

## **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham**

**October 2015**

**Report on Bowburn and Wheatley Hill Section Offices**



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### **Purpose**

To seek approval to formally declare Bowburn and Wheatley Hill Section Offices surplus to requirements with a view to marketing of the properties.

### **Background**

In the recent review of section offices, Bowburn and Wheatley Hill were identified as surplus to the Chief Constable's requirements.

This was in view of a number of factors. Firstly, both properties are in an extremely poor state of repair to the point that they have become physically unusable. For instance, the heating system at Bowburn has completely failed and the roof at Wheatley Hill requires full replacement. To put each property into a reasonable condition, a budget of around £200,000 would be required. However, the premises are also not in good locations for provision of services to the relevant local communities so it was considered that expenditure on backlog maintenance improvements would have little operational benefit.

### **Current Position**

Officers gradually wound down use of each property over a number of years and have not permanently occupied the buildings for a number of years. While still badged as police offices, they have therefore both been vacant for some time. Instead, officers who police Bowburn use Sherburn as their base but provide local drop in facilities to the community via ad hoc hire of a room at Bowburn Community Centre. Similarly, officers police Wheatley Hill from Peterlee police station with local drop in facilities being provided in various locations

Local performance has not been affected by these changes.

### **Financial Position**

Bowburn and Wheatley Hill offices are vacant but still have ongoing running cost liabilities. In 2014/15, Bowburn cost £7,500 per annum to run and Wheatley Hill's running cost was £7,000.

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The backlog maintenance requirements for both buildings are in the region of £200,000. Disposal of the buildings will make running cost savings in the region of £14,000 per annum. In addition, the requirement for capital expenditure will be negated and instead a capital receipt will be obtained.

The capital value of the properties is low due to location and condition.

### **Proposal**

It is proposed that Bowburn and Wheatley Hill section offices are formally declared surplus and that the freehold of each property is sold.

It is proposed that sale by auction will be the most appropriate means of disposal. This will however mean that the PCC will not have the opportunity to approve the purchase price for the properties before contracting to a disposal. A minimum reserve can however be approved in advance and further approval from the PCC will be sought in relation to this once an auction agent has been appointed.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Bowburn and Wheatley Hill section offices are declared surplus and are sold by auction.

Michael Barton  
**Chief Constable**

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**Appendix 1: Risks and Implications**

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**Finance** The Assistant Chief Officer confirms that the running cost savings will be taken into account in the 2016/17 budget.

**Staffing** Nil

**Equality and Diversity** Nil

**Accommodation** The proposal does not affect current accommodation arrangements as such changes were implemented some time ago.

**Crime and Disorder** Nil

**Children's Act 2004** Nil

**Stakeholder/Community Engagement** The proposal does not affect current community engagement arrangements as such changes were implemented some time ago.

**Environment** Nil

**Collaboration and Partnerships** The proposal involves continuing collaboration with local partners through ad hoc use of drop in facilities.

**Value for Money and Productivity** Nil

**Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities** Nil

**Commissioning** Nil

**Other risks** Nil

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