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Estates Transformation Programme 2024

Analysis of responses to the Carluke Police Station consultation exercise

Report

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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 14 December 2023 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, **49 consultation responses*** were received from **42 individuals** (including 2 Police Scotland employees) and **4** members of local organisations, **2** local authority responses and **1** elected member. *Note that the question “In what capacity are you completing the survey?” was optional and therefore not all consultation respondents provided this information.

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

Central to the views on Carluke Police Station was the perception that the site has not been used in support of community policing for quite some time. The perception in the length of time it had been used varied among respondents, with some recalling its use several years past while others did not perceive Carluke as having a police station at all.

In tandem with this perception of the limited use of Carluke Police Station is the perception that it has also not been seen to be used by police officers and staff by those in the community. This was further reflected in the limited perception and reporting of the Carluke Police Station being used by the public including the use of the site as a safe space.

Factors influencing agreement with proposals

Many sentiments related to the perceived limited accessibility and utility of Carluke Police Station were driven by the belief of what the site could be used for if subject to further investment, greater police resourcing, and a heightened visible presence of police officers in the community. These beliefs furthered the idea that the physical presence – reflected in the Carluke Police Station – denotes the presence of police in the area.

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 5 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 **Carlisle Police Station** was launched **15 December 2023** and concluded **18 February 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 Carluke 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 Carluke 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 Carluke 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

A total of **49** consultation responses were received from **40** individuals (as well as 2 individuals who work for Police Scotland) and **7** representatives of local organisations, MSP, etc.

Breakdown of respondents - total respondents received by classification



Listed below are the **4** 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.

- Limited accessibility, use, and utility as a safe space for the public
- Limited suitability of the building's condition to support policing
- Having a police building is a deterrent for crime
- Lack of value add to the community as the site is not use for the public

Individuals

Individual members of the public represented **82% (40/49)** of respondents, their views drive the prevalence of specific themes at a total sample level.

Local organisation representatives

Responses from local organisation representatives represent **16%** of the sample.

Table 1: response classification

	No. of respondents	% of all respondents
All respondents	49	100%
Individuals	40	82%
Individuals (who are Police Scotland employees)	2	4%
Local elected member (Councillor)	1	2%
Representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	4	8%
Local authority in an official capacity	2	4%

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

2. Consultation Analysis

2.1. Impressions of Carluke Police Station

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

There were 42 responses to this open-ended question. The most frequently made points were that:

- The building is perceived as not being used widely, with some seeing the building as not need, not suitable, and has not been accessible to the public for years.
- While not being used, other respondents did perceive the presence of a building as being a deterrent for crime.
- The role a physical building may have for those who want to engage with the police in person and not through the internet or via the phone.

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

There were 41 responses to this open-ended question. The most frequently made points were that:

- Sentiments related to perceptions of Carluke Police Scotland and its use by police officers and staff for operational policing was also perceived as unsuitable due to the closure of the building.
- Similar sentiments regarding the belief that a physical police presence would support community policing were furthered in these responses, with some respondents questioning the location of officers with limited police presence being seen using the site's car park.

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

There were 39 responses to this open-ended question. The most frequently made points were that:

- Carluke Police Station does not provide utility as a safe space for members of the public
- Carluke Police Station is not being used as a safe space, is not suitable as a safe space, and some respondents were unaware of the potential use of the site as a safe space.

2.2. Perceptions of the proposal to dispose Carluke Police Station

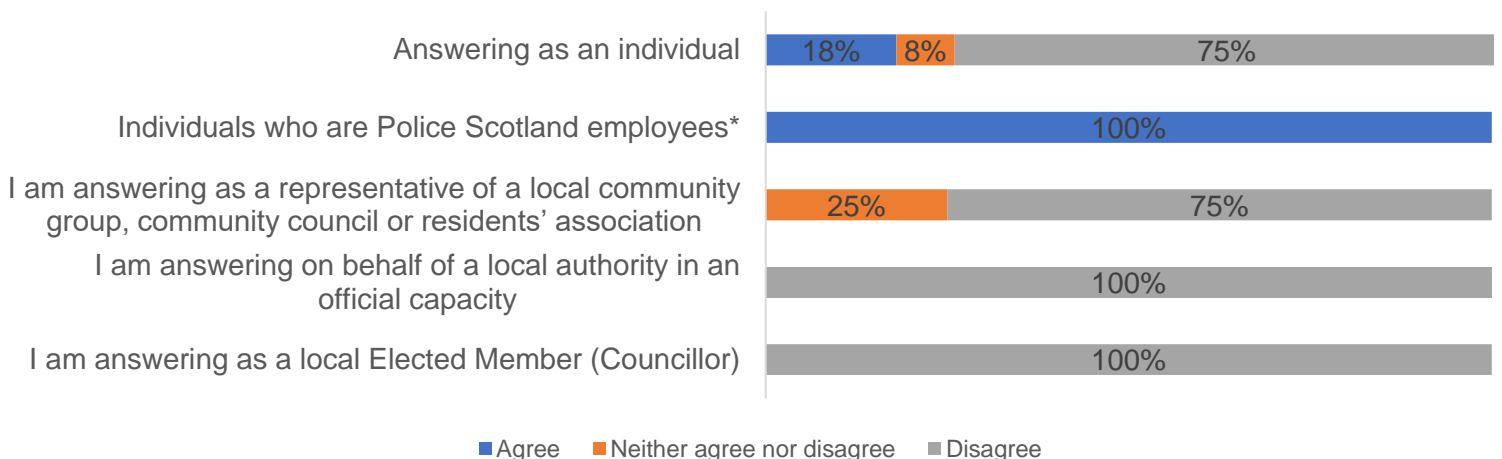
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to dispose of this building for the reasons stated at the start of this section?

	Total	Agree*		Disagree*		Neither agree nor disagree	
	N =	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%
All respondents	49	11	22%	34	69%	4	8%
Individuals	40	7	18%	30	75%	3	8%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	2	2	100%	--	--	--	--
Local elected member (Councillor)	1	--	--	1	100%	--	--
Representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	4	--	--	3	75%	1	25%
Answering on behalf of a local authority in an official capacity	1	--	--	1	100%	--	--

* "Strongly agree" and "Agree" have been combined into "agree" as well as "strongly disagree" and "disagree" being combined into "disagree".

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

Breakdown of agreement/disagreement regarding disposal by respondent classification



3. Conclusions

The consultation for Carluke Police Station provided the opportunity for the public, stakeholders, and colleagues to provide their feedback and perceptions of Carluke 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 long-standing lack of public access to Carluke Police Station and the responsive relationship to a building in which the public could not access.

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 Carluke Police Station	Theme	Coding	Response Quotes
Impressions of Carluke Police Station	Carluke Police Station used for the public engaging with Police	Lack of access	"Non existent now it's closed"
			"Not used very well as always directed to Lanark."
			"Should be used mire. The Carluke community should have a place locally to visit instead of travelling to another town"
			"There should be officers there at least some hours during the day"
		Valuable if open	"Carluke should have police officers on site when not out on calls"
			"In order to ensure local knowledge and build local relationships it is important that the police do not become remote from the communities they serve. Having a local base of operations is important."
			"It used to be, but as it's not staffed doesn't not feel it anymore"
			"The building brings years of history and culture with its use by Strathclyde Police and Police Scotland it will be sad to see this removed from the police estate due to not being used as it should by local police."
	Carluke Police Station used by police officers and staff for operational policing	Lack of value add to the community as the site is not use for the public	"The building has been unsuccessfully used for over 10 years reduced hours of service have made it worthless to the community"
			"I haven't even been near it for years. I thought it was closed already"
			"If police were inside the police they didn't respond to the public the public got used to this and stopped using it."
			"It is underused and should become an active station. The nearest office, reopened after expensive refurb is Lanark and that's only open part time."
			" Would help if public could engage contact."
		Limited use of facilities	"Occasional Police vehicle parked there. No Police Officers."
			"There were always officers here until it was closed recently, it used to have people in it which meant there was a police presence, that's reduced massively already."
" Everyone goes to lanark so don't think anyone taken to carluke now okay for the police to have somewhere to go for a tea break"			
Carluke Police Station used by members of the public as a safe space	Not used as a safe space	"It gives somewhere for people to go to when needed. I realize with modern technology this is less important but worry about what would happen if that technology failed."	
		"It is not a safe place as in is not accessible."	
		"As it is does have not regular opening times think it's unlikely that people would go for safety. But feel this is a good reason for it to remain open."	
	Having a police building is a deterrent for crime	"To give the public the reassurance that there are police in the area if there are incidents"	
		" It is reassuring to know that there is a building locally where police officers may be, if needed."	
		" Provides a safe space for a lot of people to have the opportunity to go to that may need to escape danger or dangerous situations"	
		" The presence and visibility of it makes the broader public space safe"	