



Police and Crime Panel

21st September 2023

Investigative Hub Update Report

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Purpose

1. To provide panel members with an update in relation to progression of the Investigative Hub. Temporary Chief Inspector Meecham will provide a photographic presentation to Panel.

Background

2. A full chronology of the formal decision-making and queries raised at that time by panel members was presented by the PCC at the November 2022 panel meeting.

The need for change

3. Panel members will recall a report in January 2020 following a HMICFRS Inspection Report of Durham Constabulary Police Custody which outlined a number of improvements required including:
 - The force should agree and implement clear plans for the future of the custody estate with clear timescales for delivering these so that all detainees are held in a suitable environment and can have their needs appropriately met.
 - The approach to managing detainees' risks should be improved.
 - The force should improve its approach to detainee care.
4. The Panel have been kept up to date on the development for a new state of the art Investigative Hub including:
 - a. Custody Cells
 - b. Forensics
 - c. Interview Rooms
 - d. Evidence related property

Budget Update

5. The overall project budget remains within parameters set in November 2021 but the final account is yet to be agreed.

Construction Progress Update

6. The main contractor has recently advised that they expect a further 6-week delay, with practical completion and handover now scheduled for November 2023.
7. Within the main build, resin flooring is now applied to most of the required custody areas. The charge desk has been installed along with the bulk of the secure ceiling tiles. Work is now underway to finalise the final fix of the mechanical and electrical elements. The main first floor office area is approaching completion with final decoration and ironmongery work ongoing. The ancillary building, which will contain the entirety of the force Evidence Related Property (ERP) and Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) provision, is also approaching completion with work continuing again on final finishes.
8. From an exterior perspective, the vehicle exit and entry security gates are in the process of being installed, with landscaping work underway around the site. There is a 6- week fit out period provided to the Employer prior to handover and arrangements are currently in place for the force's ICT, furniture, and signage installations to take place in liaison with the contractor.

Operational/Business Change Progress Update

9. Work is ongoing to ensure that the custody element receives its required support in terms of contacts related to, amongst others- Appropriate Adult and Medical Provision. Liaison with United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is well established to ensure that the CSI facility obtains its required forensic accreditation which will allow it to occupy the premises as soon as is possible. The Estates and Project Team continue to progress issues such as training plans and schedules, operating practices, implementation of new shift patterns, property security and insurance, and work around the scheduling of furniture and ICT installation.

Social Value

10. The PCC was provided with the latest Social Value report presented by the contractor which confirms that the total social value achieved is £25.74 million to date, exceeding targets in all areas i.e Employability, responsible business, wellbeing, environmental and improvement.

NPEG/College of Policing inspection

11. The National Estates Group/College of Policing custody lead has conducted 3 reviews of the project with the most recent inspection in July 2023. Recommendations within the report are being reviewed and implemented. Overall, the report provided

reassurance in terms of compliance with the Home Office design guidance and included a favourable summary as follows:

A full physical review of custody was undertaken. Durham have adapted a well-utilised custodial design and engineered elements to support the local operational policing requirement. The layout, which includes natural light for staff, visitors, and detainees with a central charge desk hub, is well designed. The charge desk area is excellent, which maximises benefits for staff, visitors and detainees alike. The Spennymoor custody facility is a modern and well-designed 48-cell centre.

Summary

12. In Summary:

- The overall programme of works is being overseen by the force through a programme board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC). There is OPCC representation through the Chief of Staff at this board to maintain oversight.
- The building will deliver not only a state-of-the-art custody facility (including an increase in modern cell space to 48 cells with all the up to date Home Office safety requirements), it will also provide modern facilities for some of the force's investigative teams, forensic investigation and evidence management functions.
- The project team is regularly on site and engaged with the contractors, and the DCC recently visited the site to reinforce quality requirements at the end of August 2023.

Recommendation

- 13.** It is recommended that the contents of the report and presentation are noted.

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

The overall project budget remains within parameters set in November 2021 but the final account is yet to be agreed.

Staffing

Force staff who will be located in the Investigative Hub continue to receive information relevant to the move into the Hub.

Equality and Diversity

n/a

Accommodation

The report and presentation focussed on the new state of the art Investigative Hub based in Spennymoor.

Crime and Disorder

n/a

Children's Act 2004

n/a

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

Engagement and stakeholder communications take place at regular intervals

Environment

n/a

Collaboration and Partnerships

Consultation with key partners is carried out as appropriate to each decision.

Value for Money and Productivity

Social value achieved to date is £25.74 million, exceeding targets in all areas i.e Employability, responsible business, wellbeing, environmental and improvement.

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

n/a

Commissioning

The Force continues to maintain relationships with the External Contractors.

Other risks

n/a