

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 015-21

Classification: OFFICIAL

Title of report: Stage 2 Capital Bid – Local Digital Media Hub, Colchester Police Station - Accommodation Upgrade for ISO Accreditation

Area of county / stakeholders affected: North LPA

Report by: Patrick Duffy – Head of Estates

Date of report: 11th March 2021

Enquiries to: Patrick.Duffy@essex.police.uk

1. Purpose of the report

This Decision Report seeks approval for capital investment into upgrading our Local Digital Media forensic analysis accommodation at Colchester Police Station, facilitating our ability to achieve ISO accreditation.

2. Recommendations

To proceed with investment of £36,500 of capital funding for the upgrade and re-location of our Local Digital Media forensic analysis accommodation, supporting our ISO accreditation assessment.

3. Benefits of the proposal

The proposal will support the force in achieving UKAS accreditation, ensuring that the force can maintain the ability to provide a Local Digital Media forensic analysis function that is accredited in accordance to the Forensic Science Regulator's (FSR's) Code of Practice and Conduct.

The proposal will secure compliance with the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice and Conduct and confirmation from the FSR that Essex's Local Digital Media function has met the accreditation standards required and can continue to practice providing a forensic function for Essex which supports evidence presented at court.

4. Background and proposal

Forensic science plays a vital role in the criminal justice system (CJS) by helping to identify victims, suspects and witnesses. Its proper use is therefore a critical component of an efficient system, in the delivery of justice and in public confidence in the CJS as a whole.

Given its importance, the Government committed to ensuring that appropriate quality standards are met across the system. In particular, the Forensic Science Regulator set out in 2014 the Codes of Practice and long-term timetable for organisations delivering forensic science to achieve accreditation to quality standards across various forensic disciplines. This included digital forensics, fingerprint comparison and crime scene examination.

The accreditation requirement has identified that alterations need to be undertaken to ensure the forensic analysis of digital media is undertaken within a controlled laboratory environment. The maintenance of accreditation relies upon UKAS, the auditing body, witnessing continual improvement by the force to achieve the technical standard in all operational Local Digital Media hubs.

A gap analysis has been undertaken of the existing accommodation identifying essential work required to support the UKAS accreditation, principally creating a separate laboratory environment with a separate viewing area for the investigating officer, in addition to increased space to allow for the increase of demand in this function.

The proposal is to invest £36,500 of capital funding for the upgrade and implementation of our Local Digital Media accommodation, supporting our ISO accreditation assessment due to be undertaken in May.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

Do nothing – If the project does not proceed, Essex Police will not have an accredited Local Digital Media forensic service which could result in forensic evidence presented at court being discredited and even inadmissible.

6. Police and Crime Plan

The proposal links to the following areas of the Police and Crime Plan: Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse; Reverse the Trend in Serious Violence; Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime, and Protecting Children and Vulnerable People from Harm.

This investment supports how we will work more efficiently and effectively, making the most of our resources.

The investment fits with the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan objective on Finance and Resources, with particular reference to *"Rationalise the police estate, making it fit for purpose for 21st century policing and drive out savings to reinvest back into local policing"*.

7. Police operational implications

There are no operational implications of this decision report.

8. Financial implications

The proposal requires one-off capital investment of £36,500 to ensure the accommodation is fit for purpose.

The proposal is within the Subject to Approval category of the capital programme for 2020/21 with capital funding allocated of £30,000.

9. Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this decision report.

10. Staffing implications

There are no staffing or resource implications arising from this decision report.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this decision report.

12. Risks

There are no exceptional risks around undertaking the proposal.

13. Governance Boards

- Chief Officer Group – 10th February 2021
- Strategic Board – 11th March 2021

14. Background papers

Stage 2 Capital Bid – OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Estate Strategy

<http://www.essex.pf.cc.police.uk/finance-reporting/publications/police-estates-strategy/>

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Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.


Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: 

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 17 March 2021

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer

Sign: .....

Print: Julia Berry.....

Date: 18 March 2021.....

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

However the Stage 2 Capital Bid is not for publication as it has been marked Official Sensitive

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet? YES
NO

2. Of Appendix? YES
NO


If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

The Stage 2 Capital Bid is not for publication as it has been marked Official Sensitive

Date redaction carried out: 18 March 2021

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: 

Print: Julia Berry

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 18 March 2021

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: