

# OFFICE OF POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

## ESSEX POLICE ESTATES STRATEGY

**PFCC**

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME  
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX





# FOREWORD

by **Roger Hirst**, Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, **Stephen Kavanagh**, Chief Constable

The **Essex Police Estates Strategy 2018-2023** describes our vision and ambition for the police estate for the next five years, reflecting our commitment to provide an effective and efficient estate that supports the work of the force across Essex at a local and countywide level and helps to keep our communities safe.

The very nature of policing – the changing demands of crime, the evolving investigative and scientific opportunities to help victims and indeed the changing types of crime being experienced by communities – means that policing must always be proactive and responsive for the communities it serves. The police estate too can never be a fixed asset and it must be fit for the purpose of policing today and tomorrow.

And if policing is changing then so too is the technology that makes a big difference in many aspects of our daily lives. Using technology better not only gives police more time to fight crime, it allows the force to be more efficient and reduces our need for physical space because officers are able to do more without returning to police



stations, being able to respond from within the community, where people need them to be. Even though we are now successfully increasing our numbers of police officers and volunteers, the focus on working in the community and within partnerships means we still have too much space, often of the wrong type in the wrong locations.

Most of this strategy won't come as news to people in communities across Essex. As Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable, we have taken decisions about the police estate that have at times been unpopular but they have been necessary to deliver more effective and

efficient policing for the communities we serve. We recognise the emotional and historical ties that bind many of our older buildings in to the communities in which they stand but we must balance that legacy with a responsibility to build a sustainable and modern estate for the future.

Our shared commitment is that the strength of Essex Police, and the first and best use for available police funding, is in its people and its operational capacity, not in buildings. To that end we have been moving out of the older and inefficient estate releasing funds for investment in our remaining estate and the new technology we need for the future.

Being visible and accessible across Essex remains a key priority and is a vital part of effective community based policing. We will continue to take a modern and collaborative approach to local activity, keeping operational police officers close to the heart of the communities of which they are part. We will do this through modern technology like the 'Mobile First' programme and working alongside partners through local community hubs. Making better use of partnership work with other organisations is essential because it is only by working together that we will solve some of the longstanding issues in society that we cannot tackle alone.

We already have some outstanding community hubs such as at Southend and at Tendring, providing space in the heart of communities from where we now deploy operational officers. Our recent location of

an operational police office to Brentwood Borough Council offices provides another example of working with local councils to bring policing into the heart of the community. Further opportunities will come with other local authorities and importantly through the joint governance of Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service under a single Commissioner. This new relationship is already accelerating collaborative opportunities and we will explore more of them. For instance, working together with our partners has attracted £100,000 of One Public Estate (OPE) funding to support the development of our estates collaboration projects between the emergency services in Essex. As we modernise facilities, the ability to reap the benefits of sharing space increases. Locally, regionally and nationally we are now

connected and collaborating in ways which would not have been possible only a few years ago.

Our role – as Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable – is to be effective and forward-thinking guardians of a police estate that is ready to meet the demands of the next generation and beyond, and to work for, not against, the people who work in it. It is to ensure that a countywide service is in place and that local communities have a local, visible and accessible policing resource able to respond to their local policing demands. And it is to make sure that we deliver as much funding to frontline operational policing as possible over pouring money into maintaining buildings that have long since ceased to be viable for the demands of modern policing. We believe this strategy will take us there.





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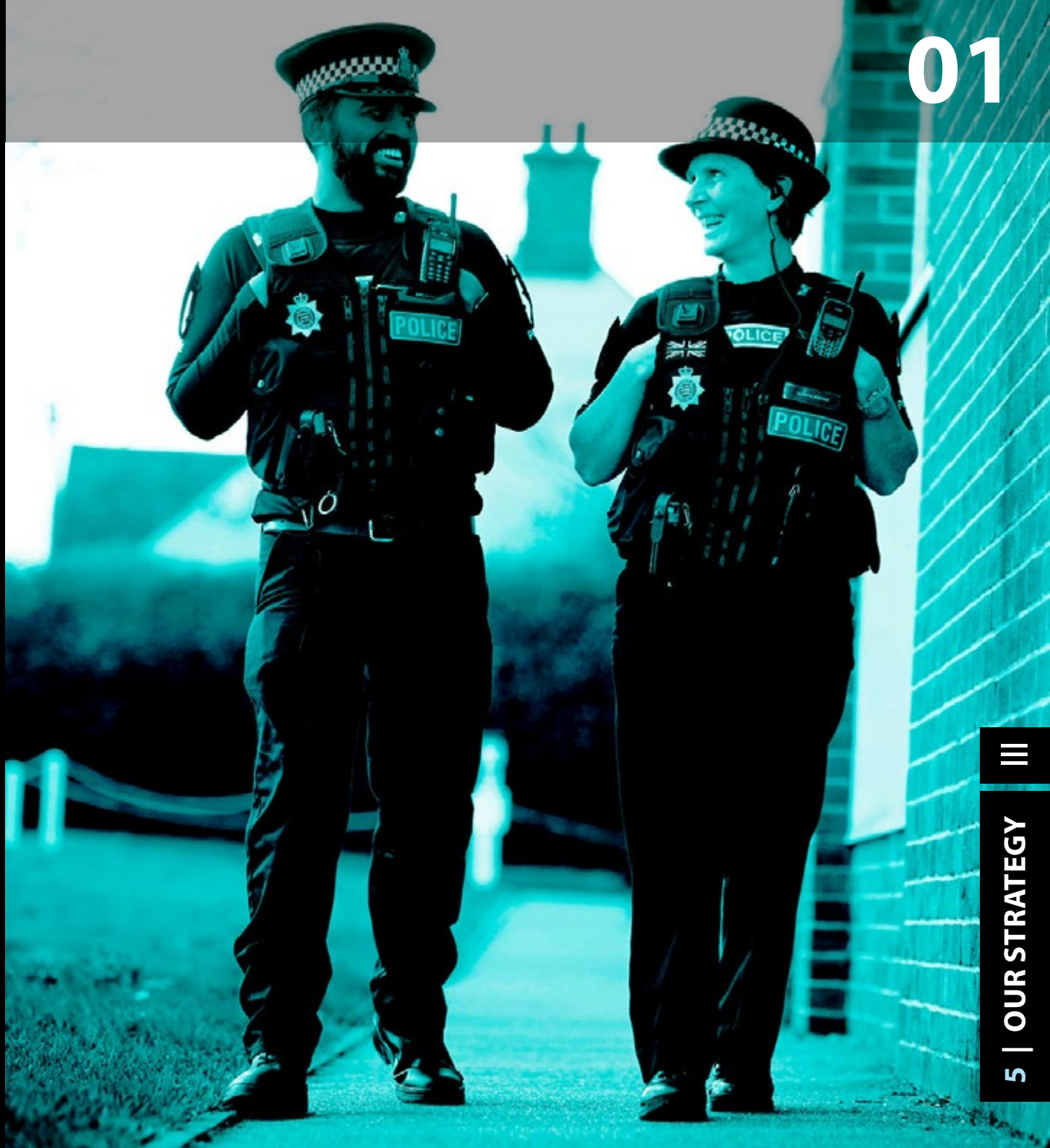


# OUR STRATEGY

Our Estates Strategy for the next five years, 2018 -2023, details how we will continue to improve our estate. It recognises the valuable work that has been undertaken in the past, acknowledges where we are now and sets out a direction for the future. It demonstrates how we will work to deliver the priorities set out in our Strategic documents.

**The Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020.** Priorities are: More Local, visible and accessible policing, Crack down on anti-social behaviour, Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse, Reverse the trend in serious violence, Tackle gangs and organised crime, Protecting children and vulnerable people, Improve safety on our roads

**Essex Police Plan on a Page.** Provides clarity on how Essex Police will prevent and solve crime, protect people from harm, bring offenders to justice and ensure the public are satisfied and confident in our service.



# OUR STRATEGY

## THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF OUR ESTATES STRATEGY

### Our core principles are:

- To support our commitment to communities to strengthen local policing and increase visibility as we make changes to our estate. We will ensure we take account of the additional numbers of police officers and volunteers we are currently recruiting with enhanced precept funding starting in 2018.
- To create an ambitious collaboration programme with emergency services and other partners that will enhance our ability to achieve service benefits and stretch our property performance targets for the efficiency of the estate.
- To be progressive in our application of agile working to maximise operational effectiveness and efficiency. We will build on significant recent successes to implement agile working in its many forms across all our services, whether delivered by police officers or staff.
- To provide accommodation that responds to the demands of modern policing, embracing the digital and cultural enablers that allow us to reduce our physical footprint.
- To drive improvements to the economy, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of our estate, releasing much needed financial resources for re-investment in the priorities of our police service.



# OUR STRATEGY

## HOW WE WILL DELIVER OUR STRATEGY

### We will do this by:

- Using the proceeds from the disposal programme, investing to improve our existing portfolio of police buildings. We will start with those buildings with the greatest need and which will deliver the best value and benefit for both the public and our police officers, staff and volunteers.
- Keeping a flexible approach to our portfolio. Our operational bases will change to reflect policing need and opportunities for sharing and collaborating with partners in the locations where we need to be. We will own properties where it makes sense and will look to share with partners where we can. The services provided will of course vary from site to site depending on the location and the police units working from the accommodation.
- Addressing high priority operational issues caused by the poor condition of the estate and the associated deteriorating resilience of the estate.
- Implementing a programme of agile working across the estate which supports our changing ways of working, delivering a further reduction in the size of the estate with a commensurate reduction in running costs and better use of space
- Applying strong risk management processes to manage the inter dependencies of the programme, and the time, cost and quality aspects of our programmes of change. We will be using a modular approach to change, setting a pace and scale of change to have a manageable operational impact and where possible we will use existing assets for development rather than purchasing sites or buildings.
- By continuing to implement a robust approach to the analysis of the priorities, costs and benefits of our investments, ensuring that any opportunities to 'invest to save' are fully explored. This will be delivered through the governance of our investment programmes.
- Incorporating energy reduction technologies in line with the Carbon Management Plan and continuing with investments to improve health and safety, security, equality and diversity.



# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF OUR ESTATE

This strategy is the first ever published estates strategy for Essex Police. The foundation of good asset management is sound knowledge of the estate and of the services to be provided both today and into the future. This enables us to determine our priorities for change to the estate that set a clear direction aligned with operational delivery. Options for change will include selling, keeping, replacing or procuring new premises, taking account of the affordability of the available options. The resultant change programmes will deliver the priority investment and divestment requirements of the estate.





# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF OUR ESTATE

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The daily experience of police officers and staff coupled with thorough technical and professional surveys in 2014 made it clear that our overall estate was in poor shape. It was neither fit for purpose nor cost effective to run and was poorly used. Ambitious proposals were prepared to sell many outdated sites with complementary plans for the re-investment in major retained sites and several new sites. While progress in disposing of outdated and redundant buildings has been good, scoping of the feasibility of major investment in new sites has so far been more challenging.

On that basis, all strategic proposals were reviewed in 2017 to achieve a more affordable, realistic and deliverable plan. That root-and-branch review has identified that increased focus on agile working across the police estate means more activity and more people can work better closer together, reducing the need for investment.

We have established our priorities for investment and have now prepared our investment programmes for the retained estate. Our priorities will all improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of policing.

### These priorities are:

- The creation of modern open plan working environments to support agile working practices with improved welfare facilities
- Addressing urgent health and safety issues
- Replacing failing building components to improve the resilience, cost efficiency and energy performance of our buildings
- Improving the current estate where it fails to meet the current minimum legislative and policy standards
- Estate rationalisation through better utilisation of space.



# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF OUR ESTATE

Our review of current proposals has determined that the appropriate way forward for the police headquarters site – representing in the force control room the force’s brain and in the memorial flag, stone, trees and force museum its heart – is to retain the site and invest in a consolidated headquarters with buildings redesigned to promote agile working and efficient use of space. The existing Essex Police college buildings will not be retained and instead training will be distributed across the estate and we will look to deliver some elements of training with partners.

This will achieve the long term reduction in running costs we need as well as raising capital from disposal of part of the site to help fund the refurbishment. The project will be more realistic, less disruptive, deliverable and better value for money while retaining important historic buildings and memorials associated with the story of policing in Essex.

Our first major investment will be at Chelmsford Police Station where we will transform a tired building with failing infrastructure into a safe, resilient police station fit for modern agile policing. Teams from police headquarters will be able to move there, hugely improving the current use of the premises and starting to free up space at headquarters helping to facilitate our plans for consolidation on that site.

We remain committed to our site at Boreham from which important operational policing functions are run and will look to purchase the freehold.

Our disposals plan remains in place. We will continue to dispose of the outdated and operationally less efficient sites. In the last 2 years Essex Police has released 12 buildings, of 3295 m2 and raised £8.8m capital for reinvestment. The revenue savings we have already made will amount to £1.2m over the life of this plan and with more to come, makes a significant reinvestment in front line policing. We continue to review our proposals for disposal as we develop our re-investment plans and plans for collaboration with partners.

Across the estate, in what continues to be a tight financial situation, Essex Police is making good progress in using their assets more efficiently. The Estates Programme has started to show significant benefits as old, outdated and operationally less valuable stations are released and capital is reinvested in modern facilities and enabling technology. This has supported a wider transformation within Essex Police, including the Mobile First programme, which helps officers to become more mobile. However, there is much more that we plan to do.



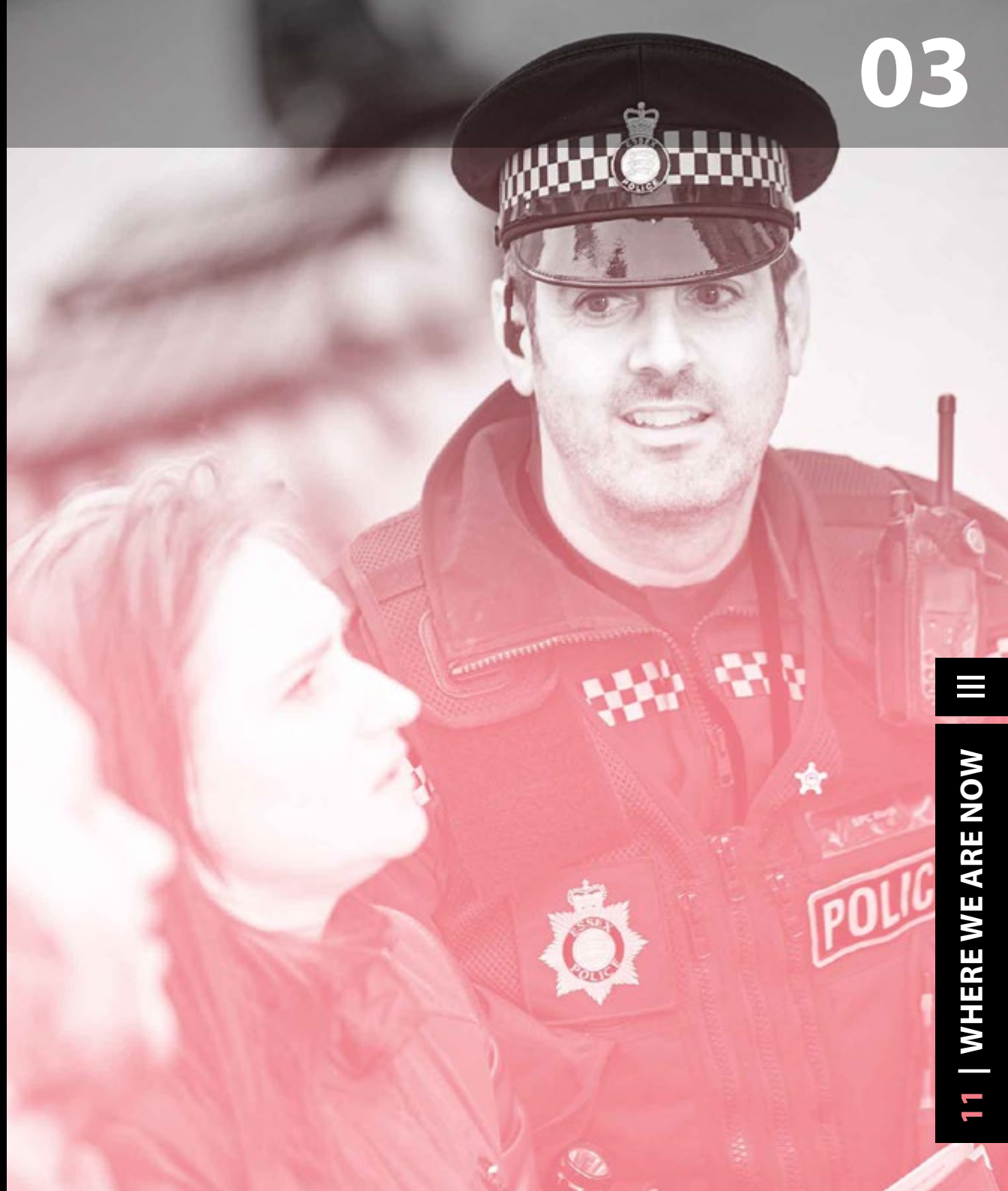


# WHERE WE ARE NOW

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## OWNERSHIP AND CONDITION

- At the end of March 2018, Essex Police holds 66 sites with 146 separate buildings. They have a floor area of 87500m<sup>2</sup> and a running cost of over £9m per annum. Most of our estate, 86%, is held in freehold, with 14% in leasehold. The asset value is £78m.
- We have a register of all the properties which we own, lease, hire or otherwise use and this is kept up to date which enables us to manage the legal issues arising from our occupation of our estate.
- We have condition surveys of all assets carried out in 2014, and have updated those for key sites in late 2017. There is a substantial backlog of maintenance works that has been identified and will need to be built into our capital programme over the next five years and beyond. We also hold all relevant health and safety data in relation to premises such as asbestos surveys and management plans.
- We subscribe to the National Benchmarking Scheme, organised by the National Police Estates Group (NPEG) which promotes better understanding of national performance and standards relating to Police Estates.



# WHERE WE ARE NOW

## SUITABILITY, SUFFICIENCY AND UTILISATION

Suitability is an assessment of how our accommodation meets the needs of the services to be delivered from them. This includes their locations and fitness for purpose. Utilisation assesses how much of the time our accommodation is used and sufficiency is an assessment of whether we have too much or too little of the accommodation we need.

- Many buildings across the Essex Police estate are not fit for purpose. Historically, police stations were constructed to a design which created a highly cellular environment and allocated desk space on a one-to-one ratio in a hierarchical manner. The result today is very low levels of utilisation, leaving many offices and desks vacant during most of the day as officers go about their duties. This is neither what we expect today nor what we can afford and where opportunities arise, we are moving away from the position. The advent of technology such as Mobile First means officers increasingly do not have to return to the station between calls and this trend will continue. These advancements present opportunities for a much more
- progressive approach to agile working across the force. To demonstrate the current and future potential benefits, we have developed a utilisation model which supports empirically the established view that our estate is still too large and that in future it will become even more so, despite the additional staff to be recruited over the next few years.
- The existing police headquarters in Springfield, Chelmsford, is an amalgamation of many different styles and types of construction. Some parts are in a poor condition, have very poor rates of utilisation and are not fit for purpose. The site costs approximately £1.8m per annum to run. As previously indicated, there has been an ambition to move away from the current Police Headquarters for a number of years, but it was only in 2016 that the organisation tested the feasibility of moving to a new location and disposing of the current site for residential development. Two options were tested, purchasing a green field site for building a new Headquarters and subsequently, building a new Headquarters and training





# WHERE WE ARE NOW

function at the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters at Kelvedon Park. Neither of these options has proved viable with the cost far exceeding the sale value of the site and the associated borrowing costs considered unaffordable. The site remains unfit for purpose in its current formation.

- Future designs of our office accommodation will produce more generic, flexible spaces. Our specialist accommodation connected with custody, forensics, specialist investigations, special operations or safeguarding, for example, will continue to have an element of specific design requirements.
- Our custody service remains essential to policing processes and investigations, however, some custody suites are old and increasingly expensive to maintain to a standard that meets national guidance for prisoner care and safety. We will carry out essential health and safety works in the short term, but more extensive changes will be undertaken in the long term.
- The site we occupy at Boreham is valuable to us in terms of its location and its flexibility for future uses. The accommodation will require some investment in the long term.

- Given the low levels of overall utilisation we have identified, there is still room to divest ourselves of more space and reduce running costs to reinvest in front line policing. We will therefore continue to review our plans for the disposal of properties and add or remove properties as our agile working and collaboration plans develop. All proposals to add or remove properties will be subject to a business case and governance process for doing so, reflecting the costs and benefits to the delivery of services.



# OUR FUTURE DIRECTION

**Our future direction is set out in our programmes for change.**

- **Our agile working programme.** This will promote a more cohesive and holistic working environment across the police force. It will underpin every project we undertake and is as much a cultural programme as it is an investment programme supported by clear policies and guidance. We are building confidence and compliance in agile working through the sensitive delivery and post project monitoring of pathfinder projects. For example, substantial operational benefits have already been realised in our move from Brentwood Police Station to Brentwood Borough Council offices in addition to the financial benefits we have achieved. This project provides a pivotal moment for the Essex Police in demonstrating the scale of what we can achieve.





# OUR FUTURE DIRECTION

- **Our estate strategy investment programme.** This will deliver projects based on the sound priorities we have outlined above. It will include business as usual i.e. capitalised maintenance projects for urgent building repairs and replacements, including general health and safety works. It will also include several major schemes, all of which are subject to further approval of stage 2 business cases.
- **Chelmsford Police Station.** At Chelmsford Police Station we will undertake remedial works to remove asbestos containing materials from within the building structure and carry out essential backlog building maintenance to mechanical and electrical services, lifts and the external fabric. We will also open plan the working space to create the environment for agile working. We commence work on this project in 2018/19.
- **Police Headquarters.** We will progress our plans for consolidation of the site during 2018. We will bring together the refurbishment of the west of the site and alternative provision for our future training facilities and establish the

value of the east of the site through the submission of a planning application. This will run alongside the remaining programme for finalising Chelmsford City Council's Local Plan for 2018-2036. The business case will be developed through this year with a view to making funding decisions for 2019/20 onwards.

- **Boreham Purchase.** This site is used by Operational Policing Command, Fleet Workshops and Force Support Unit. The site is leased, outside of statutory protection for business tenancies. Purchasing the site will enable us to invest in the site for our longer term needs and will reduce our revenue costs. The site, once in our ownership, will enable us to invest in the site to intensify our use for various specialist facilities. We commence negotiations for purchase in 2018.
- **Disposals reprovision facility.** This allocation allows us to draw down capital on a case by case basis to release premises within our disposals portfolio where there is a case to do so.

We will also bring forward a substantial scheme to address the required improvement in custody suites in the north and west of the County during the next year. We will also develop further schemes for more extensive agile working across the estate. Business cases for all these projects will be submitted in future years for consideration of capital funding and incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

# OUR FUTURE DIRECTION

- **Our business as usual investment programme**

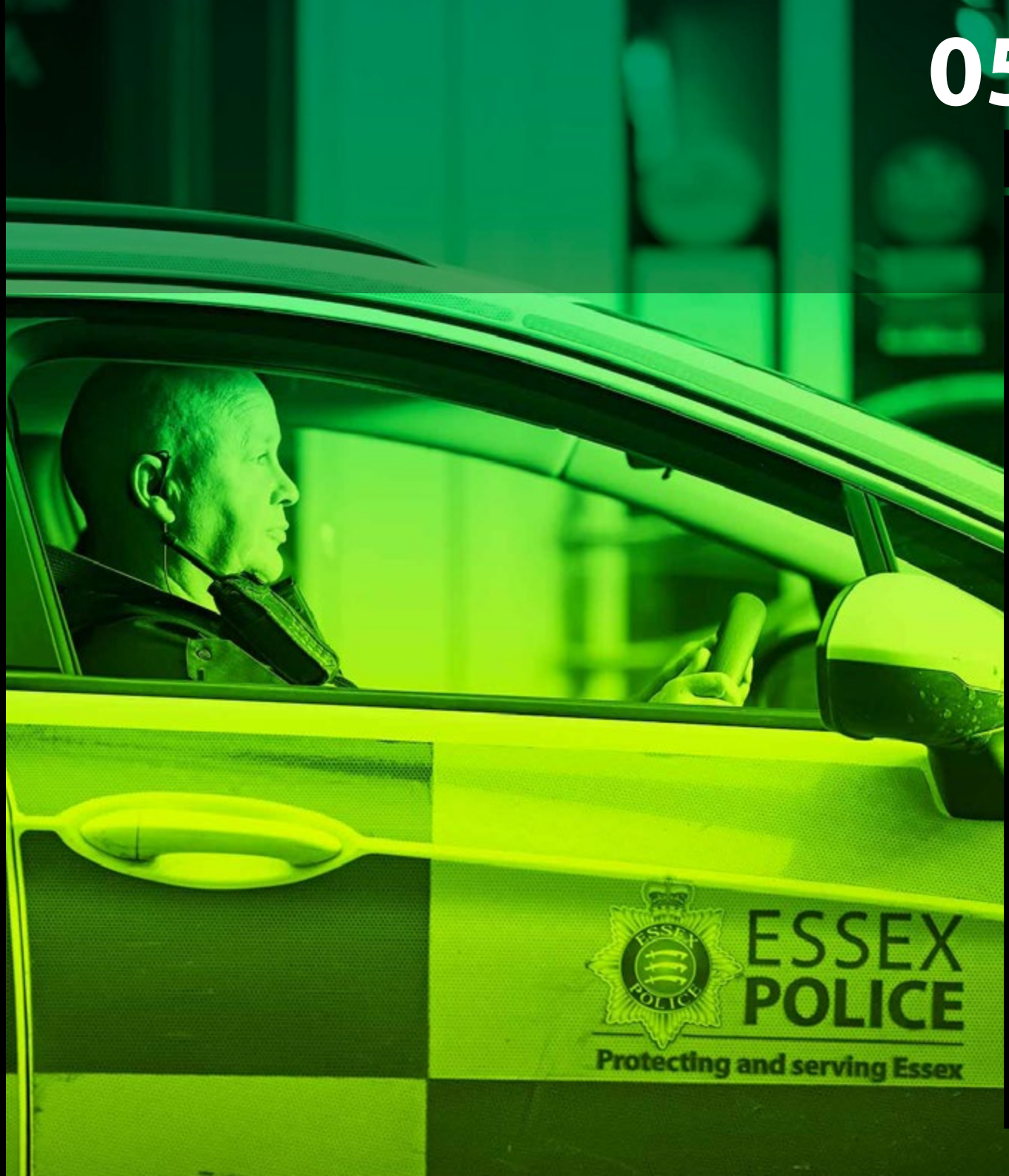
- We will invest in urgent works to address the most significant health and safety issues within our custody suites at Colchester, Harlow and Clacton. This work is approved for the 2018/19 financial year.
- Starting in 2018/19 we will invest in a 5 year rolling programme of replacement and upgrading of CCTV coverage within custody suites.
- To start addressing our backlog maintenance, we will allocate a sum each year for Capitalised maintenance to undertake major repairs and replacements at retained sites in accordance with the priorities highlighted within our condition surveys.





# GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

All elements of the Estates Strategy, including the programmes for change, have been subject to our governance process, through Essex Police Chief Officer Group for operational efficiency and effectiveness, and through the Essex Police Strategic Board chaired by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Projects starting in 2018/19 feature in the capital programme for 2018/19, subject to further approval at each stage of the development of the business case for investment. The overall Estates Investment Programmes for the period 2018-19 to 2022-23 are outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and are referred to in the Treasury Management Strategy.



# REVIEW

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This strategy will be kept under review and progress and amendments presented through the same governance structure on an annual basis.

