

# Estates Strategy 2021-31



**Cheshire  
Constabulary**



**Police & Crime  
Commissioner  
for Cheshire**

# Foreword

**We welcome the development of the estates strategy which over the next decade will see the police estate develop to service the needs of the public of Cheshire and appropriately support the officers and staff of the constabulary.**

The Estates Strategy sets out how the Commissioner and the Chief Constable will work to ensure Cheshire has fit for purpose facilities which are required to deliver effective operational policing, are connected to communities and which house support functions suitable to serve the public. That they are provided in a way to support policing and enhance community engagement.

It aims to deliver an estate which will be more efficient and of lower cost to run, which is flexible enough to respond to the developing service requirements of the local community and to contribute to increasing public confidence in policing. It will allow the Constabulary to maintain and improve high quality services, improve effectiveness, ensure good value for money and an efficient use of resources. It demonstrates the constabulary's commitment to minimising our environmental impact in line with HM Government Road to Zero Strategy, and the constabulary's Environmental Strategy 2021 – 2031.

The strategy underpins the commitments we have laid out within the Police and Crime Plan and the constabulary's policing strategy.

The Estates and facilities service is here for the front-line, and this strategy is very much a statement of that continued support.




**Mark Roberts**  
**Chief Constable**



**Dan Price**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**

# Rationale



A well planned Police Estates Strategy provides the solid foundation essential to the provision of safe, secure and high-quality policing across Cheshire for the next decade until 2030. There is no doubt that the demands for policing and the way we support and protect our communities will change hence the reason why we need to take a long term overview of police estates matters and aim to develop an estate that is truly fit for purpose.

The ambition in this strategy is to relocate to more efficient premises where deemed appropriate in terms of operational requirements, optimal revenue costs, public access and environmental efficiency. There are no plans to close police stations without first securing alternative provision. This may be with partners or stand alone, and may potentially release some buildings in the medium term. Where this does occur then we will assess the best way to maximise the resale value of our buildings to allow for reinvestment within our service to maintain frontline policing.

# Benefits of a long-term Police Estates Strategy

A fit for purpose long-term Police Estates Strategy will provide the following benefits:

- Premises developments that support the delivery of our Plan On A Page (POAP) and the police and crime plan.
- The provision for safe, secure and appropriate buildings.
- The provision of high quality policing environments which may aid staff wellbeing, morale and retention.
- An estate which is in the optimum locations to provide an effective Police service to the public of Cheshire.
- A clear commitment towards complying with sustainable developments that meet environmental requirements and support social value.
- Deliver a modern, cost effective estate which maximises the use of space and minimises revenue spend.
- An opportunity to re-invest resources tied up in surplus and / or poorly used assets back into policing.
- Where appropriate co-locate and collaborate with partners to maximise the One Public Estate.



The Police Estates Strategy aims to set out how the Commissioner and the Chief Constable will work to ensure outstanding facilities are developed to support our people in making Cheshire even safer.

# Core principles of Police Estates Strategy

There are four key principles that underpin the delivery of this Police Estates Strategy to enable Cheshire Constabulary to develop a totally fit for purpose estate over the next decade.

The **four** key principles are:

01

**Police Estate that is Fit For the Future:**

to provide estate that is operationally effective and responds to the changing demands of modern policing, embracing digital and agile working, whilst supporting the wellbeing and health of the policing workforce

02

**Police Estate at the Heart of and Connected with our Communities:**

to support our commitment to neighbourhood policing through strategically placed estate that supports our officers and staff in the delivery of outstanding service to the public of Cheshire.

03

**Police Estate that Promotes Effective Collaborative Working:**

to enable the Constabulary to locate alongside key partners on a shared 'one public estate basis', thus promoting more joined up and effective working and enabling benefits from economies of scale.

04

**Police Estate that is Economic, Efficient & Sustainable:**

to deliver an estate which will be more efficient and of lower cost to run, release financial resource back into policing on the basis that any investment will be on an 'invest to save' basis and ensuring that we meet targets for eco-sustainability. The existing construction of the estate buildings will limit the environmental improvements that are possible. Where stations are replaced we will aspire to provide zero carbon replacement buildings.

# Police Estate of the future

Predicting future trends in policing and crime can be very difficult over a longer period. Consequently a number of assumptions about the future have to be made and any Police Estates Strategy will need to have a degree of flexibility to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and facilitates excellent policing in Cheshire. In developing this Police Estates Strategy we will have regard to the following assumptions:

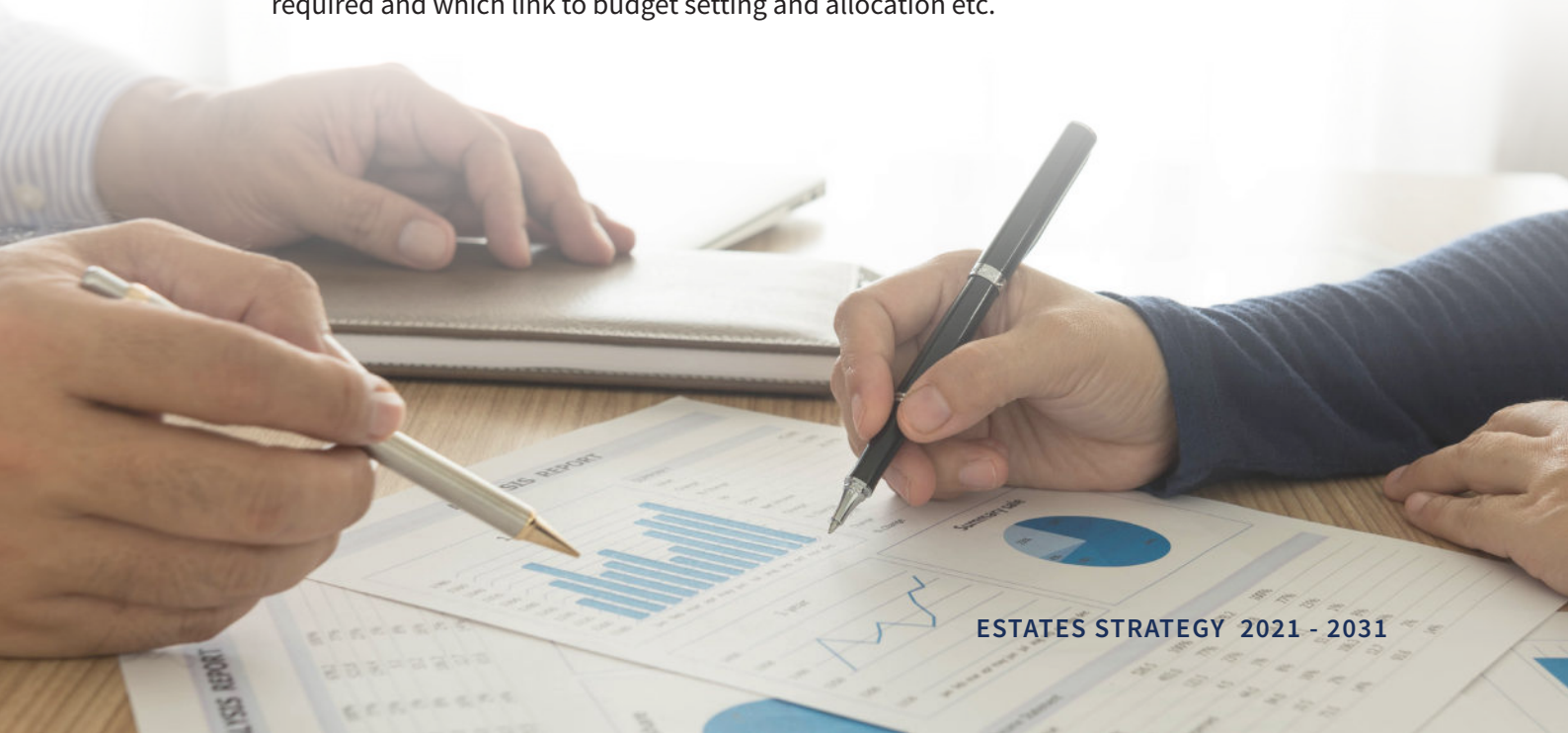
- Due to demographic changes **demand** is likely to continue to rise, and the public sector will need to continue their work together to invest in upstream preventative approaches.
- **Neighbourhood policing** will be firmly embedded and tailored to meet customer need with colocation of relevant public sector services on a 'one public estate basis' supporting a joined up approach to community issues.
- Due to continued technological advancements and digitalisation, crime is likely to change in its make-up with a greater volume of **cyber** and **social media related crime**.
- **Digital policing** will make it easier for the public to contact the police wherever they are, enabling policing to be more agile, flexible thus potentially reducing the amount of police estate floor space required.
- Our **Specialist Capabilities** will be better prepared to respond to emerging crime types. Decisions on how capabilities and collaborative services are to be positioned and structured will take into account the need to rapidly protect communities and the vulnerable as well as potentially reducing the need for traditional policing base.
- **Existing police stations**, which in many cases are failing to meet our needs, are likely to be very different, both in potential location and structure, thus requiring a concerted transformation programme to bring up to the desired state and condition.

The demands placed on the estate continue to evolve, particularly as demonstrated by the corona virus pandemic, which has been a significant challenge. It has forced greater thinking about the opportunities that can come from flexible working.

# Delivery of the Police Estates Strategy

The Police Estates Strategy will be managed by the Estates Department on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This Strategy will be effectively project managed to ensure delivery focused around a number of different work streams and programmes that enable the PCC to achieve the key objectives of the Strategy. These programmes, which enable us to get where we need to be will be totally interconnected and will focus on:

- **Effective Strategic Planning:** Whereby we review all the Constabulary Estates, identify options and prioritise delivery based on need and projected need over the next decade, underpinned by a 'one public estate' approach which leans towards effective collaborative working.
- **Investment** in specialist resource to oversee development and implementation of strategy, all costs being incorporated into the Police Estates Capital Programme.
- Significant **Consultation** with public on shape of policing over next decade.
- Devising a **Capital Investment Programme** for minor and major schemes.
- Conduct a full **Asset Review** of all existing estate against agreed parameters to help prioritise work streams and collate an inventory of site and building disposals and anticipated sales.
- Compile site based **Development Control Strategies**.
- Plan and deliver the **Police Estates Development Programme** on a systematic basis, which is carefully regulated, managed and governed to ensure it meets the needs of our communities, workforce and financial constraints and is ultimately fit for the future. **Annual Estates Delivery Plans** will be produced which focus in detail on the key tasks required and which link to budget setting and allocation etc.



# Governance and finance

All elements of the Police Estates Strategy will be subjected to our rigorous governance process; initially through the Constabularies Senior Command Team for operational efficiency and effectiveness and through the joint OPCC-Constabulary Management Board chaired by the PCC for overall approval.

Overall Police Estates Investment programmes will be cost effective and over a long-term financial cycle, any investment being made with the aim of securing value for money and supported by a business case which demonstrates this. Details of any medium term-investments will be detailed in the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan) and reviewed through the OPCC-Constabulary financial monitoring systems. The following financial assumptions will underpin the Police Estates Strategy:

- The Police Estates Strategy will enable 'cashable' utility revenue savings to be made through a modernised, energy efficient, and rationalised estate within the next five years.
- Capital generated will generally be used to invest in police estates developments; however, this will be subjected to review against the objectives of the Constabulary Capital Programme overall.
- Borrowing to fund police estates improvements will be undertaken at the most preferential rates available where this leads to efficiencies or return on investment.
- Capital investment in shared assets will be subjected to robust due diligence and where possible any significant risks mitigated against.
- The Police Estates Strategy will enable greater non-cashable efficiencies and performance due to improved productivity and retention.



# Current position

The previous Police Estates Strategy period saw a move to single deployment bases in our eight local policing units supporting established patterns of demand and forms of victim contact, and allowing for the geography of our areas. These deployment bases are supported by a range of public contact facilities and community bases with partners. Since 2016, efforts to widen access to police buildings and ensure that communities can feel connected to their police such as the recent expansion into 122 community contact points across the county supported by locally based PCSOs have been well received. The process of improving the general estate in conjunction with our partners, under our Blue Light Collaboration initiative has also begun with the joint police and fire local estates facilities at Poynton, Frodsham and Birchwood having opened.

This mix of accommodation, close to our local communities, supports the Police and Crime plan and is complimented by the environmental strategy.

The estate utilised for policing Cheshire currently consists of 37 owned properties, alongside our community bases. The key operational deployment bases (LPU's) are separately shown below.

LPU Deployment Site	No. of Sites	Use	No. of Sites
Chester (Blacon)	1	Police Station Bases	16
Crewe	1	Dog Unit	1
Ellesmere Port	1	Air Support Unit	1
Macclesfield	1	Custody Suites	3
Northwich	1	HQ	1
Runcorn	1	Police Houses	1
Warrington	1	Telecommunications Site	1
Widnes	1	Training (Probationer, Firearms & Public Order)	1
Congleton	1	Underwater Search Unit	1
		Interview Suites	1
		Motorway Post	1

**Of the sites occupied, ten are leased and one is a PFI.**

The estate currently consists of 37 buildings, some of which date back as far as the 1900s. The value of the estate owned by the Commissioner at March 2019 was £118.2 million (asset valuation on a rebuilding and replacement basis). The revenue budget associated with operating the estate is currently £8.01 million (£12.22m less £4.2m income). There are currently 16.35 full time equivalent members of staff employed to maintain and manage the estate.

In June 2021 Congleton Police station was designated as the 9th LPU. These 9 LPUs operate functionally in three areas, North, East and West of the county. The estate is being reviewed to ensure it supports the force operating model effectively.



There are a number of partnership arrangements in place which work well (including where partners occupy our buildings). We would seek to build upon these arrangements where appropriate.

The Local Policing Units (informed by a comprehensive mapping exercise ensuring maximum coverage for the county) are the foundations of the estate and the move to support these with smaller local bases and public contact points (122 community contact points) aligns with the policing model. This allows a focus for the Police Estates Strategy on high quality spaces that support policing, using a blend of physical space and mobile technology.

The creation of open plan environments and facilities to ensure that both buildings and IT mobile technology work in conjunction with one another in the single deployment bases has in some cases created underutilised space. Where this is the case the ambition would be to relocate to more efficient premises in terms of public access, operational requirements, optimal revenue cost and environmentally. This may be with partners or stand alone, and may release some buildings in the medium term. Where relocation is not possible, due to the current financial position, we would look to provide opportunities for our partners to make efficient use of any surplus space.



# Key milestones

## 2021 – 2022

- Complete estates strategy (2021 – 2031)
- Consult public on principles of Estate Strategy
- Develop brief and commence business plans for Phase 1 of the estate strategy (Northern area)
- Finalise options for potential redevelopment at Wilmslow Police Station

## 2022 – 2025

- Finalise Phase 1 of the estate strategy and commence programme of work (2022 – 2025)
- Develop Phase 1a of the strategy including planning and commence programme of work (2022 – 2025)
- Progress with the redevelopment of Wilmslow Police station site. (2022 – 2025)
- Develop brief and commence business plans for Phase 2 of the estates strategy (Eastern area)

## 2025 – 2030

- Finalise Phase 2 of the estates strategy and commence programme of work (2025 – 2030)
- Develop brief and commence business plans for Phase 3 of the estates strategy (western area and HQ)

## 2030 onward

- Finalise Phase 3 of the estates strategy and commence programme of work (2030 – 2033)

# Links to other strategies

The Police Estates Strategy will clearly deliver significant outcomes around the Constabulary Estate; however it is important to note that this strategy cannot exist in isolation as there are impacts on workforce reform, customer contact, responsiveness and financial planning. This strategy will be developed and intrinsically linked to these other strategies moving forward to ensure that outcomes and impacts are maximised.

Linked strategies include:

- Environmental Strategy
- Fleet Strategy
- IT Strategy
- Agile working Strategy



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