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Estates Transformation Programme 2024

**Analysis of responses to the Milngavie 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

A small proportion (14%, 22/156) of respondents agreed with the proposal to dispose of Milngavie Police Station. The responses received demonstrated strong overall disagreement with the proposed disposal.

Factors influencing agreement with proposals

The level of disagreement with the proposal to dispose Milngavie Police Station was high. Qualitative data from responses identified several key drivers informing the level of disagreement found. Centrally, perceptions of the access to Milngavie Police Station varied which resulted in findings reflecting the perception that the station is both an essential service within the community as well as, in tandem, other respondents perceiving the station to be closed with no public access to services.

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 **Milngavie Police Station** was launched **17 January 2024** and concluded **13 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 Milngavie 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 Milngavie 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.

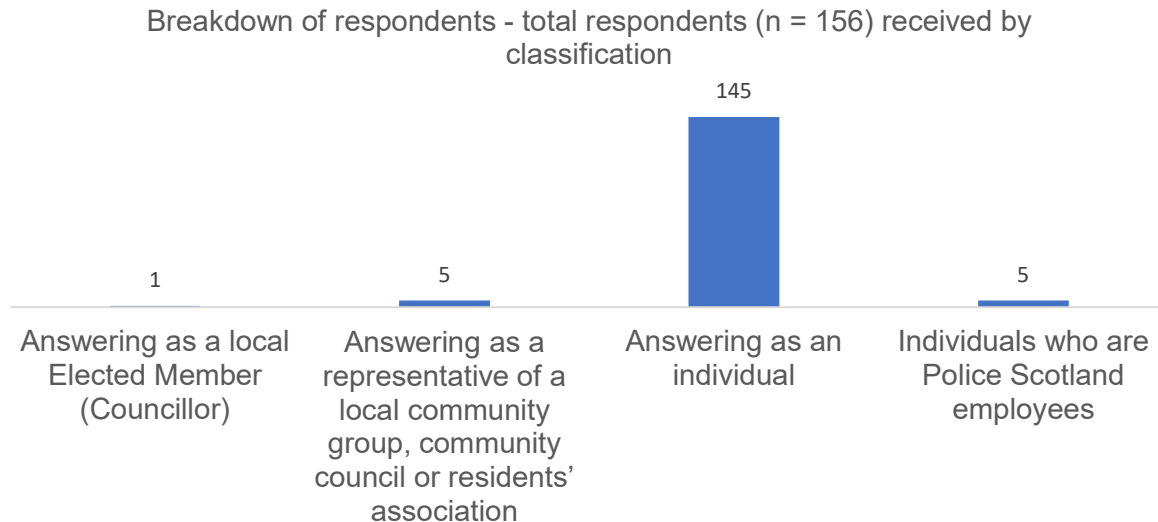
Accordingly, the extent of the analysis is proportionate to the volume of feedback in terms of comments made. An example of the data analysis process leading to the ‘Impressions of Milngavie Police Station’ results is attached (see appendix 2). The quotes that are provided through the report are intended 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, **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).



Listed below are the **7** 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.

- Accessing policing services through the station was perceived to be an important condition in how the public engage with the police.
- The perceived closure or perceived lack of access to the station are key drivers in how respondents engage with the site.
- The presence of Milngavie Police Station has as positive impact on the community, including the perception that it deters crime.
- Many respondents were unsure, or unaware, of how the site was used to support operational policing.
- Milngavie Police Station is perceived to be essential for operational policing.
- Some respondents perceived Milngavie Police Station as an essential safe space for the community.
- The perceived lack of public access to Milngavie Police Station drives negative perceptions of the station as a safe pace.

Individuals

Individual respondents (including those who work for Police Scotland) represented **96% (150/156)** 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%** of the sample.

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

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Table 1: response classification

	No. of respondents	% of all respondents
All respondents	156	100%
Answering as a local Elected Member (Councillor)	1	1%
Answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	5	3%
Answering as an individual	145	93%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	5	3%

*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 Milngavie Police Station

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

There were 127 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:

- Accessing policing services through the station was perceived to be an important condition in how the public engage with the police.
- The perceived closure or perceived lack of access to the station are key drivers in how respondents engage with the site.
- The presence of Milngavie Police Station has as positive impact on the community, including the perception that it deters crime.

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

There were 116 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:

- Many respondents were unsure, or unaware, of how the site was used to support operational policing.
- Milngavie Police Station is perceived to be essential for operational policing

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

There were 114 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 perceived Milngavie Police Station as an essential safe space for the community.
- The perceived lack of public access to Milngavie Police Station drives negative perceptions of the station as a safe space.

2.2. Perceptions of the proposal to dispose Milngavie Police Station

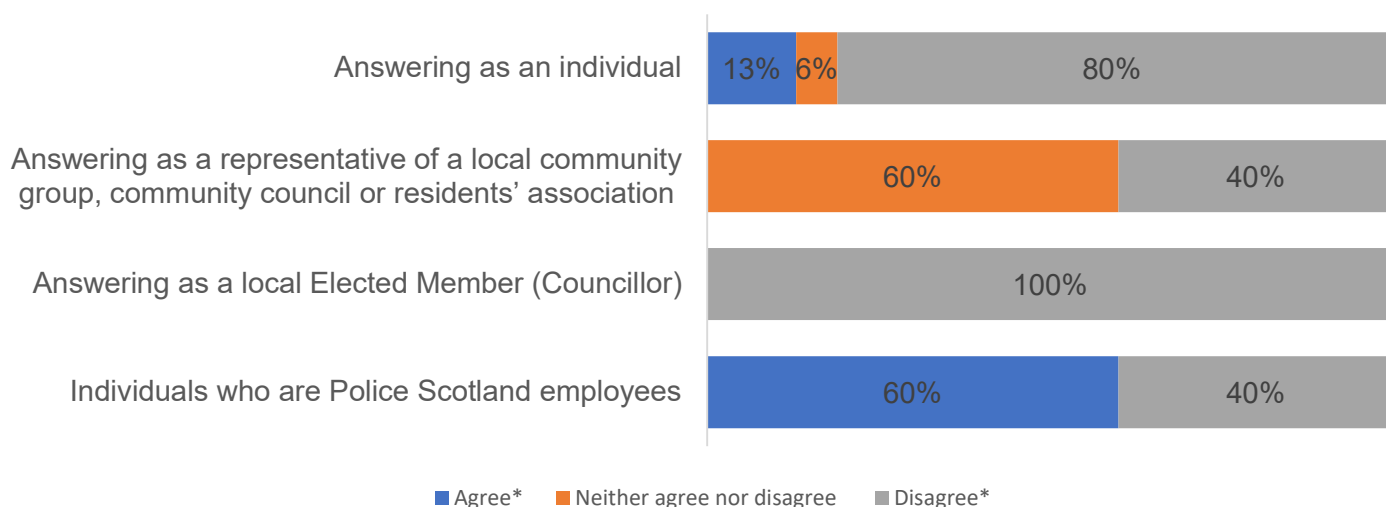
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to dispose of this building for the reasons stated at the start of this section?

	Total N =	Agree* N=	%	Disagree* N=	%	Neither agree nor disagree N=	%
All respondents	154	22	14%	120	78%	12	8%
Answering as a local Elected Member (Councillor)	1	--	--	1	100%	--	--
Answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	5	--	--	2	40%	3	60%
Answering as an individual	143	19	13%	115	80%	9	6%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	5	3	60%	2	40%	--	--

"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 Milngavie Police Station by classification

Breakdown of agreement/disagreement regarding disposal by respondents classification



3. Conclusions

The consultation for Milngavie Police Station provided the opportunity for the public, stakeholders, and colleagues to provide their feedback and perceptions of Milngavie 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 Milngavie 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 Milngavie Police Station	Theme	Coding	Response Quotes
	Milngavie Police Station used for the public engaging with Police	Accessing Policing Services through the station	<p>"Availability of a face-to-face counter experience essential"</p> <p>"Calling in to speak face to face with police officers"</p> <p>"Essential for police and community engagement, needs to stay to improve this."</p> <p>"Good to have formal station"</p> <p>"It is a short walk from the town centre, and allows for casual interactions (presenting lost property) which gives police the opportunity to build positive relationships."</p>
		Perceived closure or lack of access to Milngavie Police Station	<p>"Always looks closed"</p> <p>"Awful. Was shut for ages and when you do try to go now there's never anyone there."</p> <p>"I am contacted constantly by people who have attempted to attend the station only to discover it is closed. It is necessary to have a local police station."</p> <p>"I had no idea this station was still open and have called 111 if needed."</p> <p>"It has been difficult to engage with the police at this building as it is already closed most of the time."</p> <p>"It is already mainly closed"</p> <p>"It is often closed so there is little opportunity for the public to engage with the police"</p> <p>"Never know if it's manned. Used the outside speaker once with no reply"</p> <p>"Not in use, hasn't been for years - is my understanding."</p>
		Prominence of Milngavie Police Station as a crime deterrent and positive impact on community	<p>"A place in Milngavie is needed for the public to engage with the police but it does not need to be in this tired building"</p> <p>"Having a police station to have easy access to ,also acts as deterrent"</p> <p>"It a asset to milngavie safety."</p> <p>"It demonstrates a police presence in the area."</p> <p>"it is an important facility to have in the heart of the community"</p> <p>"It is well located, and the only one that covers Bearsden and Milngavie residents fairly locally. It is definitely important to have a physically based building to enhance engagement. Not everyone can, or would know how to, engage only online!"</p> <p>"It's a presence in the community"</p> <p>"It's an important well known place for the community to see and interact with police officers."</p> <p>"Provides reassurance and visibility to residents of Milngavie"</p> <p>"There is definitely a comfort knowing there is a fairly local police station. Even though it isn't always open it's still a reassuring presence and perhaps a deterrent to criminals."</p>

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	Milngavie Police Station used by police officers and staff for operational policing	Perceived lack of operational use of Milngavie Police Station	"As far as I'm aware the building us not manned. On the very rare occasion I have gone there it has been shut."
			"Doesn't get used which is a disgrace"
			"Cars in carpark only- no obvious staff present"
			"I am unaware of how it is used by officers"
			"Haven't seen any police officers or staff inside or even outside the building for a long time now."
			"I have not seen much Police activity but that could be because of the plan to close the station in addition to the increased mobility of Police officers"
			"Never see any police in it, and I think they all come from Kirky so what's the point?"
	Milngavie Police Station is perceived to be essential for operational policing		"Essential for the staff and police officers, nonsense to have the travel 8 miles to the nearest station."
			"Essential to the community, needs more police located here"
			"essential, especially for basic necessities"
			"For timeous response when calls are received whereby police are required to respond in the Bearsden and Milngavie area"
			"I think it provides a good central location for local officers to be based as Kirkintilloch PO is too far to respond to urgent calls in Bearsden."
			"If based locally can respond and be involved in community again if not that building one of empty spaces in precinct would be even more engaging"
			"It's regularly used by response officers who are attending calls in Milngavie, for rest and report writing. If they only have Kirkintilloch to go to this will result in significantly less officers being in the area of Milngavie."
	Milngavie Police Station used by members of the public as a safe space	Milngavie Police Station as a safe space	"Again - this is vital. If a woman is walking home and is being followed they need a police station to go to. Or if you have a vehicle incident and the other driver follows you a police station is vital to attend immediately."
			"Convenient, and subtle as the police station blends into its surroundings and is on a major thoroughfare."
			"Essential to the community, access needs widened/ increased"
			" I have been in a situation where I needed access to a space where I was safe, removing the site would mean that was impossible."
			"If it's taken away from us, do we need to travel 7.5 miles to Kirkintilloch for our safe space? What alternative safe space will the local community have??"
			"It is a place that is local to me that as a woman walking in the town that if I felt threatened it would be somewhere I could go to feel safe"

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		The perceived lack of public access to Milngavie Police Station drives negative perceptions of the station as a safe space	"At the moment the police station is not a safe place as it is closed most of the time but it would be great if there was a safe place in Milngavie that had some police presence"
			"At the moment the police station is not a safe place as it is closed most of the time but it would be great if there was a safe place in Milngavie that had some police presence"
			"Currently inaccessible most of the time."
			"Doesn't look open or welcoming"
			"I dont view this as a safe space, the counter is not staffed on a permanent basis."
			"I thought it was closed years ago. There's no sign of police presence on the site."
			"It is often closed so there is little opportunity for the public to use the building as a safe space"