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Estates Transformation Programme 2024

**Analysis of responses to the Greenock Police Station consultation exercise
Report**

April 2024

Research and Insight

Strategy, Insight and Engagement



**Estates Delivery
Group**

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Executive Summary

Following SPA approval, Police Scotland announced on Thursday 14 December 2023 proposals to close a number of police buildings across the country and invite members of the public, stakeholders and staff to give their views.

Our objective is to listen to communities, colleagues and stakeholders and respond to their needs through an open and inclusive consultation on the proposed Police Scotland estates transformation. Strategic outcome three within our [Joint Strategy for Policing \(2023\)](#) sets out our commitment to **keep public, communities and partners engaged and involved so they have confidence and trust in policing**.

Maintaining public confidence and trust involves keeping communities involved and engaged in what and how we do things, ensuring our policing model is effective that we can adapt how we connect with communities to enhance safety and protection.

Consultation and engagement approach

Launch of a national conversation

The consultation began on 17 January 2024 to support an open continuous conversation at a national level on our strategic approach to transforming our estate, hosted on our [Engagement Hub](#).

Opportunity for local engagement

At a local level, each site for consultation had its own dedicated area on our engagement hub with information about the site and proposed changes. Co-designed with colleagues, the level and scope of engagement is determined by the potential impact of proposed changes to local communities and stakeholders. This assessment takes into consideration the drivers of public confidence, user experience and accessibility of local policing.

Risk-based assessment

The level and scope of engagement was based on the impact of estate closures on communities and stakeholders and within the drivers of public confidence (i.e., visible, engaging and proactive local policing teams) – as summarised in appendix 1.

Engagement themes

The consultation includes qualitative and quantitative questions to capture agreement with the proposals and people's understanding, perceptions, and use of their local police buildings. The information was used to inform local communications and engagement, address areas of concern and impacts for informing decision-making and local scrutiny.

Communications

A co-ordinated, consistent, approach in efforts to raise awareness with at national and local level, public and stakeholders was designed by colleagues in communications. A toolkit was designed for use by divisional colleagues to support the national conversation on estates and the local engagement at divisional level of individual building closure proposals. Assets included a video of ACC Steve Johnson outlining the changes proposed, a BSL version of this video for national and local dissemination, and social media materials promoting the consultation.



Response

In total, **156 consultation responses** were received from **150 individuals** (including 5 Police Scotland employees). There were 5 respondents answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association, and 1 respondent answering as a local Elected Member (Councillor).

Key findings

Overall, the findings show the importance of maintaining visible, accessible and proactive policing in local areas and keeping communities engaged and informed on next steps.

Agreement with proposals

The perceived condition of Greenock Police Station was a major cross-cutting theme demonstrated throughout the responses to the consultation. The perceived state of the building, its aesthetic, and the perceived upkeep of the site were key drivers of the impressions of the site supporting operational policing, engagement with the community, and the site being a safe space.

Factors influencing agreement with proposals

Balancing the perception of Greenock Police Station as a symbol of policing in the community and the services (and experiences therein) was a major finding demonstrated in some opposing views reported in the consultation. The need to deliver local, visible, operational policing was demonstrated as a key factor in driving the perceptions related to the disposal of Greenock Police Station. This was seen in areas such as the centrality of the station and how this supports public-police engagement. Yet, opposing views were also seen in this whereby respondents also critiqued the location as not supporting the public through issues on accessibility. Custodial capacity, also, was a key theme emerging across responses. One of the more general points made was that changes to custodial provision must be considered with operational policing in mind the potential impact this is perceived to have on the expectations of maintaining services within Inverclyde.

1. Introduction

Police Scotland inherited a very large and ageing estate, much of which was not fit for purpose, with high maintenance costs, environmental inefficiencies, and in locations that no longer meet the requirements of local communities. Police Scotland currently owns over 320 buildings many of which are located less than five miles from the next nearest Police Scotland building.

Following SPA approval, Police Scotland announced on Thursday 14 December 2023 proposals to close a number of police buildings across the country and invite members of the public, stakeholders and staff to give their views.

The consultation included qualitative and quantitative questions to capture agreement with the proposals and people's understanding, perceptions, and use of their local police buildings.

An Engagement Hub went live on 14 December which allowed our staff, stakeholders and the public to take part in a national conversation as well as local consultations that will help us shape our estate for the future.

1.1. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 asserts to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services. A significant part of this act refers to participation in public decision-making whereby Scottish public authorities must promote and facilitate the participation of members of the public in the decisions and activities of the authority, including in the allocation of its resources.

The level and scope of engagement should be based on the impact of estate closures on communities and stakeholders, with consideration of the drivers of public confidence (i.e., visible, engaging and proactive local policing teams). The relative risk necessitates a proportionate response, meaning if 'high risk high participation', all preceding methods will be used (see appendix 1).

For determining risk, we sought information to understand:

- How the buildings are being used by colleagues, communities and stakeholders and the alternative options for continuing to meet needs.
- How is local policing maintaining and/or enhancing visible, engaging and accessible services as part of the future policing model.
- Viability of the estate for community asset transfer.

The risk assessment will be undertaken with each affected local policing division which will determine the level of engagement. The approach and methods of engagement are based on Police Scotland's Public Engagement and Participation Framework.

The local consultation for **Greenock Police Station** was launched **21 December 2023** and concluded **31 March 2024**.

1.2. Analysis and reporting

This report presents a question-by-question analysis of the responses and comments made to the local consultation for Greenock Police Station. All responses were gathered via our online Engagement Hub; no submissions were received via any other means.

The qualitative feedback is presented according to the balance and nuance of opinion relating to the impressions and perceptions of the site, in this instance of Greenock Police Station.

Respondents to any public consultation or engagement are self-selecting, and the responses may not be representative of the population.

For each of the consultation questions the issues or common themes frequently raised by respondents are presented. Please also note that often respondents answer “None” or “No idea” or singular word responses without providing additional information to explain their response further.

The open questions did not have a fixed response, or a limit to the length of the response, allowing the respondents to answer in their own words and in as much or as little detail as they liked. Consequently, thematic analysis was used to analyse the open question survey responses. This meant that each response was read by a member of the research team and the codes (main points) were identified. The next step was then to read across the responses to systematically identify any common ideas or patterns of meaning. Themes were discussed across the research team to allow for comparisons and contrasts until consensus was reached among the team on the final structure.

Accordingly, the extent of the analysis is proportionate to the volume of feedback in terms of comments made. An example of the data analysis process leading to the ‘Impressions of Greenock Police Station’ results is attached (see appendix 2). The quotes that are provided through the report are intended to illustrate some of the points in respondents’ own words and to capture some of the themes as they were written.

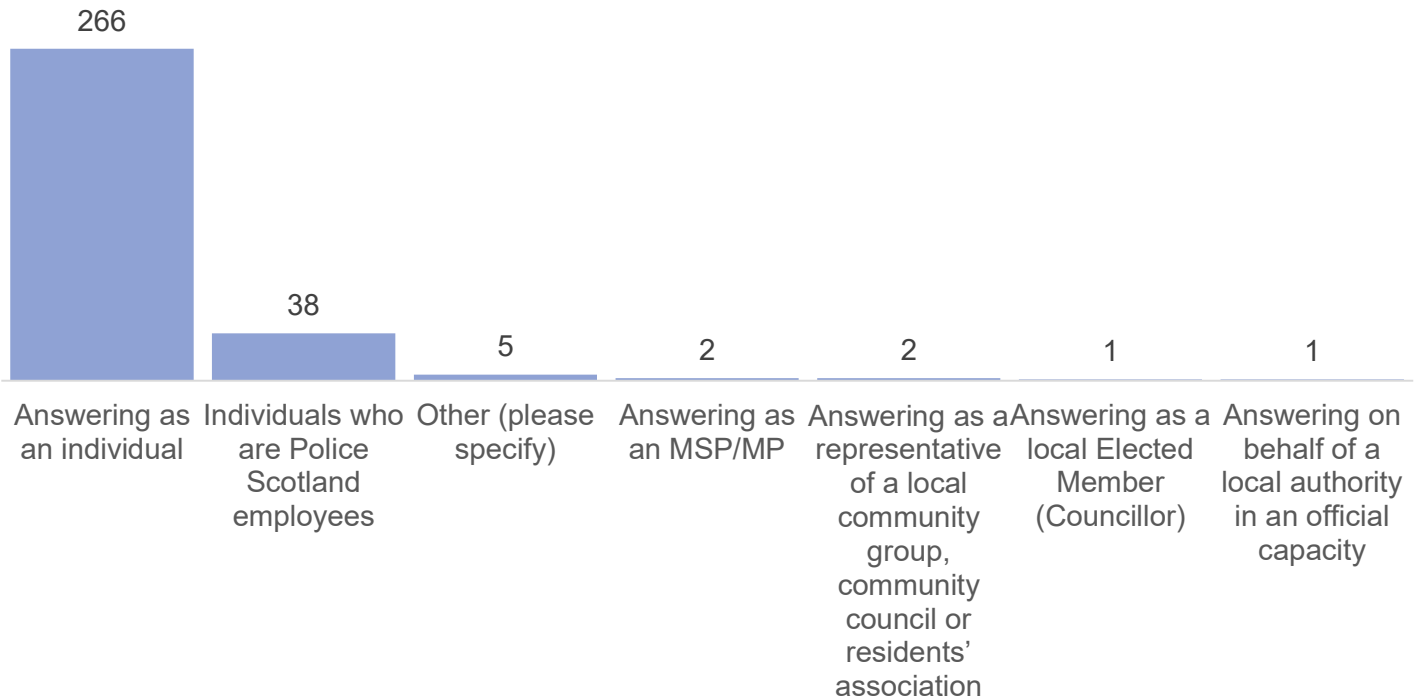
This analysis did not seek to provide a comparative or quantitative account of the issues that were raised but sought to summarise the range of topics and responses that were provided. However, descriptive terminology is used to add clarity on the views. For example, ‘some’ or ‘many’. It was not the intention to quantify the views, but it should be noted that in general, ‘many’ or ‘most’ refers to views that were shared across a large section of the responses. Use of the term ‘some’ is used to reflect an idea or viewpoint that came up less frequently than ‘many/most’.

Finally, the singular quantitative question on agreement relating to the proposed disposal of the site should not be taken independently from the qualitative context and narrative with which we thank respondents for providing.

1.3. Overview of respondent profile and responses

In total, 315 responses were received from 304 individuals (including 38 Police Scotland employees). There were 2 respondents answering as MSPs/MPs, 2 respondents answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association, 1 respondent answering as a local Elected Member (Councillor), 1 respondent answering on behalf of a local authority in an official capacity and 5 'Other' respondents.

Breakdown of respondents - total respondents (n = 315) received by classification



Listed below are the **ten** most prevalent themes at a total sample level. This is to provide an understanding of the issues reported across the total sample. Themes are not presented in an order of magnitude.

- The central location of Greenock Police Station supports police-public engagement.
- There are negative critiques regarding the accessibility of Greenock Police Station
- Front counter provides support for the community .
- Negative perceptions of the condition of Greenock Police Station
- Respondents perceive the location of Greenock Police Station as a driving factor supporting operational policing.
- Negative critiques of the building's condition are also related to impacting operational policing.
- The custodial capacity of Greenock station was perceived to be an important dimension to operational policing.
- Some respondents perceive the visibility of Greenock Police Station as inspiring feelings of safety.
- Some respondents perceive the condition of Greenock Police Station as reducing feelings of it as a safe space.
- The presence or absence of Greenock Police Station is perceived to an impact on the site as a crime deterrent.

*NB: The total "Individuals" number includes deducting the total number of individuals who work for Police Scotland

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Individuals

Individual respondents (including those who work for Police Scotland) represented **96% (304/315)** of respondents, their views drive the prevalence of specific themes at a total sample level.

Local organisation representatives

Responses from local organisation representatives represent **4% (11/315)** of the sample.

Table 1: response classification

	No. of respondents	% of all respondents
All respondents	315	100%
I am answering as an individual	266	84%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	38	12%
Other (please specify)	5	2%
I am answering as an MSP/MP	2	1%
I am answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	2	1%
I am answering as a local Elected Member (Councillor)	1	<1%
I am answering on behalf of a local authority in an official capacity	1	<1%

*NB: The total "Individuals" number includes deducting the total number of individuals who work for Police Scotland

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2. Consultation Analysis

2.1. Impressions of Greenock Police Station

Impressions of how Greenock Police Station is currently being used by the public for engaging with the police.

There were 246 responses to this open-ended question. Please note that this question did not capture quantitative data and accordingly only substantive themes/points raised by respondents are presented. The most frequently made points were that:

- The central location of Greenock Police Station supports police-public engagement.
- There are negative critiques regarding the accessibility of Greenock Police Station.
- Front counter provides support for the community.
- Negative perceptions of the condition of Greenock Police Station.

Impressions of how Greenock Street Police Station is currently being used by police officers and staff for operational policing.

There were 225 responses to this open-ended question. Please note that this question did not capture quantitative data and accordingly only substantive themes/points raised by respondents are presented. The most frequently made points were that:

- Respondents perceive the location of Greenock Police Station as a driving factor supporting operational policing.
- Negative critiques of the building's condition are also related to impacting operational policing.
- The custodial capacity of Greenock station was perceived to be an important dimension to operational policing.

Impressions of how Greenock Police Station is currently being used by members of the public as a safe space.

There were 214 responses to this open-ended question. Please note that this question did not capture quantitative data and accordingly only substantive themes/points raised by respondents are presented. The most frequently made points were that:

- Some respondents perceive the visibility of Greenock Police Station as inspiring feelings of safety.
- Some respondents perceive the condition of Greenock Police Station as reducing feelings of it as a safe space.
- The presence or absence of Greenock Police Station is perceived to an impact on the site as a crime deterrent.

2.2. Perceptions of the proposal to dispose Greenock Police Station

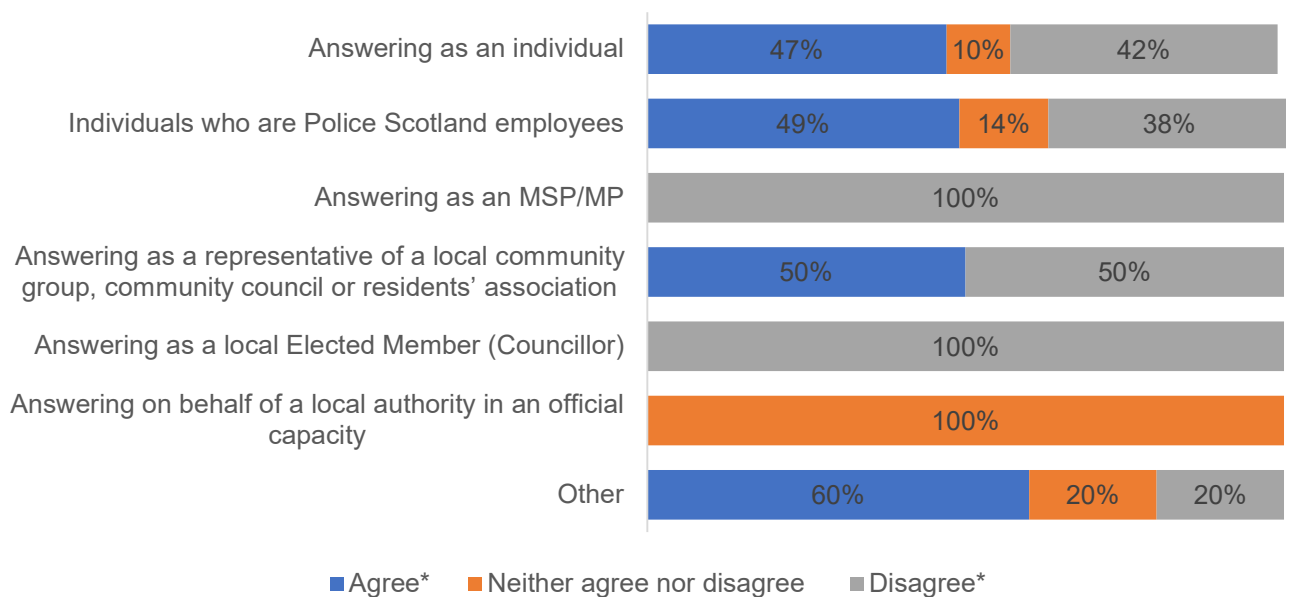
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to dispose of this building for the reasons stated at the start of this section?

	Total	Agree*		Disagree*		Neither agree nor disagree	
	N =	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%
All respondents	307	145	47%	128	42%	34	11%
Answering as an individual	259	123	47%	109	42%	27	10%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	37	10	49%	14	38%	5	14%
Other (please specify)	5	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%
Answering as an MSP/MP	2	--	--	2	100%	--	--
Answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	2	1	50%	1	50%	--	--
Answering as a local Elected Member (Councillor)	1	--	--	1	100%	--	--

"Strongly agree" and "Agree" have been combined into "Agree" as well as "Strongly disagree" and "Disagree" being combined into "Disagree". "Don't know/No Opinion" and blank responses have been omitted.

Graph 1: Agreement and disagreement on disposal of Greenock Police Station by classification

Breakdown of agreement/disagreement regarding disposal by respondents classification



3. Conclusions

The consultation for Greenock Police Station provided the opportunity for the public, stakeholders, and colleagues to provide their feedback and perceptions of Greenock Police Station in response to the proposed estate transformation programme.

Although this approach provided a way for people to submit their views, given the relatively small number of responses, it cannot offer a complete or representative view that reflects the concerns and insights of all individuals and organisations.

Findings indicate the lack of access to Greenock Police Station is a driving influence on the impressions of its function in community policing in the local area.

Next steps

This report provides a summary of the consultation analysis in support of a consistent, co-ordinated, and open dialogue between Police Scotland and the public, stakeholders, and colleagues regarding the proposed estate transformation programme.

These results will be shared to the appropriate governance mechanisms within Police Scotland and will be shared with the public via the Engagement Hub in due course.

The next steps are summarised below as:

- A report will be prepared (which will include this consultation report) to Corporate Finance and Investment Board with evidence to inform decision-making.
- If approved to progress, a paper will be prepared for the Scottish Police Authority Resources Committee with a proposal.
- Police Scotland will progress the activities within the proposal to either dispose of a building (which may include selling), support a community asset transfer of a building, or invest in a building.
- Feedback to the public, communities and stakeholders will be shared and published in the form of 'you asked, you said, we listened' on our [Engagement Hub](#) where the consultation was hosted. Copies of the consultation findings will also be published.

Scottish Police Authority meetings are public and they [can be viewed online](#) via the SPA's website.

Appendix 1: Risk based assessment approach

Citizen Participation	Local Risk		
	Low	Medium	High
Low	<p>Inform (by distributing or making information accessible on policies, decisions, services and legislation).</p> <p>Inform Method: Website, Social media, Bulletins, Reports, Media releases.</p>		
Medium		<p>Discover and Review (by consultation); identifying local needs, concerns and feedback with the proposed estate changes, perceptions of modernisation and estate strategy. Understanding local reactions to and reflections of the proposal and using these to inform decision on disposal.</p> <p>Review 1: National Conversation (online feedback)</p> <p>Review 2: Local Estate Survey (online feedback, localised)</p>	
High			<p>Community Empowerment: Community meetings, workshops, focus groups to promote two-way communication and proactive, visible, participation</p> <p>Consensus building: deliberative forums to promote deeper engagement via public assemblies.</p>

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Appendix 2: Example qualitative coding matrix

Impressions of Greenock Police Station	Theme	Coding	Response Quotes
	Greenock Police Station used for the public engaging with Police	Greenock Police Station's centrality in the community supports engagement.	<p>"A good location, know where to access information and advice"</p> <p>"Access there and can be used. Local priority"</p> <p>"Building is situated centrally and easy to access for members of the public"</p> <p>"Central location handy, equally for everyone"</p> <p>"Central location piece of mind that it is there when needed"</p> <p>"Clearly visible and well-recognised building, providing well-located presence within the community that offers reassurance to local community. "</p> <p>"Easily accessible and well known location to residents"</p> <p>"Easy access from public transport and located within town centre."</p>
		Negative perceptions of Greenock Police Station accessibility	<p>"As far as I can tell there is no disabled access as only front steps so that cannot be good. "</p> <p>"Could be improved for accessibility in a location where parking is possible."</p> <p>"Difficult to find parking as the front entrance is onto the main road."</p> <p>"Fairly busy, however access/parking is poor"</p> <p>"good although access is questionable"</p> <p>"It sits in a central location and is easily identifiable but not easily accessible in terms of parking or for people with disabilities"</p>
		Front counter usage and support for the community	<p>"A much-needed public reception desk. It is therefore not closed off to the public."</p> <p>" the public counter is essential for local policing"</p> <p>"For engaging with the public it's a 24 hour front counter in a central location - any new custody suite MUST have this."</p> <p>"Front counter in town centre means public can liase with police"</p> <p>"Great, you walk in it's open and staffed 24/7 unlike other offices where you can find it shut!"</p> <p>"The front counter is an operational necessity for members of the public that do not have access to digital communications. Members of the public who have been victim of certain crimes may not feel comfortable reporting what has happened over the phone and would prefer to speak face to face with a member of staff."</p>

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		Negative perceptions of the condition of Greenock Police Station are related to limited engagement	"Awful to go into and impersonal and too big"
			"Basic functions which could have been picked up from a smaller police office"
			"Dated"
			"Clearly in a poor state and hasn't had any noticeable improvements for a significant time"
			"Eyesore and looks as if it needs millions spent on it"
			"outdated but practical"
			"I have never been in, but it looks awful from the outside"
			"I think the building is not used much by the public. It's not fit for purpose for staff use. It's a blot on the landscape."
			"It's old and unfit for a police station in 2024, I get it was built in the 1960(well, at least the architecture is from then) and it feel cramped for the officers and the public, it's not inviting people to ask for help is quite daunting."
			"Looks old and a new police building would highly desirable"
			"Old and not very welcoming and puts you off going near"
			"The brutalist architecture of the building is quite uninviting for the public. It also appears poorly maintained."
	Greenock Police Station used by police officers and staff for operational policing	Respondents perceive the location of Greenock Police Station as a driving factor supporting operational policing.	"A base within Inverclyde is key"
			"Central for responding to incidents in Inverclyde"
			"An Important LOCALLY based police station."
			"Central location makes for quick responses "
			"Centrally located which is good for community"
			"Good location for use by police, near an arterial route for Port Glasgow and Greenock"
		Negative critiques of the building's condition are also related to impacting operational policing.	"Building is run down. The old-style layout causes operational issues. There is a lot of unused/unusable space."
			"Can't be easy in a deteriorating building."
			"Dilapidated condition likely causes issues for staff"
			"Probably too large for the amount if officers who are there at once though"
			"Having never been inside but imagine that because of its age that it will not be functioning as well as is needed for staff"
			"Probably too large for the amount if officers who are there at once though"
		The custodial capacity of Greenock	"Centrally located. Private parking for operation vehicles. Custody suite provision"
			"Custody suite located in Greenock is vital."

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		station was perceived to be an important dimension to operational policing.	"Custody suite is essential, without which the response shifts would collapse with the further abstractions"
			"Greenock is essential for the division due to it being K Divisions only operational custody suite, literally have no issues if it gets shut and moved but you need a custody suite and productions office"
			"Specifically, the custody suite is an asset that policing in the west of Scotland will suffer massively from the loss of with the amount of time that abstractions for custody will take."
			"To lose a 50 cell custody suite and throw the overflow onto 2 already struggling stations is absolutely horrendous. It will completely demolish operational policing when officers are having to transport prisoners up to 45 minutes down the motorway into Glasgow"
			"custody is also a major factor - loosing a custody suite in the area would have an impact on the already backlogged court"
			"The custody suite is spread over 3 floors which is really not suitable for the management of violent prisoners, the lift is regularly out of use and does not stop at every floor, the cctv within the custody suite is of a poor standard visually with unclear images of all areas and especially within constant obs cells."
	Greenock Police Station used by members of the public as a safe space	Greenock Police Station inspires feelings of safety	"Feeling safe and having a place to go if needing police info or police input"
			"Glad to know we have this locally and brings comfort to residents."
			"Good visual representation and physical presence of policing in the local area."
			"Its town centre location gives it both visibility and accessibility."
			"Having a police station presence in each town is important to safety"
			" I feel safe knowing there is a police station in town, I especially feel safe around the Inverclyde area knowing I have a station being manned"
			"It is a beacon of hope to the general public"
			"It is a dominant physical presence which offers a visual reminder that the Police are there close by if needed."
			"Fortunately I have not required to use as a safe space but the fact it is located on the main thoroughfare and location widely known and accessible within the community is reassuring"
			"I regularly see the front bar filled with people at all hours of both day and night looking for sanctuary and a safe place where they know there will be people there to assist them."

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			<p>"Though it's not officially designated as a "safe space," the Greenock police station emanates a sense of safety and openness. Situated prominently and easily spotted, it serves as a constant reminder of the police presence, deterring criminal behaviour and comforting residents. Through clearly labelled signs and designated areas for reporting and interaction, it provides a welcoming environment for anyone seeking help, regardless of their situation. Additionally, the presence of community policing officers and private discussion spaces boosts feelings of security and reassurance for individuals sharing sensitive information."</p>
		<p>Negative critiques of Greenock Police Station as a safe space</p>	<p>"Doesn't feel safe. It's an awful building that doesn't feel welcoming, isn't accessible and feels like a prison"</p> <p>"Given the appearance of the facade it does not appear to be a safe space"</p> <p>"Greenock currently has a poor reputation for safe spaces, particularly for woman and vulnerable people. The knowledge that we no longer have a fully operational Station will only increase criminal activity."</p> <p>"Hideous and difficult to access. No safe spaces"</p> <p>"highly visible, albeit uninviting"</p> <p>"I don't think it works well as a safe space as there's no confidentiality I'm the public space of the station"</p> <p>"Not good, there is nowhere for members of the public to go as a safe space other than sitting in the main bar"</p>
		<p>The presence or absence of Greenock Police Station is perceived to an impact on the site as a crime deterrent</p>	<p>"The knowledge that we no longer have a fully operational Station will only increase criminal activity. In addition, homes, other premises, public land"</p> <p>"Greenock Police Station is so accessible and I believe that people in a state of fear would feel safe and even more reason to keep a police station in Greenock"</p> <p>"It is both visible and accessible and as such is positive."</p> <p>"Just having a physical building is a massive deterrent. Removing a large prominent presence would be catastrophic to the area."</p> <p>"Probably not a high footfall from the general public but certainly a psychological comfort and must have given how high the crime rate is in Greenock and Inverclyde"</p>

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