Estates Transformation Programme 2024

Analysis of responses to the Gorbals Police Station consultation exercise

Report

April 2024

Research and Insight

Strategy, Insight and Engagement

Contents

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, **59 consultation responses** were received from **51 individuals** (including 6 Police Scotland employees). There were 4 respondents answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association, 2 respondents answering on behalf of third sector organisations, 1 respondent answering on behalf of an educational establishment and 1 respondent answering as 'Other'.

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

5 respondents of the 59 respondents agreed with the disposal of Gorbals Police station.

Factors influencing agreement with proposals

The physical location of Gorbals Police Station was a consistent theme that permeated throughout all responses to the consultation. Many respondents reflected on this a key driver in perceiving the site to be active operationally, which supported feelings of positive community policing and perceptions of the station being a safe space.

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 **Gorbals Police Station** was launched **22 February 2024** and concluded **04 April 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 Gorbals 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 Gorbals 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 Gorbals 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, **59 consultation responses** were received from **51 individuals** (including 6 Police Scotland employees). There were 4 respondents answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association, 2 respondents answering on behalf of third sector organisations, 1 respondent answering on behalf of an educational establishment and 1 respondent answering as 'Other'.

Breakdown of respondents - total respondents (n = 59) received by classification

Category	Count
Answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	4
Answering as an individual	45
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	6
Answering on behalf of a third sector organisation	2
Answering on behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college	1
Other	1
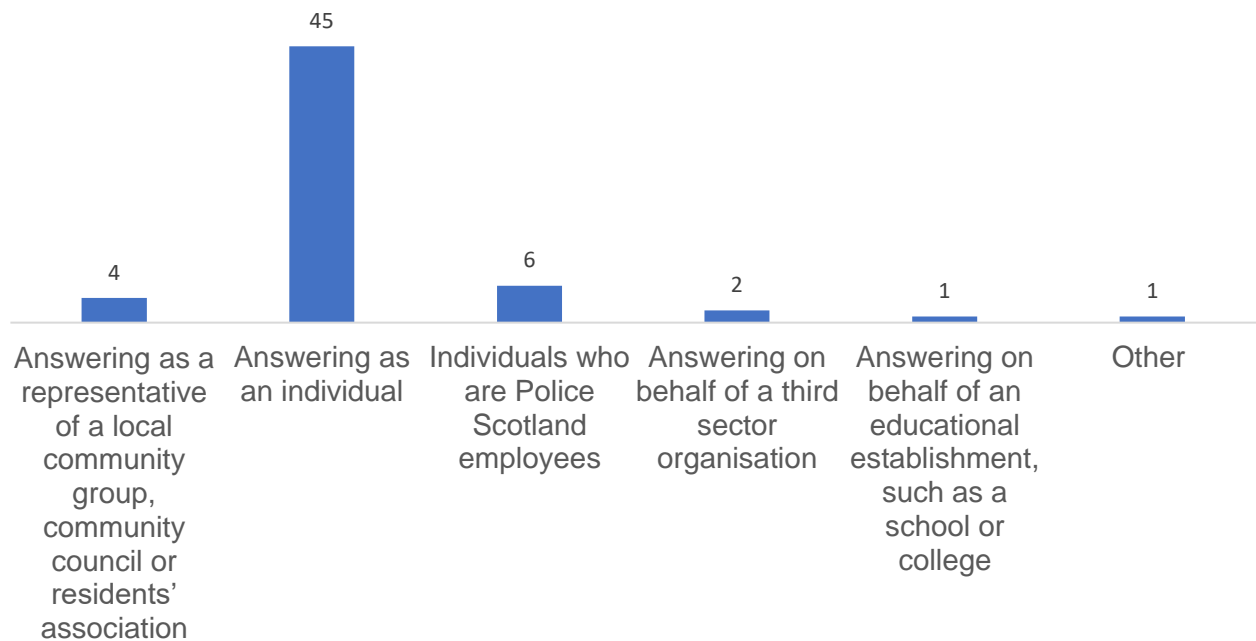
Listed below are the **4** most prevalent themes at a total sample level. This is to provide an understanding of the issues reported across the total sample. Themes are not presented in an order of magnitude.

- Gorbals Police Station is perceived to be busy, serving and supporting the community.
- The centrality of Gorbals Police Station reinforces feelings of safety.
- The centrality of Gorbals Police Station is a key driver in the highly perceived operational activity of the station.
- The perceived high levels of policing activity in Gorbals Police Station reinforces feelings of support.

Individuals
Individual respondents (including those who work for Police Scotland) represented **86% (51/59)** of respondents, their views drive the prevalence of specific themes at a total sample level.

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

Local organisation representatives

Responses from local organisation representatives represent **14%** of the sample.

Table 1: response classification

	No. of respondents	% of all respondents
All respondents	**59**	**100%**
Answering as an individual	45	76%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	6	10%
Answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	4	7%
Answering on behalf of a third sector organisation	2	3%
Answering on behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college	1	2%
Other	1	2%

2. Consultation Analysis

2.1.   Impressions of Gorbals Police Station

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

There were 50 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 perceived the site to be busy, reflecting sentiments that the site is actively serving and supporting the local community.
- The central location of Gorbals Police Station furthered feelings of safety.

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

There were 44 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 centrality of Gorbals Police Station is a key driver in the highly perceived operational activity of the station.

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

There were 42 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 perceived high levels of policing activity in Gorbals Police Stations reinforces feelings of support.

## 2.2. Perceptions of the proposal to dispose Gorbals 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	**56**	**5**	**9%**	**49**	**88%**	**2**	**4%**
Answering as a representative of a local community group, community council or residents' association	4	1	25%	3	75%	--	--
Answering as an individual	43	3	7%	39	91%	1	2%
Individuals who are Police Scotland employees	6	1	17%	4	67%	1	17%
Answering on behalf of a third sector organisation	1	--	--	1	100%	--	--
Answering on behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college	1	--	--	1	100%	--	--
Other	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 Gorbals Police Station by classification

Breakdown of agreement/disagreement regarding disposal by respondents classification
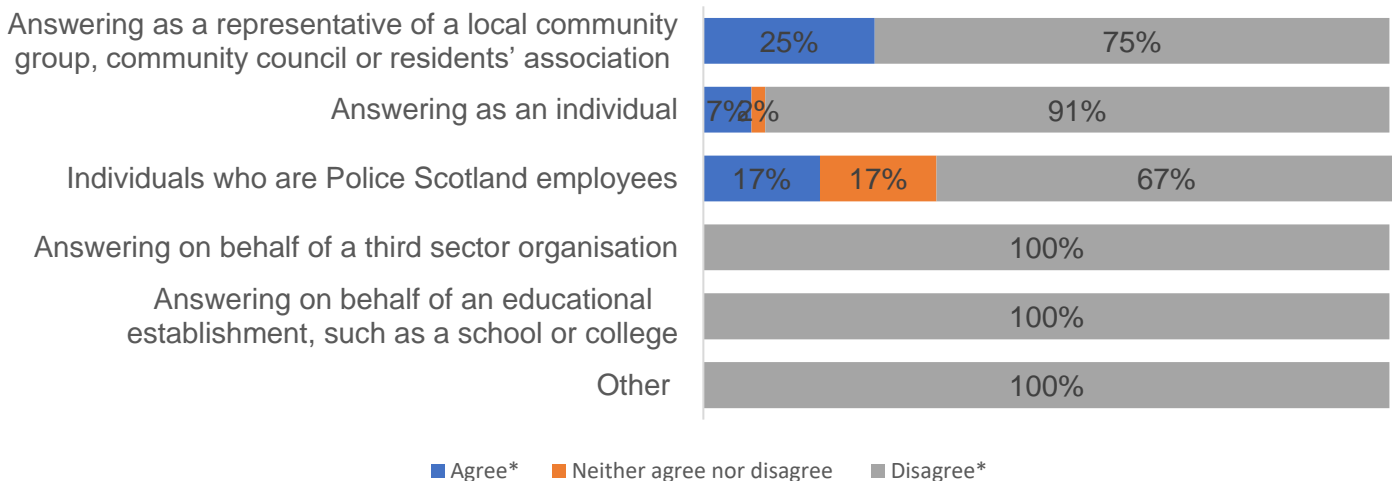
3. Conclusions

The consultation for Gorbals Police Station provided the opportunity for the public, stakeholders, and colleagues to provide their feedback and perceptions of Gorbals 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 Gorbals 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	Inform (by distributing or making information accessible on policies, decisions, services and legislation). Inform Method: Website, Social media, Bulletins, Reports, Media releases.		
Medium		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. Review 1: National Conversation (online feedback) Review 2: Local Estate Survey (online feedback, localised)	
High			Community Empowerment: Community meetings, workshops, focus groups to promote two-way communication and proactive, visible, participation Consensus building: deliberative forums to promote deeper engagement via public assemblies.

Appendix 2: Example qualitative coding matrix

Impressions of Gorbals Police Station	Theme	Coding	Response Quotes
	Gorbals Police Station used for the public engaging with Police	Gorbals Police Station is perceived to be busy, serving and supporting the community	"Every time I go passed the station it always has cars in the car park and outside which implies there are a lot of staff working. This makes you feel safer."
			"Good, the public attend at the front bar and it is one of the closest stations to the city centre for tourists."
			"I see people regularly using the front desk at this office."
			"It is used by locals"
			"Local people feel safer with the office in the community"
			"Public within the local area use this station frequently and like having officers locally"
		The centrality of Gorbals Police Station reinforces feelings of safety	"Having a local presence is important and also a deterrent"
			"in view police station makes us feel safer we like location seeing police presence has kept vandalism down in our area"
			"Local people feel safer with the office in the community"
			"I'm 55 and knowing it's there gives me peace of mind I feel safer known the police station is on my doorstep"
			"For local residents who live so close to a city centre it provides an additional feeling of safety."
	Gorbals Police Station used by police officers and staff for operational policing	The centrality of Gorbals Police Station is a key driver in the highly perceived operational activity of the station	"Having police officers work out of this provides a quick response in the area. It helps keep local issues down"
			"Good centrally positioned base"
			"it is used operationally everyday"
			"Local and convenient base for operations"
			"Police are visible in the local area as a direct result of this office's location"
			"Response and community officer operate from this office, if they were removed you would lose a lot of local knowledge of these officers"
			"The building is always busy with police in the area. This provides an additional feeling of safety. As a resident I feel better knowing the police officers are nearby."
			"This is used by police officers as a good hub to be able to access a number of areas all within a reasonable time"
	Gorbals Police Station used by members of the public as a safe space	The perceived high levels of policing activity in Gorbals Police Stations	"Definitely seen as a safe space for the Gorbals community."
			"Feel safe knowing the local police station is on my door step."
			"I have personally seen members of the public regularly use this office of as safe space and if this building shuts it will leave the most vulnerable exposed and with no where near to attend and seek refuse."

		reinforces feelings of support	"People in the area know this is a place to go if they need to. People who are not local will also recognise it as a police station and a place of sanctuary"
			"The public can rely on this office as a place to go to reach safety and seek further advice"
			"To loose this building would impact on local people who like face to face communication just being able to have it within walking distance for enquiries for my husband and myself as we are both pensioners"
			"Well known and within easy reach should you need a safe shelter that's open 24/7"