

Metropolitan Police Estate

Asset Management Plan Bexley

November 2007

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1. An introduction to the police estate

Policing in London is changing. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is working hard to deliver a more effective and locally focused service, and to do this it needs a property estate that can adapt to meet new challenges and grow to support a 21st century police service.

The Metropolitan Police Estate is legally owned and managed by the Metropolitan Police Authority, the statutory watchdog for the MPS. The Authority has overall responsibility for all MPS buildings and facilities in London and recognises the vital role the estate plays in supporting the delivery of effective and efficient policing across the capital.

The challenges the MPS faces are changing and complex. Police numbers have risen in recent years, from 25,400 police officers in 2000 to over 31,000 in 2007, along with almost 4,000 Police Community Support Officers, almost 2,000 special constables and 14,000 members of police staff. As the largest single employer in London, this growth has placed new demands on our buildings and facilities.

London itself is growing and changing and the police service must respond to new areas of population growth and shifting demographic patterns. Entirely new areas of the capital are being created through large regeneration projects and the MPS is involved from the outset to ensure services are properly integrated into these projects.

Finally, changing patterns of crime and an increased focus on the threat from terrorist activity are placing additional burdens on the MPS.

Against these challenges, the Metropolitan Police Estate and how it is managed is crucial to ensure an effective police service for London.

There are over 380 operational buildings located throughout London's 32 boroughs, from police stations and offices to boat sheds and training facilities. Such a complex and diverse estate presents particular challenges:

- the estate is ageing – around 40% of the buildings pre-date 1940
- a large number of buildings are poorly located
- many of the buildings are inefficient, expensive to maintain and fail to offer the space required for policing in 2007 and beyond
- new demands are constantly being made for more space and better security
- much of the estate is no longer appropriate for a modern police service whose employees deserve good working conditions
- it is not always possible to simply upgrade or renew an individual part of the estate in one borough – there is an urgent need for major change in most boroughs

The Metropolitan Police Estate has to be modernised to provide accommodation that enables a more accessible, flexible and effective police service for each borough. These changes to the estate will directly improve policing by:

- increasing public accessibility by being located closer to the communities the MPS serves
- maximising the use of current space and providing more space to accommodate an evolving police service
- delivering, where appropriate, open plan spaces for more flexible working
- providing newer facilities which offer a more modern environment for officers and staff and a more pleasant environment for the public
- encouraging more effective joint working through co-location with other agencies

Modernising the estate by providing more efficient buildings with reduced maintenance costs will also lead to cost savings for the police service. In addition to which the MPS remains committed to delivering buildings in the most sustainable way, from planning through to occupation, as set out in our environmental strategy.

How the estate is managed

Overall responsibility for the estate, its management and development, is held by the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), the statutory organisation responsible for ensuring an efficient and effective police service for London.

Day-to-day management of the estate in each borough is delegated by the MPA to Property Services Department (PSD), part of the Resources Directorate of the MPS.

Territorial Policing Headquarters (TPHQ) is responsible on a day to day level for policing in each borough. This includes the officers, staff, their equipment, resources and the accommodation from which they operate.

2. About this document

This document sets out the strategy for improving the Metropolitan Police Estate in Bexley over the next three years.

The future estate will be based around the following five operational policing themes, which are explained in more detail throughout this document:

- Safer Neighbourhoods bases
- Custody Centres
- Patrol Bases
- Front Counters
- Office accommodation

It is envisaged that the future estate in each London borough will include at least one of each of these elements, which together will form an ideal template for an effective and responsive police service.

However, because of the nature of the work and the range of local challenges that the MPS faces, there will not be a 'one size fits all' solution for every borough and plans will be adapted in response to individual borough needs and policing demands.

Every borough has an Asset Management Plan (AMP), which considers the existing estate, assesses specific local requirements and then determines how it can be modified and developed to ensure it continues to be appropriate for policing. It also gives consideration to regeneration, planning and commercial issues, such as new areas of development and growth.

This document summarises Bexley's AMP and gives details of the changes and developments planned over the next three years.

3. How we are consulting

The MPS places great value on consultation and communication to ensure it understands the needs, wishes and priorities of the communities it serves. It is important these communities and other stakeholders understand more about the estate from which the police operate, its size, condition and the changes that are required.

In March 2007 'Property for Policing' was published, outlining the wider pan-London estate and beginning to explain how the best estate for borough based policing can be provided. It lists some of the challenges that the estate currently faces and looks at the individual elements of the estate envisaged for each borough.

This document is the next step and looks at specific changes to the estate in Bexley. Throughout this document there are five key themes, on which we are asking for your views. You do not have to provide an answer to them all and may feel you just want to comment on one or two.

You can send your comments back to us by:

Post – Jim Spicer, Bexleyheath police station, 2 Arnsberg Way, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4QS

Email – Jim.Spicer@Met.Police.UK

By Hand – Bexleyheath police station, 2 Arnsberg Way, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4QS

Additional copies of this document and response form are available from:

Locations

Bexleyheath, Belvedere and Sidcup police stations

Phone number – 020 8284 9156

Website – www.met.police.uk/bexley

Please contact us on either of the addresses above if you require a copy of this document in an alternative format.

We will be consulting for a period of 3 months following publication of this Asset Management Plan. The consultation will be led by the Borough Commander for Bexley, on behalf of the MPA and MPS.

Please ensure all correspondence is with us by the close of this period.

We shall then carefully consider the views we receive before producing a revised version of the AMP and we will start to implement the proposals in this

plan at the earliest opportunity. Where appropriate we will also feed back to you the views that we have received and the subsequent changes we have made.

We will not be able to reply individually to every response received but we are here to listen to your views and if you do have any questions on this document would welcome the opportunity to discuss them further with you.

It is important to remember that while driving through this process, normal business will continue and so some consultation and communication activities may need to take place outside this plan.

An electronic version of this document and other strategies referred to within this document are available at www.met.police.uk or www.mpa.gov.uk.

4. About policing in Bexley

Bexley covers an area of 6,400 hectares and consists of a number of local neighbourhoods. As part of the Thames Gateway it is set to grow in both population and visitor numbers (although most of the Thames Gateway development will take place north of the borough).

The regeneration of the Belvedere/Erith area in the north of the borough will generate 5,000 new jobs and 1,400 new homes and will be supported by the development of Crossrail. The borough also shares with Greenwich the development of the Thamesmead area and all of these will present additional policing requirements.

At present there are 375 police officers, 88 police staff, 100 Police Community Support Officers, 95 Special Constables, 64 Volunteers and 41 Police Cadets based in the London Borough of Bexley. They are split between three key locations within the borough, all of which where a member of the public can report a crime. The current Metropolitan Police Estate in the borough is made up of the following sites:

Building	Police services based there	Contact point / front counter	Opening hours
Bexleyheath police station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custody cells • Patrolling • 4 Safer Neighbourhoods teams • Senior Management Team • Operations and Intelligence Units 	Yes	24/7
Belvedere police station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Safer Neighbourhoods teams • Training Unit 	Yes	Mon – Fri 12.00 – 16.00
Sidcup police station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Safer Neighbourhoods teams 	Yes	Mon – Fri 12.00 – 16.00

In addition to the above Metropolitan Police Estate, we also have presence at these Safer Neighbourhoods bases in the community.

70 Galleon Close, Erith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team 	No	N/A
The Howbury Centre, Slade Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Safer Neighbourhoods teams 	No	N/A

Welling School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team 	No	N/A
Rosla Building, Westwood College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Safer Neighbourhoods team 	No	N/A
Old Bexley Church of England School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Safer Neighbourhoods teams 	No	N/A
15 Princess Parade, Waterside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team 	No	N/A
North Cray Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team 	No	N/A
Galleons Housing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team 	No	N/A

However the borough continues to face a number of policing challenges. These include:

- Reducing violent crime
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Addressing youth issues

Over the next five sections we will introduce to you the key parts of the future Metropolitan Police Estate for the borough and explain why these facilities are needed.

5. Our future plans: Safer Neighbourhoods programme in Bexley

One of the most important changes being delivered across London by the MPS is the Safer Neighbourhoods programme.

Safer Neighbourhoods is about local policing, with police and other groups working with the community to identify and tackle issues of concern in the neighbourhoods. Each team is made up of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and police officers, who are dedicated to the local neighbourhoods that they serve (which usually equate to the local council wards in the borough).

These teams are additional to other policing teams and units in the borough. They need appropriately located bases so that they can provide real community-focused policing. With the increase of town centre developments a greater focus will be needed on town centre policing, ensuring the police are easily accessible to all those who shop, live and work in these centres.

Safer Neighbourhoods bases vary widely in both form and location, from offices at local police stations, to small kiosks, offices within partnership bodies, and locations in schools and hospitals. Some are in places of worship and in supermarkets. Central to them all is the principle that they are located in easily accessible places, close to the heart of the community that the team serves and within, or as close as practicable, to the relevant ward. Most of the premises have facilities to provide local 'surgeries' and public contact points or front counters, often staffed by volunteers.

The current distribution and location of Safer Neighbourhoods teams on the borough is as follows:

Property address in Bexley	Ward teams based at this address
Belvedere police station	Lesnes Abbey
	Belvedere
	Northumberland Heath
70 Galleon Close, Erith	Erith
The Howbury Centre, Slade Green	North End
	Colyers
Bexleyheath police station	Barnehurst
	Christchurch
	Brampton
	Danson Park

Welling School	St Michaels Ward
Rosa Building, Westwood College	Falconwood & Welling
	East Wickham
Sidcup police station 87 Main Road	Blackfen & Lamorbey
	Sidcup
	Longlands
Old Bexley Church of England School	St Marys
	Blendon & Penhill
15 Princess Parade, Crayford	Crayford
Galleons Housing Association	Thamesmead East
North Cray Community Centre	Cray Meadows

Some teams are currently temporarily located. It is our intention to move these teams to permanent bases, easily accessible to their wards, as soon as suitable bases become available.

This means that we are therefore planning to open additional Safer Neighbourhoods bases throughout the borough and some of these may have front counter or contact point facilities. Through your Safer Neighbourhoods team we will keep you updated on our progress finding these bases.

More information on the Safer Neighbourhoods teams in Bexley can be found at:

<http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods/boroughs/bexley/saferneighbourhoods.htm>

Theme 1: Safer Neighbourhoods bases

- A** Do you have any comments and views about the provision of Safer Neighbourhoods bases?
- B** If you have any specific suggestions of premises or sites suitable for a Safer Neighbourhoods base in the borough please let us know.

6. Our future plans: new custody provision in Bexley

There are currently 19 custody cells within the borough, which are located at Bexleyheath police station.

For a borough the size of Bexley this is a relatively small number and, although there is currently sufficient capacity, as the borough grows, there is a need to provide additional cells. In addition, arresting officers travelling to and waiting in custody facilities currently has an impact on their ability to police the streets in the borough. This has proved costly and time-consuming for borough policing.

The MPS has recognised that it is no longer necessary or appropriate to have custody cells in high street police stations and that locating these at a strategic point in the borough will save money, improve efficiency and enable more frontline policing.

We are now looking at developing specialised custody facilities, known as Custody Centres, in each borough in London. The concept of a Custody Centre is grouping between 20-40 cells in one location along with related facilities such as interview rooms, consultation rooms and a search suite. A Custody Centre would offer more cells that meet modern standards and provide more suitable facilities for officers, lawyers and other visitors.

As demand on the current facilities in Bexley increases with additional staff, officers and the growing population, it is essential that capacity is increased and the standard of facilities improved.

Possible sites for a Custody Centre need to be in an easily accessible location and more details of the criteria for this are available at www.mpa.gov.uk.

Custody for Bexley is already centralised at Bexleyheath police station, but we will look at whether it is feasible to provide extended facilities here or a Custody Centre elsewhere on the borough.

Theme 2: A Custody Centre

- C** Do you have any comments about the provision of a Custody Centre in the borough?

7. Our future plans: improved patrol facilities in Bexley

Operational officers currently patrol the borough from Bexleyheath police station, a modern facility built in 1994. The facilities provided for them are reasonable with most key support functions also located there.

However growing demand may place greater strain on these facilities in the future and it may then be necessary to provide further patrolling facilities in the form of a Patrol Base.

A Patrol Base is a flexible warehouse-style building that will accommodate the majority of operational police officers and resources for the borough in one main building. It will also provide garaging for police vehicles and operational parking, allowing a large number of vehicle movements with minimal disruption and enabling faster response times. These bases will not be open to the public (see section 8 for details on facilities which are open to the public), but will bring officers and vehicles together at a single location with faster access to all parts of the borough.

Central to the location of this site are the excellent 24/7 transport accessibility and vehicular access, together with a high level of operational parking availability. The building would be as flexible as possible so that internal layouts can be adapted as necessary to suit changing police requirements.

We will continue to review demand on patrolling facilities in Bexley in the future and consider whether a Patrol Base facility is necessary. We will of course keep you updated on our proposals.

Theme 3: Patrol facilities

D Do you have any comments about the provision of a Patrol Base in the borough?

8. Our future plans: front counters - a better environment for the public in Bexley

There are currently 3 public front counters located in Bexley where members of the public can contact the police, be it to report a crime, report for bail or speak to their local officer. These are:

- Bexleyheath police station
- Belvedere police station
- Sidcup police Station

Traditional and historical concepts of police stations have meant that there is often a mix of functions taking place in the same building – so reception, enforcement, and victim-focused functions can all take place at the same front counter. This is not always appropriate for reasons of safety and security of both members of the community and our police staff and officers.

We are therefore looking into splitting the front counter facilities so that these functions can take place independently of each other. This will lead to increased feelings of security and a better service for the public.

The provision of front counters across London is currently being reviewed to ensure that front counter facilities reflect a more joined up, citizen-focused approach and enables them to provide an enhanced service to all customers.

For Bexley this means looking at the design of existing facilities within the borough, the manner in which these facilities are operated, and by whom.

The strategy is in the early stages of development at the moment but the aim is for front counters to be available in a wide mix of police accommodation in the borough. From police stations to Safer Neighbourhoods bases, the intention is that they will help provide enhanced accessibility and help create a sense of reassurance for every member of the local community.

Central to this plan is the principle that no existing front counter facility in the borough will be closed until alternative, improved facilities are open and operational.

Theme 4: Public counters

- E** Do you agree with the splitting of front counter facilities to provide dedicated space for reception, enforcement and victim-focused functions?

9. Our future plans: better office accommodation in Bexley

The remaining policing functions within the borough are the command, management and support functions. These functions are in turn made up of a number of smaller units.

It used to be the case that these functions were spread across police stations and specialised police buildings in the borough. This meant an inefficient use of valuable space and inappropriate facilities used for functions that, because of the administrative nature of their work, could be accommodated within a single office facility. We have therefore over the last few years reorganised and improved our back-office facilities.

In Bexley all these functions are now accommodated in Bexleyheath police station. These improved facilities for staff and officers have in turn led to better, more efficient functional teams and a more effective organisation, able to provide better support for frontline officers.

We will of course review the utilisation of this space following the development of other police buildings in the borough such as the possible provision of a Patrol Base and Custody Centre.

Theme 5: Office buildings

- F** Do you agree with the grouping of command, management and support functions into a single office building in the borough?

10. The future of police facilities in Bexley – a summary

Although we are making considerable progress in providing an estate suitable for the police service in the borough, we still have a long way to go.

By working together with the community and other statutory and voluntary agencies, we intend to carry on improving our estate and providing the best facilities we can. Bexley needs accessible and friendly police facilities in the right locations and we, the police, deserve excellent working conditions to help us carry out our duties.

This document has a life span of three years and during this time we will be continually updating and refreshing our ideas. After this time we will continue working on and developing them as sites become available and as needs and demands change.

All of our proposals for new developments are also subject to passing through the planning system in the borough, which takes time and will also involve further consultation.

In summary we propose that the future Metropolitan Police Estate within Bexley will eventually consist of the following:

- **Bexleyheath police station** – a modern facility, which currently accommodates custody cells, patrolling facilities and the Senior Management Team for the borough. It is to be assessed to provide a better use of space following the provision of the Patrol Base and Custody Centre
- **Belvedere police station** - currently home to 3 Safer Neighbourhoods teams. It is to be assessed to provide a better use of space following the provision of the Patrol Base and Custody Centre
- **Sidcup police station** – currently home to 3 Safer Neighbourhoods teams. It is to be assessed to provide a better use of space following the provision of the Patrol Base and Custody Centre
- **70 Galleon Close** – currently home to 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team
- **The Howbury Centre** – currently home to 2 Safer Neighbourhoods teams
- **Welling School** – currently home to 1 Safer Neighbourhoods team
- **Rosa Building, Westwood College** – currently home to 2 Safer Neighbourhoods teams
- **Old Bexley Church of England School** – currently home to 2 Safer Neighbourhoods teams

- **Safer Neighbourhoods bases** – will provide accommodation for each Safer Neighbourhoods team currently housed in temporary accommodation in permanent bases, easily accessible to their wards
- **New front counters** - to be available in a wide mix of police accommodation in the borough and provide enhanced accessibility and a sense of reassurance for every member of the local community

These changes will ultimately result in significant cost savings around the estate through reduced maintenance costs, more efficient buildings and a more effective use of the space that is occupied in the borough. Such savings will be reinvested back into the estate and ultimately back into supporting frontline policing.

We continually need to adapt and respond to new challenges and we need an estate that allows us to do this. The changes we have set out here are crucial to providing an estate fit for policing in the 21st century and will allow us to deliver the best possible police service for Bexley.

Theme 6: Summary

- G** Do you have any other general comments on the Metropolitan Police Estate in Bexley?

11. Your comments

Please use the space below to answer any of the questions, which we have asked in this document. You can then remove it and send it to us at the contact details on page 5.