

“Co-locations often make the best use of the public sector estate and offer the opportunity for increased visibility, closer working and increased collaboration between partners. Police Scotland has more than 60 examples of successful co-location.”

Mr Macpherson's said that the government has been criticised for the under-utilisation of the building, and points out he has made previous suggestions about using Victoria Quay for “the wider needs of the public”.

But if the police moved into part of Victoria Quay as a new home for local police officers to work from, Mr Macpherson writes is that it is modern, would improve public services and would make financial sense. The base would mean that police officers would work from a building used by other services which is often seen as a benefit in practical and financial senses.

The Scottish Police Authority outlined proposals last month to sell off some of the premises which it owns but does not use enough to justify the cost. The authority wants to close 29 police stations and has asked the public for their views. There are five stations earmarked in Edinburgh – Leith, Balerno, Fettes HQ, Portobello, and the West End.

Read more about those proposals [here.](#)

