



Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire and  
Luton Borough Council

## Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Task and Finish Group

# Review of the Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police

November 2013

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Foreword from the Chair .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Evidence .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.1. Estates Strategy Document .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.2. Public Consultation .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.3. Individual Sites .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.4. Budget Considerations .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.5. Additional Information .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5.6. Interview with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix A: Project Scope .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix B: Terms of Reference.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix C: Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix D: Consultation responses .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix E: Additional Information .....</b>	<b>84</b>

# 1. Foreword from the Chair

This report sets out the findings of the review conducted by the Task and Finish Group established by the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel at its meeting on 26 September 2013 to consider the Bedfordshire Police Estates Strategy. This Task and Finish Group was particularly important in that it was the first of a number of planned Task and Finish Groups carrying out pre-scrutiny of the Commissioner's work, and should pave the way for a much closer and productive working relationship going forward.

These are very challenging times for Police funding. The report on Bedfordshire Police's response to the funding challenge, published by the HMIC in July 2013, indicated that although the force has made good progress in meeting that financial challenge and has developed a detailed change programme which allows it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime, the HMIC considers that Bedfordshire Police faces a more difficult challenge than other forces and that, having taken the range of steps any force would be expected to take to become efficient and effective, Bedfordshire may soon struggle to identify where further savings can come from, with little option but to cut frontline police officer numbers further. Given the need, and the public's wish, to protect frontline policing, this means that all other avenues for reducing spend need to be fully utilised in innovative ways so as to ensure that an effective policing service continues to be delivered to the public. This requires the Commissioner to ensure that the force maximises the effectiveness with which it uses all the resources at its disposal, including its properties.

Our report recognises the need for difficult decisions to be taken but, whilst supporting the Estates Strategy, emphasises the need to ensure that it is implemented in a phased and planned way which will not reduce access to police services and, indeed, offer the public a variety of alternative methods of easy access. It is the Task Group's view that the implementation of the strategy in fact offers the potential to enhance the current level of service by improving the range, convenience and effectiveness of the means by which the public may access that service, provided the strategy is implemented in an efficient and thoughtful way. Effective communication of the existence of those various channels and how to access them, plus providing an understanding to the public of the changes in police contact will, however, be the key to successful implementation.

The Task Group has appreciated the open approach and full co-operation it has received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire in undertaking this review. Particular thanks go to Stephanie McMenamy, OPCC Chief Executive, Philip Wells, OPCC Chief Finance Officer and Julie Wymer, OPCC Deputy Chief Executive who attended Task Group meetings to present the strategy and the results of the public consultation that took place between 1 August and 1 October 2013 and responded comprehensively to our many questions. Thanks must also go to Commission Martins and to Chief Constable, Colette Paul who attended the

Task Group's meeting on 11 November 2013 to respond to questions which the Task Group wished to put to them when they were under extreme time and diary pressure.

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Policing Protocol 2011 require Police and Crime Panels to exercise their functions with a view to supporting the effective exercise of the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner for their Police area. Members of the Task and Finish Group have looked long and hard at the evidence that has been presented to them during the course of the review and challenged the Commissioner and his office to demonstrate to us whether or not the Estates Strategy can be pursued without any adverse impact on the service which the people of Bedfordshire receive from their Police Force and enable it to make a contribution to the overall savings on the police budget which still need to be found.

The Task Group has been satisfied that the Commissioner's approach, which has included significant public consultation, is appropriate and that the work it has undertaken in carrying out this review is in keeping with the Panel's obligation to support the effective exercise of the Commissioner's functions. I would like to thank the other members of the Task Group, Councillors Chapman, Holland and Saleem for their commitment to this review and support for the review process.

Finally, I would like on behalf of the Task Group to thank the officers of the Panel's Host Authority who have provided superb support work, organisation, assistance and advice to the Task Group's work.

Mr Paul Cain  
Chair, Task and Finish Group (Estates Strategy) of Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

## 2. Recommendations

After careful consideration of the evidence gathered during the review and the conclusions reached, the Task and Finish Group agreed that the following recommendations be made to the Police and Crime Commissioner of Bedfordshire.

That:

- 2.1. Having considered the responses received to the Public Consultation and the reassurances provided by the Commissioner and the Chief Constable, the Bedfordshire Police Estates Strategy be supported given its essential role in helping to deliver a balanced budget over the coming years;
- 2.2. The Commissioner develop a Public Access Strategy in order to make the public more aware of the various channels of interfacing with the Police;
- 2.3. The Estates Strategy be implemented in planned and well communicated stages, in order to cause minimum disruption to the service offered to the public, and to avoid any potential loss of public confidence in the policing services available;
- 2.4. No police stations be closed until adequate alternative provision of services is already in place;
- 2.5. Innovative communication methods be developed and exploited for maximum effect, for example to dispel the misconception that emergency response vehicles are based at Police Stations and to increase public awareness of the channels available to interact with the Police;
- 2.6. ICT investment is continued to improve accessibility, and enable staff to spend more time on the front line;
- 2.7. Increased efforts be made to communicate with hard to reach and Black and Minority Ethnic communities across Bedfordshire to enable their views to be taken into account in the future shaping of services;
- 2.8. Alternative access points should be chosen carefully having regard to the consultation responses received.

### 3. Executive Summary

In order for the Panel to expand its role in supporting the development of policing in Bedfordshire, agreement was reached between the Commissioner and the Panel that “Task and Finish Groups” would be set up to carry out pre-decision scrutiny, looking at particular and topical issues of policing in the County, which the Commissioner will need to consider over the coming period.

The first of these Groups was established to review the Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police in the context of the responses received to the public consultation carried out into contacting the Police in a non-emergency situation, which was undertaken between 1 August and 1 October 2013. The Terms of Reference and the Scope for the review were agreed by the Panel at the 26 September 2013 meeting, which also appointed Panel Members Cllr. Chapman, Cllr. Holland, Cllr. Saleem, and Mr. Cain to sit on the Task and Finish Group.

At the first meeting of the Group, Members considered and confirmed the scope of the review. This produced the following agreed lines of enquiry:

1. What strategies and plans are incorporated in the Estates Strategy?
2. What are the views of the Police and Crime Commissioner?
3. What are the views of the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)?
4. What are the views of the Chief Constable (CC)?
5. What are the messages received from the public consultation carried out by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)?
6. Are other partners or organisations being consulted, who and how?

The Commissioner was of great assistance in facilitating the review by allowing full access to his staff, and by providing all the information the Panel needed to complete the review. In addition the PCC and the CC were very helpful in being interviewed by the Task and Finish Group for the purpose of gathering evidence for use in the review.

The full scope for the review is included in this report at [Appendix A](#), and the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group are available at [Appendix B](#).

Once the evidence gathering process was complete, the evidence was collated in a draft report in order to provide the discussion basis for production of the recommendations.

The draft report was considered at the Group’s meeting on 11 November 2013. It was updated to include the recommendations decided at that meeting, and then submitted to the Panel’s meeting on 25 November 2013 where the final content of the report was agreed. The Panel’s recommendations to the PCC are detailed in section 2 of this final report.

## 4. Conclusions

Members considered the evidence and information received during the course of the review and came to the following conclusions:

- 4.1. That the responses received to the recent public consultation on Access to Policing Services are statistically sound and do not indicate the need for any significant amendment to the Estates Strategy overall;
- 4.2. Of respondents to the public consultation:
  - ⇒ 70% had not visited their local Police Station in the last year;
  - ⇒ 78% prefer to contact the Police either by phone, e-mail or on-line compared with 22% preferring face to face contact;
  - ⇒ 71% would accept closure of Police Stations if they were easily able to access the local neighbourhood policing team.

The low response rate from Luton may be explained by the belief that Stations there will not be affected and that traditionally Black and Minority Ethnic groups respond at a lower rate;

- 4.3. Budgets for the Force (currently the total budget stands at £103m) have been/will be cut by the following amounts:
  - ⇒ 2010/11 to 2013/14 - £15.0m;
  - ⇒ 2014/15 to 2015/16 - £7.5m;
  - ⇒ 2016/17 to 2017/18 - £10.0m.
- 4.4. That the Estates Strategy is a five year strategy covering the period 2013-18 intended to be implemented in a managed way that will not result in the closure of any Police Stations unless alternative provision of services is in place;
- 4.5. The consultation responses reveal that there is a lack of knowledge of alternative channels currently available of interacting with the Police;
- 4.6. The consultation responses reveal that there is a misconception that emergency response vehicles are based at Police Stations;
- 4.7. That, given the lack of knowledge and misconception referred to in 5 and 6 above, there is a need to improve communication about how to access the service;
- 4.8. That the consultation responses provide a valuable source of information to inform the development of a Public Access Strategy;
- 4.9. That further investment in ICT will improve the accessibility and visibility of front line Police by enabling them to have remote access to systems and information which they currently need to return to the office to access;

## 5. Evidence

In order to have an input into the PCC's Budget planning process, the Task and Finish Group had to submit their final report to the Police and Crime Panel's meeting on 25 November 2013. Once agreed by the Panel this would then allow the PCC to consider the recommendations and his response to them as appropriate into his strategy for the future.

To ensure that the review ran to this tight schedule, Members carried out a scoping exercise at the Panel meeting on 26 September 2013 to decide the extent of the review and the timescale. This resulted in the production of a scope document which is included at [Appendix A](#).

The main tasks the Group carried out were:

- ⇒ To consider the draft Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police;
- ⇒ To consider the public consultation responses;
- ⇒ To meet the PCC and his CC;
- ⇒ To meet with the OPCC Chief Finance Officer, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.

The Task and Finish Group met on three separate occasions, and a summary of the evidence gathered is presented as follows:

### 5.1. Estates Strategy Document

At the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group Members considered the Estates Strategy, which is included at [Appendix C](#), and asked questions of the OPCC Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive. In response they were given the following information:

- ⇒ The Strategy is a current working document and has been written for the PCC and the CC of Bedfordshire Police;
- ⇒ As part of the stage two transfer, decisions will be made on whether the PCC or the CC "owns" the employees and the land and buildings of the force. The PCC will probably retain ownership of the estate;
- ⇒ The process was commenced in February 2013, and the strategy and consultation options were considered at the 15 April 2013 and 20 May 2013 meetings of the OPCC Executive Board;
- ⇒ The Strategy will remain a restricted document until the results of the consultation have been incorporated into the strategy. It will then be published on line;
- ⇒ Collaboration between Forces has been successful, although cross-charging became an excessive administrative workload and has been ceased;
- ⇒ Bedfordshire Police have a policy of asking for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for all new developments, even if there is no current need for facilities in that particular development e.g. Wixams;

- ⇒ The PCC has stated that no police stations will be closed unless alternative provision of services is already in place;
- ⇒ ICT investment will improve accessibility, and enable staff to spend more time on the front line;
- ⇒ There is a short term target to reduce estates expenditure by 6%, to be achieved by reducing service costs.

## **5.2. Public Consultation**

Prior to the detailed consultation results being available Members were given the following preliminary information by OPCC Officers:

- ⇒ The consultation ended on 30 September 2013 and the interim results would be available by the end of October;
- ⇒ 1215 individuals had responded, which is a statistically robust number, with the following headline results:
  - 83% of the respondents were between the ages of 35 to 74, 57% were men and 90% were white;
  - Of the 52% who had contacted the Police 85% had done so via e-mail or telephone in the last year;
  - 70% had not visited their local Police Station in the last year;
  - 78% prefer to contact the police either by phone, e-mail or on-line compared with 22% preferring face to face contact
  - 27% want to report ASB face to face whilst 40% want to report face to face if they are a victim of an assault or robbery;
  - Only occasion when people would prefer to use a front counter would be to hand in or claim lost property-94%;
  - 55% would use a community hub/Co-location;
  - 64% would use on line provision of services;
  - 71% would accept closure of Police Stations if they were easily able to access the local neighbourhood policing team;
  - 67% would not want a third party provider running front counters;
  - 88% would prefer funds to be spent on front line policing rather than police stations;
  - 51% would not support an increase in Council Tax to fund services.

At a subsequent Group meeting Members considered a covering report and the detailed consultation responses, which are included at [Appendix D](#) and were given the following information:

### **5.2.1. General:**

- ⇒ The questionnaire used for the survey, contained in the Appendix to the report, had been quality assured by the Consultation Institute;
- ⇒ Part A of the questionnaire set out to establish in what ways the public currently contact and access policing services. Part B explored public preference for alternative ways of contacting the police;
- ⇒ Reaching younger people and “hard to reach” groups was an issue identified at the beginning of the process. This had been confirmed by preliminary results part

- way through the consultation. The PCC had tried to address this by personally attending “fresher weeks” at the University and targeting BME groups.
- ⇒ The final results show that BME groups and the Luton area are under-represented, and that there had been a significant level of response from the Central Bedfordshire area. This has been taken account of when interpreting the results;
  - ⇒ A total of 1612 responses had been received of which 361 had been only partially completed and 47 were hard copy response;
  - ⇒ The demographics of those who responded were:
    - 57% Male/43% female;
    - By area: Bedford Borough 24%, Central Bedfordshire 42%, and Luton Borough 9.5%;
    - 90% of respondents classified themselves as white British;
    - 70% of respondents were between the age of 45 years to 74 years.
  - ⇒ The recommendations detailed in the covering report were agreed by the OPCC Executive Board at their 28 October 2013 meeting.

### **5.2.2. Results:**

- ⇒ Positive feedback showing that there is good general awareness of the 999 and 101 telephone numbers;
- ⇒ There is lack of knowledge of alternative channels of interacting with the Police. This is a known communication issue for the Force;
- ⇒ There is a lack of knowledge of Police Station locations;
- ⇒ The majority of people would be happy to use on-line services, but not for crime related matters (e.g., to report Anti Social Behaviour or violent crime) where the preference is for telephone or personal contact;
- ⇒ Younger respondents tended to be more frequent callers at Police Stations;
- ⇒ There is a mixed view of using community hubs and other public service locations for Police matters;
- ⇒ There was a negative view of using “Skype” perhaps due to negative local media coverage which had occurred around the time the consultation period started;
- ⇒ Central Bedfordshire respondents would accept paying extra to keep local Stations open, Bedford Borough and Luton Borough respondents would not;
- ⇒ The major concern over possible Station closures was different by area as follows:
  - Luton: Feeling of Safety;
  - Bedford: No concern;
  - Central: Increase in response times.
- ⇒ It was considered that the low response rate from Luton may be explained by the belief that Stations there will not be affected, and that traditionally BME groups respond at a lower rate;
- ⇒ There is a misconception that emergency response vehicles are based at Police Stations (leading to a view that response times would worsen if Police Stations were closed).

### **5.2.3. Conclusions:**

- ⇒ The responses were generally as expected and hence were unlikely to alter the direction of the Estates Strategy, however they provided valuable input into the production of a “Public Access Strategy”;

- ⇒ Actions that could be taken in the form of promises:
  - Tailoring the Police Station opening hours to match the public's requirements;
  - Enabling the public to track progress of crime investigations on-line;
  - Providing Crime Prevention desks in places such as supermarkets (as the Metropolitan Police Force does).
- ⇒ New channels of public interaction need to be implemented prior to any Station closures;
- ⇒ It had not yet been decided how to communicate the results to the public, but the message needed to be consistent across the Force.

### **5.3. Individual Sites**

Information on individual sites within the estate of Bedfordshire Police was provided as follows:

- ⇒ Greyfriars, Luton and Dunstable are the only police stations that have custody suites;
- ⇒ The buildings at Head Quarters, and Luton and Dunstable police stations are in good condition, whilst Greyfriars is in poor condition and is estimated to have a five year lifespan. The other buildings which make up the estate are in average condition;
- ⇒ Leighton Buzzard police station has a usage figure of 20% and some buildings on the site are closed;
- ⇒ The plans to build at the Head Quarters, which have been granted planning permission, would cost £14m using conventional building techniques. The current level of Capital Reserves, which has been accrued over several years is £5.5m. Using modular custody construction techniques would be cheaper and would also provide a mobile solution. A needs analysis including IT and the issue of coverage for Bedford town centre will be carried out, with decisions on a proposed way forward to be taken within a six month timescale;
- ⇒ The planning for a new facility is based upon 35 custody cells compared to the current provision at Greyfriars of 15;
- ⇒ Co-location of services is being considered in conjunction with the Pan Bedfordshire Property Group:
  - Biggleswade: The police station is not a good design for its function, and is under used;
  - Dunstable: The police station will not need custody provision in the longer term, but the location is good considering the extensive building development planned locally.

### **5.4. Budget Considerations**

Members discussed budgetary issues with OPCC officers and were given the following information:

- ⇒ Current estate maintenance funding is concentrated on the buildings the Force needs;

- ⇒ The PCC will be looking to have an action plan in place for delivery against the Estates Strategy at the end of 2013, with any budget implications being brought to the Panel on 6 February 2014;
- ⇒ The Estates Strategy, when finalised, will be a document to provide a decision making framework over the next five/ten years;
- ⇒ Budgets for the Force (currently the total budget stands at £103m) have been/will be cut by the following amounts:
  - 2010/11 to 2013/14: £15.0m
  - 2014/15 to 2015/16: £7.5m
  - 2016/17 to 2017/18: £10.0m.
- ⇒ The actual funding received by the Force each year is less than the figure which use of the funding formula produced by the Home Office would give.

## 5.5. Additional Information

During the course of the review the Group requested additional information from the PCC's Office and was provided with:

- ⇒ PCC Executive Board Minutes for meetings held on 15 April 2013, and 20 May 2013;
- ⇒ PCC Report, "Policing and Public Access in Bedfordshire" received at the PCC Executive Board meeting on 20 May 2013;
- ⇒ PCC Partnership Database;
- ⇒ Bedfordshire Police Estates Cost Spreadsheet (*Redacted from the final report due to the commercially sensitive nature of the data*).

These documents are available at [Appendix E](#).

Members considered these documents and were given the following information in discussions with OPCC Officers:

- ⇒ The Mayor's Office of Police and Crime (MOPAC) for London has a "Public Access Strategy" in the form of promises, examples of which are:
  - One Station in every Borough will always be open to the public, 24/7, 365 days per year;
  - Every victim of crime is entitled to a personal visit;
  - The public can access Police services at Community Hubs, where it is guaranteed there will be no offenders present (separate provision being for those required to report to the Police, pay fines etc).
- ⇒ In Surrey and Sussex, the PCCs had halted Station closure programmes until their Estates Strategies were reviewed. No public consultation had been carried out and the closures had continued. In contrast, the Bedfordshire PCC had been positive in seeking the public's views.
- ⇒ The Implementation Plan referred to in the minutes of the OPCC Executive Board meeting on 15 April 2013, will be produced when all work on the Estates Strategy has been completed;
- ⇒ The PCC has stated that Police stations will not be closed unless an alternative provision is in place. The PCC's time spent on the counters at various Police

- Stations has demonstrated that, on the days in question, visitor numbers were very low;
- ⇒ There was a need to consider carefully how/when feedback was provided to the public on the consultation outcomes so that the responses were available at the same time;
  - ⇒ The Panel has an important role to play in communicating with the Public.

## **5.6. Interview with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable**

The Task and Finish Group concluded their evidence gathering process by interviewing the PCC and the CC at the 11 November 2013 meeting.

Members considered the Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police and asked questions of the PCC and CC. In response they were given the following information:

- ⇒ The results of the public consultation had reinforced their views on the Estates Strategy but the PCC was slightly disappointed at reactions to the possible use of social media;
- ⇒ The PCC was not disappointed about the level of public response to the consultation, which had been in line with anticipated response levels. He had been assured that these were statistically robust;
- ⇒ The PCC wanted to make the Force more accessible and to put in place additional, as opposed to alternative, ways for the public to interact with the force;
- ⇒ A figure had not yet been put on the contribution the Estates Strategy would make to the savings required to be made over the next two years;
- ⇒ The Estates Strategy should contribute to the savings without the service to the public being negatively affected;
- ⇒ All budgets were being looked at to see where savings could be made;
- ⇒ The biggest savings were expected to be made from working in collaboration;
- ⇒ The Estates Strategy was part of the transformation and collaboration agenda and it was important this was carried out as a strategic exercise with a clear direction;
- ⇒ There was an opportunity to provide an interim solution in Leighton Buzzard fairly quickly at a fraction of the cost of the current premises which had only a 10% occupancy rate, as suitable premises were available. The long term ambition however was to have shared premises with Central Bedfordshire Council and the Fire & Rescue Service;
- ⇒ The aim was to use less expensive “shop fronts” to provide a High Street presence and to make these very visible;
- ⇒ There was a firm commitment to have alternative means of accessing services in place before any existing premises were closed;
- ⇒ The use of other buildings as contact points would depend on what it was possible to achieve through partnership working;

- ⇒ The comments expressed by some respondents to the public consultation that they did not wish to access services at locations where offenders were also present, would be taken into account;
- ⇒ The lessons learnt by the PCC from the closure of Police Stations in other areas were to consult with the public first (which in some cases elsewhere in the country had not happened) then, once a new strategy was in place, to let the public know what was happening and why it was necessary for future proofing the service and show how the consultation responses had been fed into the strategy;
- ⇒ The Policing Model currently in use did not in the CC's view provide sufficient geographical accountability/responsibility and was being amended so that the Superintendent responsible for Luton would also be responsible for ensuring that the Central Bedfordshire area has also received the service its residents need. Although the Superintendent would be based in Luton, s/he would be responsible for a Central Bedfordshire based Chief Inspector. This was considered the best means of countering the perception of a Luton centric service. Both the Luton and Bedford Superintendents would be required to provide support in Central Bedfordshire;
- ⇒ Any police station closures would not impact on response times, which there was a clear commitment to improve;
- ⇒ If the proposal to build a custody suite in Kempston to replace that in Greyfriars, Bedford went ahead, the additional travelling distance would only slightly impact on policing of the night-time economy in Bedford. Officers would only have to return to base to take a prisoner into custody, as they would be provided with electronic devices and would be able to work anywhere in the community;
- ⇒ The consultation responses indicated an antipathy to the use of supermarkets etc, although there may be circumstances in which such locations could be used to supplement permanent arrangements and improve police visibility. A Public Access Strategy was being developed, which the PCC was happy to share with the Panel;
- ⇒ The PCC anticipated that the Panel's review of the Strategy and the consultation feedback would provide another valuable perspective and an assurance for both his office and the public as to the thoroughness of the work undertaken and the conclusions reached.

## Appendix A: Project Scope

<b>Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Group</b>	
<b>Review Topic</b>	<b>The Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police</b>
<b>Senior Officer Support</b>	Linda Stevens, Head of Member Services, Bedford Borough Council
<b>Scrutiny Officer Support</b>	Hugh Bartos, PCP Support Officer
<b>Reasons for the review</b>	<p>The Police &amp; Crime Panel recognises the financial challenges facing the Police &amp; Crime Commissioner and acknowledges that he will need to make some difficult decisions in order to find the necessary savings required.</p> <p>With a reducing workforce and changes to the way the estate is used the Commissioner is keen to provide the public of Bedfordshire value for money and make best use of limited resources.</p> <p>The aim of the scrutiny review is to support the Commissioner in making informed decisions.</p>
<b>Key Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What strategies and plans are incorporated in the Estates Strategy?</li> <li>2. What are the views of the Police and Crime Commissioner?</li> <li>3. What are the views of the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)?</li> <li>4. What are the views of the Chief Constable?</li> <li>5. What are the messages received from the public consultation carried out by the PCC?</li> <li>6. Are other partners or organisations being consulted, who and how?</li> </ol>
<b>Methodology/Approach</b> (What methods of investigation should be used to gather evidence)	<p>⇒ To meet with OPCC Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive to enable Task and Finish Group to clarify understanding (having read the Estates Strategy) and to refine as necessary the review scope and identify if any additional information is required.</p> <p>⇒ To hold a suitable number of Task and Finish Group meetings in order for a report to be prepared and submitted to the 25 November 2013 meeting of the full Panel.</p>

<b>Equality and Diversity</b> Is an "Equality Analysis" required?		This activity has no relevance to Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An equality analysis is not needed.	
<b>Written evidence requested</b>		⇒ To be provided with Estates Strategy (currently confidential).  ⇒ To receive the results of the public consultation once available.	
<b>Specify who the Panel would like to contribute to the review</b>		⇒ The Police and Crime Commissioner; ⇒ The Chief Constable; ⇒ Officers from the OPCC; ⇒ Panel Support Officers.	
<b>Site Visits Required?</b>		To be decided	
<b>Barriers/dangers/risks</b> (identify any weaknesses or potential pitfalls)		⇒ Review recommends actions for which there is no funding to implement; ⇒ Review produces no meaningful actions or results.	
<b>Level of Publicity</b>		To be decided	
<b>Indicator of a successful review</b>		Evidence based recommendations that support the Commissioner in making informed decisions.	
<b>Projected Start Date</b>	<b>26 September 2013</b>	<b>Report Deadline</b>	25 November 2013
<b>No. of meetings</b>	<b>To be decided</b>	<b>Projected Completion Date</b>	25 November 2013

## **Appendix B: Terms of Reference**

### **Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel**

#### **Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Group “Estates Strategy”**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Introduction:**

The role of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel (The “Panel”) role is to scrutinise and hold the Commissioner to account as a ‘critical friend’.

In order to ensure that particular issues are scrutinised in a thorough and timely fashion, the Panel has decided to establish “Scrutiny review Task and Finish Groups”. These groups can meet on a more frequent basis than the full Panel, thus enabling members to scrutinise matters in greater detail over a short time period.

The “Scrutiny review Task and Finish Group” (The “Task and Finish Group”) will report back to the Panel when the review is complete.

#### **2. Membership and Chairing**

The Membership of this Task and Finish Group will comprise four members of the Panel, but any member of the Panel may attend meetings of the Group if they wish to do so.

Members of the Task and Finish Group will elect one of their number as Chair and one as Vice-Chair for its duration.

Each Member of the Task and Finish Group will have one vote.

The quorum for the Task and Finish Group will be a minimum of three Members.

#### **3. Support for the Task and Finish Group**

Bedford Borough Council will provide administrative and Scrutiny Support as the Panel’s host authority. The Panels’ scrutiny officer will advise and liaise with the Chair and Task and Finish Group Members, ensure attendance of witnesses, and liaise with the representative(s) of other organisations as necessary.

Meetings shall be held at venues, dates and times agreed by the Task and Finish Group. The host authority will provide administrative support, including organising and minuting the meetings.

At the conclusion of the review, Officers from the host authority will produce the draft report for approval by the Task and Finish Group, and submission to the full Panel for their consideration.

#### **4. Scope and Method**

This Task and Finish Group will scrutinise the Estates Strategy of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

This will involve receiving the Estates Strategy, and the results of the public consultation currently being carried out. Members will also interview the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive, and carry out other activities that they decide would be useful in gathering evidence for use in the review.

The Task and Finish Group's meetings will be informal and will not be held in public. Once the tasks described in the previous paragraph have been completed then a report will be produced for consideration by the full Panel at their meeting on 25 November 2013.

#### **5. Report**

At the conclusion of evidence gathering, Members will deliberate and agree in principle, their conclusions, comments and recommendations. The Panel's support officers will prepare a draft report in the line with the Task and Finish Group's views. The report will be submitted to the Task and Finish Group for its approval

Once the final version of the report has been agreed, it will be submitted to a formal meeting of the Panel for their consideration

#### **6. Procedure Rules**

In all matters other than those specified in this document, the Panel's Procedure Rules will apply to the Task and Finish Group.

#### **7. Agreement to these Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference were agreed by of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel, and cannot be changed without its express agreement.

# Appendix C: Estates Strategy of Bedfordshire Police



## Estates Strategy 2013-2018



## **Contents**

1. Introduction and overview
  - 1.1. Introduction and history
  - 1.2. Aspirations
  - 1.3. Definitions
2. Estates data
  - 2.1. Areas
  - 2.2. Age
  - 2.3. Ownership
  - 2.4. Condition
  - 2.5. Space Utilisation
  - 2.6. Running Costs
  - 2.7. Summary
3. Custody Provision
4. Planning the future Estate
  - 4.1. Crime data
  - 4.2. Overview of future developments
  - 4.3. Central Bedfordshire
  - 4.4. Bedford Borough
  - 4.5. Luton Borough Council
  - 4.6. Collaboration
  - 4.7. Mobile Policing
5. Estate maintenance
6. Environmental management
7. Funding the Estates Strategy
8. Conclusion

Appendix 1 Plans of approved development at the Kempston Headquarters site

Appendix B Crime mapping for 2012/13.

## 1. Introduction and overview

### 1.1. Introduction

Now that the operational policing within Bedfordshire has been confirmed as the two hub model, it is timely to examine the police estate in terms of location, fitness for purpose and the ongoing maintenance liability attached to each site. In addition the continual programme of collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire and the ongoing co-operation with partners, requires us to examine every opportunity to maximise our assets whilst continuing to reduce costs.

The purpose of this strategy is to outline the proposed direction for the future of the Bedfordshire Police Estate and identify what is required both now and in the future from operational policing, our collaborated commitments to our partner forces and how best we can integrate our specialist teams with those of our other partners. The aim of the estate strategy is to ensure the estate effectively facilitates the delivery of the Police Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan in building a safer Bedfordshire and in doing so deliver the aims of the force 'to Fight Crime and Protect the Public'. Recognising the current financial climate affecting both, the country and policing, a key objective of the Estates strategy will be to maintain its flexibility in order to respond to future requirements of policing in Bedfordshire, but will continue to ensure that a strong policing presence remains across Bedfordshire whether this be through use of our own buildings or sharing these with Partners and other Sectors.

Bedfordshire Police is currently in an alliance with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Constabularies for the delivery of its Protective Services. It is now also commencing on a wider remit of collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire to include areas such as Finance, Human Resources, ICT, Call

Handling and Criminal Justice. This, when achieved, will impact on this Estates Strategy for Bedfordshire and will therefore need to be reviewed and potentially a single unified Estates Strategy would need to be considered in order to rationalise the location of assets, within these particular areas of policing, to reflect any increased integration of the Forces.

### 1.2. Aspirations

To ensure the estate provides the most effective and efficient solution to operational needs, whilst maintaining the ability of the public to access the police as determined through consultation with the residents of the Force area.

To maximise a culture of agile working thus the promotion in the use of hot desking facilities throughout the estate and the development of mobile data and video conferencing facilities to enable the introduction of agile working practices within the Force.

To develop a fully operational police deployment base, with custody facility, subject to any development on joint facilities, serving Bedford within the existing Force HQ site.

The majority of the current estate ranges between categories B to D condition. Our aim is to have all of our facilities in at least the B category. This would allow for a reduction in ongoing revenue costs with a target of the estates budget being no more than 3% of the overall Forces budget. This would reflect a 6% reduction on current costs of running the estate.

The cost of energy continues to rise and is now a significant part of the Estates budget. A further aspiration therefore is to ensure that all buildings are as energy efficient as possible. We currently follow best practice for sustainability construction and refurbishment work.

### 1.3. Definitions

We have attempted to define certain terms extensively used within the organisation for clarity only within this paper. We do not hold them up as nationally agreed terms or definitions.

'Co-Location' - A single site within the county owned by one partner organisation, who leases a part of a building or the site to another partner for an adjusted market value rent. The leased section of the building or site is in the sole possession of the tenant but provides the public with a single location for a number of services. e.g the work currently being undertaken with Central Beds Council, Leighton Buzzard District Council and The Fire Service surrounding a single site and building in central Leighton Buzzard 'Shared Accommodation' and the current accommodation at Futures House, marsh Farm Luton

- A workstation or workstations provided by a partner to another partner organisation within their existing office space. All ICT will be separate either via a broadband or secure connection should it be required. All furniture, storage and facilities would be negotiated for each site. The agreement would take the form of a licence particular to that site. The purpose is to aid direct mutual working, for example in areas such as Social Care. e.g. Luton ASB Team operate within Luton Police station with Luton Borough Council Staff.

'Mobile Policing' – Vehicle based officers that are equipped with a device or devices allowing them to carry out all of their desk based official duties without the need to return to an office or workstation.

'Local Policing Base' – A self contained property either standalone or part of a larger building between 150 and 200m<sup>2</sup> sufficient for interview room, separate offices for sergeants and Inspectors, a general office, an area to prepare a drink and food, locker space, toilets and a shower. Provision for an enquiry desk could be shared or separate.

## 2. Estates data

This section considers the estate and provides key data upon which decisions for the future can be made. The original data from which this information is obtained can be found with annual benchmarking data produced by NPEG and the survey data held within the estates department computer aided facilities management software.

### 2.1. Areas

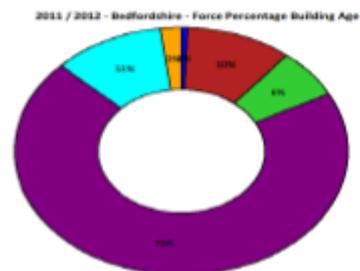
The estate comprises of 41 properties spread over 19 sites plus 3 radio mast sites. This comprises both freehold and leasehold properties but does not include any shared accommodation owned by a partner organisation. The gross internal area of the properties is 31,646m<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.2. Ownership

Approximately 81% of the estate is under freehold ownership based on GIA (Gross Internal Area). The remainder is split with 18.5% on leases under 10years and 0.5% on a long term lease with Department of Transport.

The leasehold properties are predominantly office accommodation and it is anticipated that this can be reduced to around 5% of the force's GIA over the next three years in order to reduce ongoing revenue costs.

### 2.3. Age



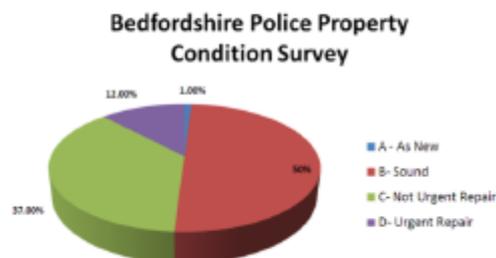
#### 'Code Description

- A Pre 1920 (1%)
- B 1921 – 1945 (10%)
- C 1945 – 1965 (6%)
- D 1966 – 1975 (70%)
- E 1976 – 2000 (11%)
- F Post 2000 (2%)

## 2.4. Condition

The condition of the estate is assessed internally and data held within the estate computer aided facilities management (CAFM) software.

Unfortunately insufficient preventative work has been undertaken in the past and much of the freehold estate requires extensive expenditure.



A more detailed survey has been undertaken in order to identify and quantify the size and nature of the back log maintenance liability, in order to plan where funds should be focused and where properties may no longer be serviceable.

## 2.5. Space Utilisation

The force aims to use space as efficiently as possible, whilst trying to maintain a reasonable working environment for all. The restructuring within the force over recent years has enabled Estates to re-organise departments in terms of interdependencies throughout the force and take the opportunity to improve the quality of the accommodation wherever possible.

Occupancy rates at the principal sites are approximately 96%, but at the smaller satellite sites, rates are between 15% & 40%. This is as a direct result of the new policing model. Exceptions to this are Sandy Police Office and Biggleswade Police Station which operate closer to 98% and 90% respectively. This is due to the presence of collaborated units at these sites.

The 2011/12 NPEG data calculates Bedfordshire Police as 14.5m<sup>2</sup>/FTE against an all forces average at 18m<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.6. Running costs

Based on the HMIC report 2012/13 the Forces premises costs are as follows

- Total Premises costs are £1,630/FTE against a sector average of £2,425/FTE.

Using the latest NPEG data available for the year 2011/12

- Maintenance costs £31.06/m<sup>2</sup> GIA
- Energy costs £19.35/m<sup>2</sup>
- All Estates and Facilities £101/m<sup>2</sup>

The data shows that building maintenance only equates to 17.76% of the total Estates expenditure. These figures do not take into account the many changes within Estates and Facilities during 2012/13 or planned changes for 2013/14 which should reduce these costs by approximately 12%

## 2.7. Summary

It can be clearly seen from the information above that a long term trend of underinvestment in the building services and fabric of the estate has led to an overall decline in the quality and condition of the estate. Although maintenance costs are not particularly low in comparison to some other Forces, when the age of the buildings and size of the Forces are factored in it becomes apparent that Bedfordshire are within the bottom sector in respect to how much they have invested in their estate in the past in terms of £/m<sup>2</sup>.

What is also apparent is that the new policing model has resulted in a proportion of the estate being underutilised and surplus to the current operational requirements. Whilst provisions for energy conservation at these sites have been employed, the very fact that the sites are lit and heated for much of the day for only a few people or occasional operational need brings into question their need and associated cost.

The leased estate, although 18.5% of the overall GIA, is still too high in terms of ongoing revenue

costs in relation to rent, as an example. It is proposed that all leased properties are examined and where possible, properties are vacated as soon as the lease expires or a break clause is due. This will not be possible in all cases but closer examination of how we use these sites must be undertaken in terms of functional suitability and value for money.

### 3. Custody provision

The current custody provision is spread between three sites, Luton, Bedford and Dunstable police stations.

Greyfriars Police Station custody is in need of modernisation and a significant spend and therefore is being considered alongside Greyfriars Police Station itself, in terms of replacement opportunities.

The Headquarters development which has received planning approval has provision for 40 cells with twin charge areas. The scheme allows for this to be reduced to 20 cells if required but still allow for another 20 to be constructed at a later date. (Plan attached at Appendix A). However it is now anticipated that the full proposal of a new Police Station at Kempston is unlikely to be necessary and therefore adjustments to the existing permission will need to be agreed if a separate custody facility is required.

A scheme for increasing cell provision at Luton was investigated last year and scheme drawn up to increase the existing provision by 15 cells. This scheme would cost in the order of £1.4million including remodelling of the charge desk area to a more suitable arrangement. However, work has been undertaken with the Home Office to consider the overall custody provision in the South of the County and this will need to be reflected in the wider piece of work currently being undertaken within the Force surrounding the wider assessment of custody needs for Bedfordshire.

Several forces have implemented the purchasing of out of town locations and constructing one central custody provision for an entire area. This type of approach has both positive and negative aspects when compared to the current structure of custody provision within Bedfordshire.

Therefore work is being undertaken in assess the Force's approach to custody to ensure the right provision is made for the public of Bedfordshire.

## 4. Planning the future estate

### 4.1. Crime Data

Attached at appendix B are simple maps indicating the current number of incidents and crimes reported throughout the county. As would be expected the numbers are significantly higher towards the centre of the two large conurbations and reflects the rationale behind the two hub policing model currently in place.

### 4.2. Overview of future external developments

The present government has set out a need for approximately 50,000 homes to be built within Bedfordshire within the next twenty years. It should also be noted that the expansion to the south of Milton Keynes by nearly 45,000 homes may also have an impact.

<b>Anticipated New Homes Planned to 2031</b>	
Developments Greater than 1000 homes only	
Milton Keynes	45000
Fields Road Wootton	1080
Great Denham and West of Kempston	2750
Biddenham	1200
Shortstown	1525
Houghton Regis North/North Luton	6885
North Luton	4000
East Leighton Linslade	2500
Wixams	4500
Biggleswade and Dunton	2382
Arlesey	1043
Streatley	2900
East of Luton (NHDC)	1400

Evenly spread this would not directly affect Policing within the county, but the proposals identify one or two very large developments within the county, as shown in the table above. The developments surrounding Houghton Regis and North Luton will add a significant number of homes to the Luton area.

Luton Borough Council only propose an additional 360 homes to be built within its boundary and it intends to review its planning policies in relation to roof conversions and extensions which may have an effect on population density over time. In addition we have noted that the proposals within the Welfare Reform Act and planned changes in housing grant policies may also lead to increases in population densities.

Commercial development in county is varied but there are two main changes, The Sundon Rail Freight Interchange to the north of Luton and the Flitwick (Woburn) Centre Parcs, which may impact on policing. The impact of the Centre Parcs project is currently being explored to ensure that resource can be effectively deployed to areas of demand and how this can be undertaken in partnership with Centre Parcs itself.

#### 4.3. Central Bedfordshire

Whilst the Force has implemented a two hub model there is the need to ensure that all areas of Bedfordshire and Luton have the appropriate level of access to the Police. In this vein the Estates Department has been investigating sharing accommodation and co-location across the entire county, albeit with a prime focus on Central Bedfordshire. These investigations will continue and whilst we have no commitments, other than the agreed shared accommodation at Luton and Dunstable at this stage, we are currently in discussion on options at Leighton Buzzard.

A number of other developments being considered by Central Bedfordshire Council may also be suitable for a co-location, these includes sites at Biggleswade and Flitwick. These sites have been chosen for their good local amenities and their accessibility to public transport, both bus and rail.

It is suggested that if co-location can be achieved within these areas then along with the current underutilisation of our existing estate, those properties within the central element of Bedfordshire, with the exception of Dunstable Police station, could be sold, reducing the number of sites but increasing the quality of the accommodation, ensuring that facilities are fit for modern policing, reducing revenue costs through modern energy efficient buildings and maintaining a physical presence across Central Bedfordshire, whilst improving access through public transport.

Dunstable Police Station is located to the west of Luton and is largely empty at present. The existing custody facilities are used at peak times only but are of a good standard. Dunstable Police Station is ideally situated to respond to the developments previously highlighted and with ample private / public car parking and good public transport links. Although only in a fair condition, it is proposed that it will be refurbished to a good standard in the next few years, subject to funding. The structure is of good quality and it is anticipated that a full window replacement programme will begin next summer and this will extend the anticipated life of the building to over twenty years.

Houghton Regis will be the centre of much of the proposed residential development within the south of the county. As such Estates have already engaged with Central Bedfordshire Council with a view to securing a new property through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is effectively a tax placed on developers to provide public infrastructure to support the new development. We are also proposing this in respect of the Leighton Buzzard co-location proposals.

Income generation, through effective use of CIL and Section 106 agreements, will form a key part of the Estates Strategy ensuring that income streams are fully exploited, thus reducing the burden on the residents of Bedfordshire.

#### 4.4. Bedford Borough

Bedford Police Station (Greyfriars) should be regarded as very close to the end of its useful life, due to the nature of the construction, its condition and the space constraints of the site itself. Without breaking down into too many individual elements, the key areas are the electrical distribution, very poor windows and cladding in terms of energy performance, and the lifts, although currently functional, all require replacement. There is only a limited amount of energy conservation work that can be undertaken without significant fabric replacement. It is estimated that Greyfriars would require an investment of around £4-4.5 million to bring to a category B standard and would require a complete shutdown for in excess of a year whilst the works were undertaken.

The headquarters site has a great deal of potential in terms of development and the principal buildings are of a style and construction that will enable continual

adaption and development for another 30 years, provided a suitable maintenance regime is in place. Its greatest drawback is that the current North Hub custody provision is centred at Bedford police station. Planning permission for a new police station has now been granted on the Headquarters site, which also allows for new parking for 600 cars and a second access provision to the Headquarters site. It is hoped that this increased parking provision can be combined with an alternative transport solution for officers and staff working in the south hub. In addition to the custody provision already discussed, the new development would include enough office accommodation to provide new offices for the North Hub for all of the current officers and staff at Bedford Police Station. Despite the current permission being for a new station, other alternatives, such as redevelopment of some of the internal spaces, is still being considered, but this is dependent on what emerges from the Tri-force collaboration discussions in the next twelve months.

The Halsey Road site contains Roads Policing and the current vehicle workshops and although only in a fair condition meets the current needs. However, the planning permission granted at the HQ site also included outline planning approval for additional buildings to the rear of the site, should the need to replace Halsey Road arise in the future.

Riseley Police Station is the only police building in the rural area of North Bedfordshire. It is relatively cheap to run and maintain and is in good condition and therefore provides an adequate policing base for the north rural areas of Bedford.

#### 4.5. Luton Borough Council

The current south hub is Luton police station. Centrally located, it offers a fair level of accommodation and many areas are in a good condition. Luton's main two drawbacks are the inadequate parking provision and the poor levels of performance from the existing windows and curtain walling systems. Having said this the structure is a good design that allows for refurbishment and adaption, the building does not have significant areas of failure and with a considered programme of refurbishment and investment over the next few years would make this site a significant asset. As already mentioned above, alternative transport solutions for officers and staff working out of Luton

Police Station will be considered as part of this Strategy.

Leagrave Police Station is currently an ANPR base. The property is adequate and the overall site is large. This site could be considered for redevelopment should an ongoing operational need be identified.

#### 4.6. Collaboration

In relation to the aforementioned strategic direction of working collaboratively through an Alliance of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, a few Bedfordshire owned buildings are being occupied by collaborative units. Currently Sandy Police Office and Biggleswade Police Station are two of these housing Scientific Services Unit in Sandy and Professional Standards Department in 80% of Biggleswade. Both buildings are post war but of an early 1900s style. Both sites are of a good standard throughout, however, the current layouts are not the most effective in terms of function as they are mainly made up of small offices/rooms. The central block at Biggleswade is a very poor use of space but would require extensive internal remodelling if the true potential were to be realised. Both sites are fully occupied with the current units requiring more space as their collaboration models develop. Most of the sites currently used for collaboration were chosen at a time when only two forces were being considered and it is now questionable as to their suitability.

A single large shared site at a central location for collaborated units would be a better use of accommodation and alternatives have now been investigated and discussions with partner force's taking place.

#### 4.7. Mobile Policing

Mobile working can be allied to agile working within the organisation, allowing extensive use of hot desking, home working and vehicle based offices. Therefore the Estates Strategy and emerging ICT Strategy need to be intrinsically linked as the Estates strategy is implemented. The integration of a modern ICT strategy will undoubtedly see a reducing need for property as there is an increased ability for officers and staff, where appropriate, work from vehicles with suitable in car IT support, and public access will be

more seamless at point of contact rather than via an enquiry office approach.

## 5. Estate Maintenance

One of the aims of the Estates and Facilities Department is to achieve a category B rating for the majority of the estate. In order to achieve and maintain this standard the estate requires a proactive maintenance programme which is adequately funded.

The day to day maintenance of the estate can be sub-divided into reactive and planned activities. Reactive is reported through the Estates Helpdesk and is dealt with by on site staff whenever possible. The aim is to reduce the amount of reactive maintenance through the increased use of planned preventative work, however due to the budgetary constraints only essential areas can be covered and many areas have to be minimally maintained.

It is proposed that the condition surveys will now be completed annually to enable the tracking of large scale expenditure such as roof replacements etc, and increased use of the CAFM system will enable us to identify recurring reactive faults as a way of identifying more serious failures.

The use of the CAFM system will enable estates to produce risk based maintenance programs, which will categorise work in terms of its impact on the Police operations should it occur.

## 6. Environmental Management

The Bedfordshire Police Environmental Strategy 2013-18 aims to protect the environment whilst delivering value for money. The key elements of the strategy comprise:

- Conserving resources
- Minimising pollution
- Maximising recycling
- Minimising waste
- Monitoring and reviewing progress

Consequently, a key feature of the Estates Strategy will be the continual improvement in the environmental efficiency of its estate and ensuring that all current legislation is adhered to.

As a matter of course, refurbishment projects will continue to be assessed for opportunities to improve environmental performance and cost-effective measures are incorporated; thus contributing to the conservation of resources and reduction in carbon emissions on an incremental basis.

The renewal of services also offers opportunities for increased energy efficiency; both in the specification of plant and equipment and the subsequent control. Again, within budget constraints and having regard for pay-back terms, these opportunities are realised wherever possible.

All new properties will aspire to 'Excellent' BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Assessment Method – the recognised industrial standard) standards of environmental management.

The Strategy will continue the ongoing programme for considering the use of renewable forms of energy that could be incorporated within our sites.

## 7. Funding the estate

The OPCC has agreed a Capital Programme for the period 2014-15 to 2017-186 and this will continue to be updated on an annual basis to reflect the priorities of the PCC and Chief Constable. The current plan for the estate mainly focuses on costs associated with maintenance but recognises the need to replace Greyfriars Police Station and Custody over the Medium Term.

The PCC has a capital expenditure reserve that he intends to increase, where possible, recognising the current financial climate. Along with the disposals mentioned within this Strategy, provide for a solution to custody within the North and to provide access to the Public in Central Bedfordshire whilst retaining the current two hub approach to operational policing.

## 8. Conclusion

The OPCC/Force are committed to delivering the Estate Strategy against the current background of financial uncertainty.

However, within this uncertainty there is a need to ensure that the estate for the Force continues to remain fit for purpose and provides a modernised approach to more effective and efficient policing.

In this vein the Strategy will focus on ensuring our investment is in the right locations, ensure our properties are appropriately maintained and any

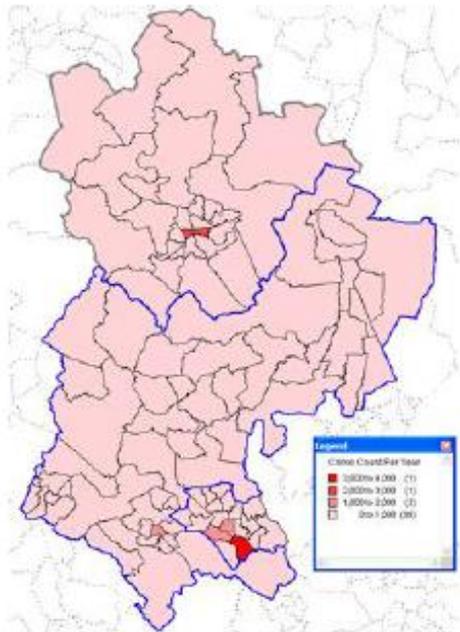
development work will be cognisant of the environment.

The delivery of the strategy will require not only PCC and Force leadership but leadership from our partners with whom together we will build a safer Bedfordshire.

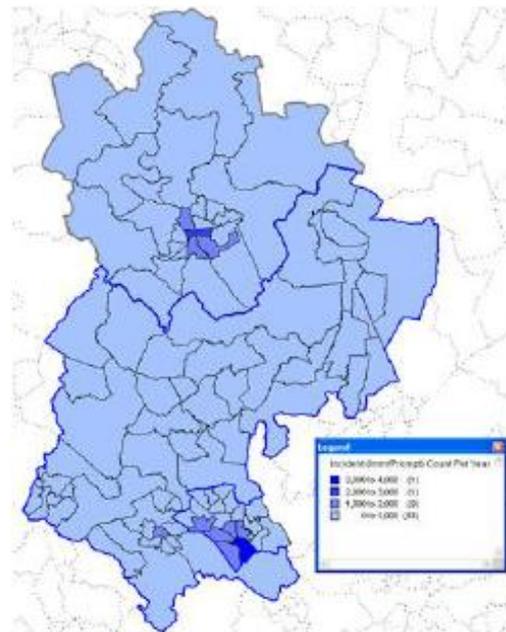
Appendix A



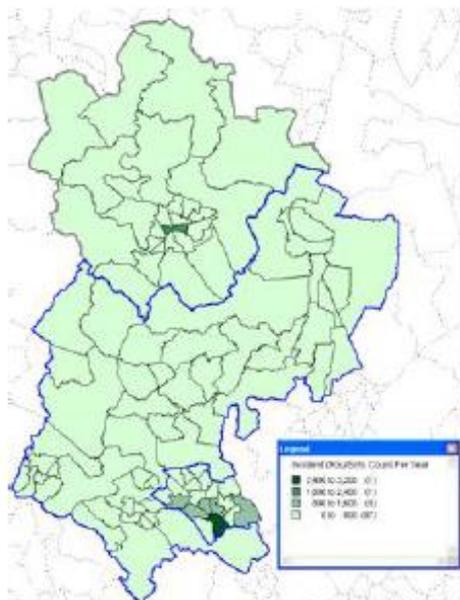
Appendix B



Crime in the County per year



Incident (Imm/Prompt) Count per year



Incidents (Rou/Sch) Count per year

## Appendix D: Consultation responses

### REPORT TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

<b>Date</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2013	<b>Report No</b>	8
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#### **Title**

Bedfordshire Police – 2013 Estates Strategy – Public Consultation on Access to Policing Services – Survey findings

#### **Purpose**

To consider the findings from the public consultation in order to inform future decisions in relation to the medium term resources strategy.

#### **Executive Summary**

In order to sign off and develop an implementation plan for the delivery of Bedfordshire Police Estates Strategy the Commissioner requested that the public be given the opportunity to shape how they will access policing services in the future.

An on-line, independently verified, questionnaire was launched online on 1<sup>st</sup> August for a two month period. The survey closed on the 1<sup>st</sup> October. The questionnaire was widely promoted and publicised with hard copies available on request.

A total of 1,612 people responded to the survey making the sample size statistically robust with confidence levels of 95% (+/- 3%).

The full report of findings is attached to this report as Appendix A.

#### **Recommendations**

- To revisit the Estates Strategy to ensure that it reflects the views of the public;
- Consider the report and recommendations arising from the Police and Crime Panel;
- Develop a public access strategy identifying the impact on the estate and ICT, based upon the responses from the public;
- Develop an action plan for the delivery of the wider Estates and ICT Strategy to be agreed at a future meeting of the Executive Board in time to incorporate into the 2014/15 to 2017/18 capital programme;
- Agree an approach to provide feedback to the people of Bedfordshire.

## **Background/Supporting papers**

1. Bedfordshire Police 2013 Estates Strategy
2. Reports to Police and Crime Commissioner – April/May 2013 Executive Board

## **Contribution to the Police and Crime Plan**

The ease of access for the public to policing services in Bedfordshire is central to building confident communities and a safer Bedfordshire.

## **Implications**

- 1. Strategic Risk Implications – Ensuring the right balance is struck between operational demand and public accessibility.**
- 2. Financial Implications – the findings from the public consultation will inform the medium term resources strategy.**
- 3. Equality and Human Rights Implications – the services and options available for the public to contact the police will need to ensure usability in relation to meeting differing needs.**
- 4. Legal Implications – the Commissioner has the statutory duty to obtain the views of the public as well as to ensure an effective and efficient policing service.**
- 5. Regional/Collaborative Working Implications – depending on future decisions possible co-location of front counter services with other public services may entail the Commissioner working in collaboration with a range of partners.**

## **Report**

### **1. Introduction**

In April this year the Commissioner considered and approved Bedfordshire Police Estates Strategy in principle subject to public consultation. It was therefore agreed that before it was finally signed off and an implementation plan produced the Commissioner would gain the views of the public in order that the design of the implementation plan is informed by the findings of the consultation.

At the May Executive Board an approach to the consultation was agreed which led to an independent market research company SMSR developing an on-line questionnaire. SMSR have a track record of working within the policing environment and were able to draw on previous questionnaires in relation to the use of police front counter services.

### **2. Appendices**

Draft SMSR report on the survey findings from the public consultation

### **3. Issues for consideration**

#### **Questionnaire Design and Development**

The questionnaire was compiled in consultation with the Commissioner, Bedfordshire Police and the knowledge and experience of SMSR. The questionnaire was designed in two parts with an introduction from the Commissioner that set out the financial challenges and the cost of running the police estate. Part A of the questionnaire set out to establish in what ways the public currently contact and access policing services. Part B explores public preference for alternative ways of contacting the police.

A number of the questions were 'market tested' and amendments made as a result. The questionnaire was quality assured by the Consultation Institute (CI) before it was placed on-line. CI were satisfied that the questionnaire provided the respondents with the ability to shape the way they access policing services in the future.

As well as being placed on-line the survey link was sent to all key stakeholders and partners within the county.

#### **Publicity**

The public consultation was widely promoted in print, media and social media. The survey link was sent to partners, stakeholders and the public with paper copies available on request. Interim analysis from SMSR highlighted gaps in those responding to the questionnaire, mainly young people and a range of minority groups. In order to hear the views of these under-represented groups the

Commissioner and his team engaged with a range of diverse groups and Universities during August and September.

Before the survey closed on the 1<sup>st</sup> October a second publicity campaign was organised mid - September to capture those members of the public who had returned from summer holidays.

In total:

- 1,612 people completed the questionnaire, which includes
- 361 people who partially completed the questionnaire, and
- 47 paper copies were completed and returned.

The sample size makes the findings statistically sound with a confidence level of 95% (+/- 3). However, the sample size is not sound in terms of representation with under-representation from Luton and under-representation from a range of diverse groups.

### **Demographic data**

#### **Gender:**

Male: 44%

Female 33%

#### **Respondents by Local Authority area:**

Bedford Borough	388 = 24%
Central Bedfordshire	690 = 42%
Luton Borough	155 = 9.6%

#### **Ethnicity:**

90% of respondents classified themselves as white British

3% of respondents were from a minority ethnic background

6% of respondents preferred not to say

**Age:** 70% of respondents were between the age of 45 years to 74 years

### **High Level Findings**

In broad terms the majority of respondents find it easy to contact the police and in most cases do this by telephone and/or email. In the last year 69% of the respondents had not visited a police station.

Many respondents are aware of the various ways they can contact the police, however, a number of people are not aware of how they might contact an individual officer or a local policing team. Advertising ways of how to contact the police may improve this situation.

In terms of preferences for accessing the police in the future at least half of the respondents would accept co-located or community hub type services if front counter provision were to be reduced with 64% supporting the use of dedicated online channels to report crime, request a visit or email a query.

In light of alternative means to accessing the police 50% of respondents would accept the closure of front counter services and buildings (32% disagree with 18% having a mixed view) and 71% of respondents would accept the closure of police station front counter services if they could directly contact a local policing team.

There was a strong rejection of a third party providing front counter services and no desire for an increase in council tax.

**External scrutiny**

On behalf of Bedfordshire residents the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel established a sub-group to provide independent and impartial scrutiny to the Commissioner’s Estates Strategy and the public consultation exercise. A series of scrutiny meetings have taken place during October and the sub-group will report their findings to the November Police and Crime Panel meeting.

**4. Conclusion**

The approach to engagement has been carefully developed to ensure that the public are aware of the financial challenges faced by the Commissioner and the possibility that some police stations may have to close. External verification has been sought to make sure that the public have the ability to shape the services going forward.

The on-line questionnaire has produced a statistically sound (albeit not representative) set of findings that can be used to shape the next phase of the Estates Strategy.

**5. Recommendations**

- To revisit the Estates Strategy to ensure that it reflects the views of the public;
- Consider the report and recommendations arising from the Police and Crime Panel;
- Develop a public access strategy identifying the impact on the estate and ICT, based upon the responses from the public;
- Develop an action plan for the delivery of the wider Estates and ICT Strategy to be agreed at a future meeting of the Executive Board in time to incorporate into the 2014/15 to 2017/18 capital programme;
- Agree an approach to provide feedback to the people of Bedfordshire.

**Public Access to Information**

Information in this report is subject to publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation. Any information that should not be made publically available should be included in an appendix to this report and the reason for restriction given.

Is any 'restricted' information appended to this report? No  
If 'yes' please advise reason for restriction.

<b>Report Author</b>	Dr Julie Wymer, Deputy Chief Executive on behalf of Chief Executive
<b>Date of report</b>	24 October 2013



## Contacting the Police in a Non-Emergency Situation

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**Report (V02)  
October 2013**

**Contents Page**

- 1.0 Executive Summary ..... 38
- 1.1 Contacting the Police .....38
- 1.2 Police Stations and Front Counters.....39
- 2.0 Introduction ..... 40
- 3.0 Research Aims and Objectives ..... 41
- 4.0 Methodology ..... 41
- 5.0 Sample..... 40
- 6.0 Findings: Contacting the Police ..... 41
- 6.1 Contacting Local Police .....41
- 6.2 Previous Contact with the Police.....46
- 7.0 Findings: Police Stations and Front Counters..... 51
- 7.1 Local Police Station.....51
- 7.2 The Future .....53
- 7.3 Closure of Police Stations and Police Station Front Counters.....66
- 7.4 Policing Budget.....74
- 8.0 Additional Comments..... 75
- 8.1 Additional Comments.....75
- Appendices ..... 76
- Appendix 1 Questionnaire .....76

## 1.0 Executive Summary

### 1.1 Contacting the Police

Three fifths of respondents felt it would be either very (17%) or fairly (43%) easy to contact the local police should they need to, primarily due to awareness of telephone numbers and a general confidence that they could reach the police by telephone if / when needed.

The preferred method of contacting the police varied greatly when considering different reasons for making contact however, it is encouraging that with the continuous developments in technology large proportions of respondents expressed preference for online methods of contact in circumstances other than reporting crime or anti-social behaviour or those which required a face to face interaction (e.g. handing in and claiming lost property). Online methods of contact were particularly popular for finding and receiving information, whether this was receiving updates in relation to a crime which had been reported (internet: 15%, email: 40%) or more general information such as finding out about crime levels (internet: 45%, email: 35%).

Awareness of most methods of contacting Bedfordshire Police was high however, awareness did tend to be lower of police social networking sites (40%), being able to email individual officers and groups (39%) and using a phone box outside of a police station to call for assistance (33%). As respondents expressed significant preference for the use of email and the internet, further communication and promotion of these services should be considered.

More than half (52%) of respondents had contacted Bedfordshire Police in the 12 months prior to taking part in the consultation, with most saying they had done so to give the police information (45%) or report an incident of crime (29% as victim, 17% on behalf of another) or anti-social behaviour (25%).

More than two thirds (69%) of respondents had made contact over the telephone through 999 or 101 while almost a fifth (19%) had done so in person at a police station front counter. Although three quarters of respondents had found it easy to make contact, more than a fifth had found making contact either very (6%) or fairly (15%) difficult.

## 1.2 Police Stations and Front Counters

Around seven out of ten (69%) respondents had not visited their local police station in the 12 months prior to taking part in the consultation. Around a quarter (24%) had visited on one to three occasions, while only 5% had been to the local police station four or more times within the previous year.

The preferred opening times for police station front counters were Monday to Friday between either 10 am to 3 pm (21%) or 5 pm to 8 pm (23%) however, the largest proportion (39%) indicated no preference.

Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents agreed that they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if they were able to use dedicated online channels to report a crime, request a visit or email a query, while seven tenths said police station front counter services could be closed if they had the ability to contact their local neighbourhood policing team directly.

More than half of respondents would accept a reduction in front counter services if they could access police services at the same time as other public services within the same building (56%), if they could speak to a police officer as part of their day to day life (55%) or if the use of mobile police stations became a regular service (53%).

A half of respondents agreed that police station front counters should be closed unless there is clear evidence which supports a need for them or if it would help the police to make the required savings. In addition, 45% were in agreement that police station front counters should only be provided in areas of high population and higher crime levels.

Fewer respondents agreed that they would be willing to accept an increase in council tax to keep all current police station front counters (29%) or a reduction in police station front counters if facilities such as Skype / social media were available (31%). Respondents were also sceptical that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider (13% agree, 67% disagree).

The greatest concern (albeit less than a fifth of respondents at the peak) surrounding the changes to or closure of police station front counters and police stations was an increase in the time taken to respond to emergency (19%) and non-emergency (15%) incidents. This needs careful consideration in terms of communications / strategy but the former certainly seems a perception that is more easily managed.

When given the choice, the majority of respondents (88%) would prefer for more of the budget to be spent on visible police and less on keeping local police stations open.

## **2.0 Introduction**

### **Background**

In November 2012, Olly Martins was elected as the first Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the Bedfordshire area. Since election the PCC has engaged with members of the public in order to better understand their views and any concerns they may have.

Over the next two years cuts in government funding mean that Bedfordshire Police has to make additional savings of £7.5m. The police estate, including local stations, costs £3m a year to run and maintain. The greater the savings that can be made from buildings, the more visible policing within communities can be protected.

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office would like to consider the police estate and plan to review the buildings, where they are, and whether they meet the public's needs. There may also be opportunities to make savings on under-used, out-dated and unfit buildings that can be invested in new and more accessible facilities.

In addition to this review, Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office commissioned SMSR Ltd, an independent research company, to support consultation with residents from across the Bedfordshire area to gather their views on the policing estate.

### **Report Structure**

Included in the report is a set of topline findings which provides quick reference to all the questions asked throughout the survey. In addition all questions have been analysed by area and demographic group and any significant differences in opinion are commented on throughout the report.

It should be noted that when the results are discussed within the report, often percentages will be rounded up or down to the nearest one per cent. Therefore occasionally figures may add up to 101% or 99%.

### **Acknowledgements**

SMSR would like to thank the 1,612 Bedfordshire residents who took part in this consultation as well as Julie Wymer at Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office for her help in conducting this survey and regular input and interest in the overall process.

### **3.0 Research Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of the survey was to ensure residents had the opportunity to give their views on the future of the policing estate. These views will then help to shape plans to improve how residents can access and contact the police in non-emergency situations.

The key objectives of the consultation were as follows:

- Measure current perceptions regarding the ease of contacting Bedfordshire Police
- To understand experience of contacting the police, including how contact was made and reason for contact
- Assess preferred methods of contacting the police in pre-given scenarios
- Measure awareness of various ways of contacting Bedfordshire Police
- Measure support for alternative ways of providing community police if police station front counter provisions were reduced
- Understand concerns with regards changes or closures of police station front counters / police stations
- Assess whether police stations or visible policing were of greater priority to residents

### **4.0 Methodology**

A questionnaire was designed by SMSR in conjunction with officers from Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, a copy of which can be found in the appendices. All versions of the questionnaire were piloted prior to the fieldwork to ensure it was easy for residents to complete and the findings would meet the aims and objectives of the consultation.

When the questionnaire was approved an online link was produced. This link was promoted to local residents in various ways, including through the issuing of a press release. In addition, residents were also given the opportunity to contact the PCC's Office to obtain a hard copy of the questionnaire if they preferred.

All fieldwork was conducted between Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August and Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

## 5.0 Sample

In total 1,612 residents took part in the consultation which gives a confidence level of 95% (+/- 3%). Among some groups of the population confidence is reduced due to smaller sample sizes (particularly younger respondents, BME respondents and those living in the Luton area) therefore further consultation may be required on an on-going basis to ensure their views are understood.

The demographic and service breakdown of responses was as follows:

Gender	Number	% of sample
Male	712	44.2
Female	537	33.3
Missing	363	22.5

Age	Number	% of sample
16 to 24	23	1.4
25 to 34	93	5.8
35 to 44	160	9.9
45 to 54	269	16.7
55 to 64	299	18.5
65 to 74	302	18.7
75 or above	90	5.6
Do not wish to say / missing	376	23.3

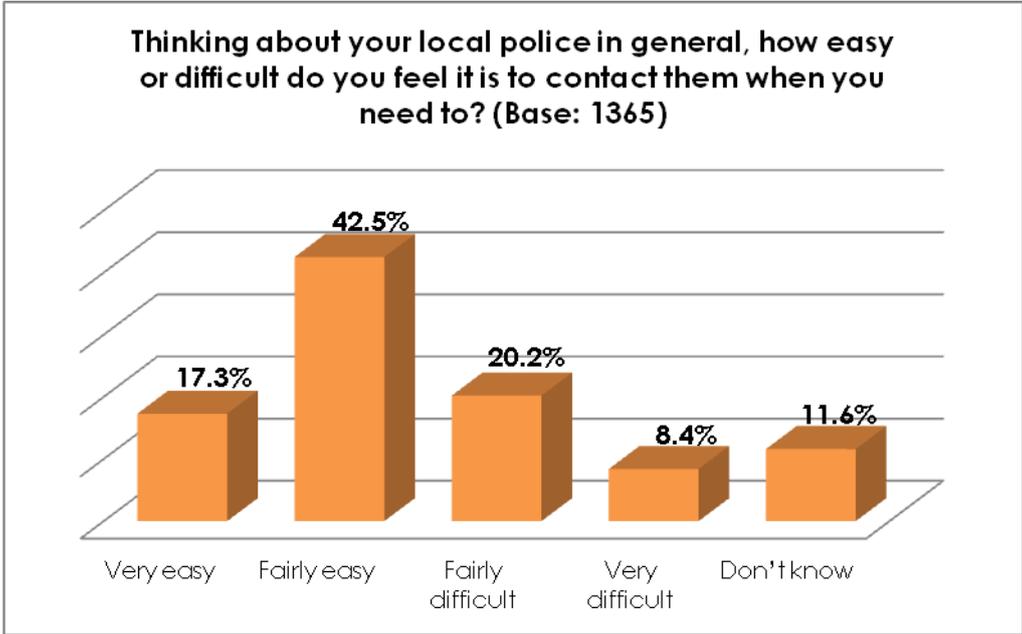
Ethnicity	Number	% of sample
White	1146	71.1
Black	9	0.6
Asian	15	0.9
Mixed	9	0.6
Other	6	0.4
Do not wish to say / missing	427	26.5

Area	Number	% of sample
Bedford	388	24.1
Central Bedfordshire	690	42.8
Luton	155	9.6
Missing / not sure	379	23.5

# 6.0 Findings: Contacting the Police

## 6.1 Contacting Local Police

### 6.1.1 Ease of Making Contact



Three fifths of respondents felt it would be easy to contact the local police should they need to, with 17% saying it would be very easy. Of the 29% of respondents who thought they would experience difficulties contacting the police, 20% felt it would be fairly difficult while 8% said it would be very difficult.

Respondents aged 25 to 34 (76%) most frequently said it would be easy to contact the police should they need to; only 16% of respondents in this age group felt they would have difficulties contacting the police. Respondents aged 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 most frequently said they would anticipate difficulties contacting the police (32% and 31% respectively).

Almost two fifths (39%) of respondents with a disability said it would be difficult to contact the police if they needed to; 12% higher than those who did not have a disability (27%).

**Thinking about your local police in general, how easy or difficult do you feel it is to contact them when you need to?**

Area	Base	Very / fairly easy (%)	Very / fairly difficult (%)
Bedford	388	68.0	19.6
Central Bedfordshire	688	55.7	33.1
Luton	154	61.0	29.2

More than two thirds (68%) of respondents living in the Bedford Borough felt it was easy to contact the police when needed, however this dropped to 56% among those living in Central Bedfordshire. A third of respondents living in Central Bedfordshire felt it would be very or fairly difficult to contact the police should they need to.

**Why do you say that? (Base: 1224)**

Reason	Number	%
I would call the police / have contact numbers (unspecified)	209	17.1
I would contact the police via a local station	185	15.1
I would call a non-emergency number (101 etc)	140	11.4
Takes too long / can't get through on telephone	125	10.2
I have not tried to contact the police so not sure	120	9.8
Not sure of contact details / lack of information / details changes	101	8.3

Respondents were asked to give reasons for their perception of how easy or difficult it would be to contact the police.

Around a fifth (17%) of respondents said they would call the police or had the contact telephone numbers for police. Many respondents specified the way in which they would contact the police for example by contacting a local police station (15%) or calling a non-emergency number (11%).

Issues which were raised with regards to contacting the police included being unable to get through on the phone or the time it would take to do so (10%) and being unsure of contact details / lack of information / details changing (8%).

## 6.1.2 Preferred Method of Contact

In each of the following circumstances, what would be your preferred method of contacting the police?							
Situation	To a police officer or PCSO on the street (%)	At a police contact point at a high street location (%)	In person at a police station front counter (%)	Internet (%)	Email (%)	Post / letter (%)	Telephone (%)
Telling the police what's going on in your neighbourhood	20.3	7.8	14.2	7.7	22.3	0.3	27.3
Making an appointment to talk to the police / PCSO	3.6	5.9	14.5	5.8	26.0	0.5	43.7
Finding out who your local officer is	6.0	6.1	13.1	28.9	22.6	2.0	21.3
Finding out about levels of crime in your area	3.1	3.2	7.5	45.0	34.5	2.3	4.4
To pay a fine	0.6	7.2	27.3	27.0	7.5	22.1	8.3
To hand in or claim lost property	2.4	24.8	67.6	1.4	0.9	0.6	2.3
To make a complaint about the police	0.7	4.7	30.5	8.3	27.4	19.7	8.8

The preferred method of contacting the police varied greatly when considering different reasons for making contact. Police station front counters were the most frequently selected method for handing in / claiming lost property (68%) and making a complaint about the police (31%). Police station front counters were also one of the preferred methods for paying a fine (27%) however, a similar proportion of respondents expressed a preference for doing so over the internet (27%).

Internet and email were the most popular methods for finding information about local officers (internet: 29%, email: 23%) and levels of crime in the area (internet: 45%, email: 35%). Although not the preferred method, around a quarter of respondents also said they would prefer to use email to make an appointment to talk to the police / PCSO (26%) and tell the police what was going on in the area (22%).

Few respondents expressed a preference for using a police contact point at a high street location other than to hand in or claim lost property (25%). Similarly few respondents selected speaking with a police officer / PCSO on the street as their preferred method unless they were making contact to tell the police what was happening in their neighbourhood (20%).

**In each of the following circumstances, what would be your preferred method of contacting the police?**

Situation	To a police officer or PCSO on the street (%)	At a police contact point at a high street location (%)	In person at a police station front counter (%)	Internet (%)	Email (%)	Post / letter (%)	Telephone (%)
To get an update on an existing crime	2.5	3.6	10.3	15.4	39.6	1.3	27.4
Reporting a crime where your property has been stolen	5.3	4.3	18.6	1.5	3.0	0.0	67.4
Reporting a personal crime	8.4	6.0	25.2	0.8	1.2	0.0	58.4
Reporting anti-social behaviour	10.0	4.4	14.6	4.9	11.2	0.2	54.8

Respondents were also asked to specify their preferred method of making contact when reporting a crime or anti-social behaviour (ASB), as well as receiving updates about a reported crime.

Four out of ten respondents selected email as their preferred method for receiving updates on existing crimes however, few respondents selected this as their preferred method for reporting crime or ASB.

Telephone was the preferred method of making contact when reporting personal crime (67%), crime where property had been stolen (58%) or ASB (55%).

When considering all reasons for contacting the police few respondents selected post / letter as their preferred method of doing so.

### 6.1.3 Awareness of Methods of Contact

The following are ways to access Bedfordshire Police services. Please indicate whether you are aware of the following methods.

Method	Aware of method	
	Number	%
Visiting a police station	1234	96.8
Non-emergency telephone number (101)	1131	87.9
Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) to report crime anonymously	1080	85.0
Letter or fax	992	78.8
Participation in police related group or meeting (Neighbourhood Watch)	987	77.9
Speaking to a police officer / PCSO on patrol	923	73.0
Visiting a local public police meeting	728	57.4
Contact through website/online enquiry form	705	56.0
Contacting your local PCSO directly	514	40.9
Visiting a neighbourhood base where police officers/PCSOs visit	513	40.7
Police social networking sites - Facebook, Twitter	504	40.2
Email to an individual officer or group (for example a local policing team)	485	38.5
Using the phone boxes outside a police station to call for assistance	422	33.4
Text phone (for the hearing impaired)	347	28.2

Respondents were provided with various ways that they could access Bedfordshire Police services and asked to state which, if any, they were aware of.

Almost all (97%) respondents knew they could access the police by visiting a police station; awareness was also high for the non-emergency telephone number (88%) and reporting a crime anonymously through Crimestoppers (85%).

Less than two fifths of respondents indicated awareness of emailing an individual officer or group (39%), using a phone box outside of a police station to call for assistance (33%) and text phone (28%).

## 6.2 Previous Contact with the Police

More than half (52%) of respondents had contacted Bedfordshire Police in the 12 months prior to taking part in the consultation and were therefore asked to give information about this contact.

### 6.2.1 Reason for Contact

For what reason(s) were you in contact with Bedfordshire police? (Base: 689)		
Reason	Number	%
To give the police information about something	307	44.6
To report a crime or incident as a victim	198	28.7
To report anti-social behaviour	172	25.0
To report a crime or incident on behalf of somebody else	120	17.4
Attended a local event at which police were present	90	13.1
Speaking to an officer on patrol	49	7.1
They knocked on my door	29	4.2
As a suspect or as a result on having been stopped on suspicion of committing a crime or an offence	7	1.0
Other	91	13.2
Don't know / can't remember	4	0.6
Prefer not to say	11	1.6

Almost half (45%) of those who had contacted the police said it was to provide the police with information. More than two fifths of respondents had made contact to report a crime or incident either as a victim (29%) or on behalf of somebody else (17%); a further 25% had made contact to report ASB.

Among those who specified another reason for making contact, 16 respondents said they had contacted the police for advice or information, 10 respondents said it had been as part of their job and 9 respondents said they had handed in lost / stolen property.

## 6.2.2 Method of Making Contact

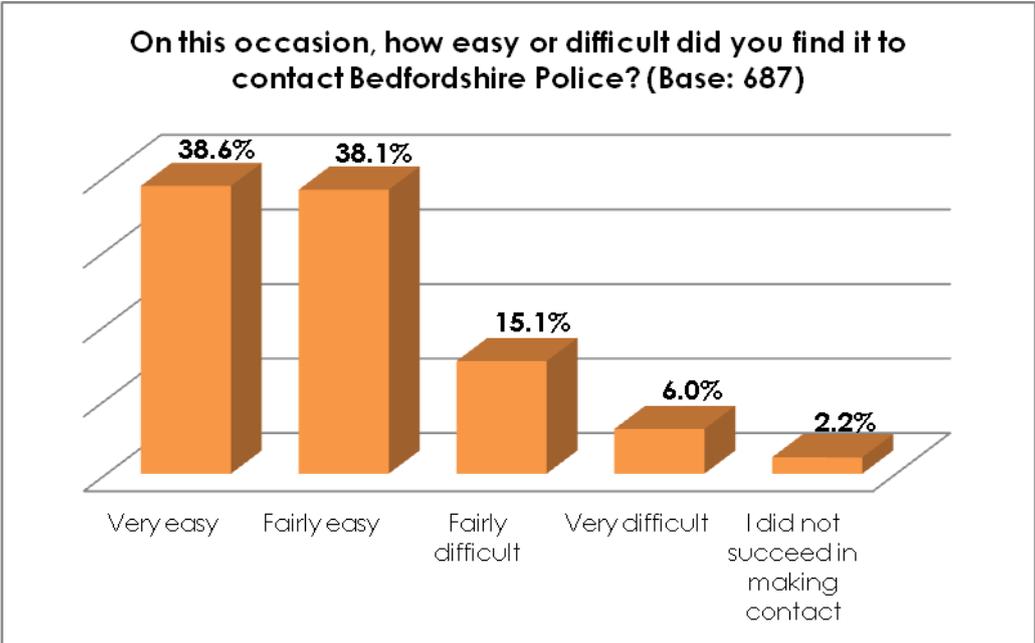
Which of the following ways did you make contact with Bedfordshire Police? (Base: 689)		
Reason	Number	%
By phone – via 999 or 101	477	69.2
In person, at a police station front counter	130	18.9
Online / email	110	16.0
Attended a local event / community meeting	73	10.6
In person, to a police officer or PCSO on the street	62	9.0
In person, at another location	34	4.9
In person, at a Police Information Point	8	1.2
By post / letter	8	1.2
Other	80	11.6
Don't know / can't remember	3	0.4

The most common way to contact the police was via 999 or 101 as around seven out of ten (69%) respondents had made contact using these numbers. In addition, a further 70 respondents who had made contact in another way said this had been through a telephone number other than 999 or 101.

Although making contact through online mediums emerged as a preferred method for making contact, only 16% of respondents had contacted Bedfordshire Police online or via email.

Around a fifth (19%) of respondents had contacted the police at a police station front counter and 9% had done so to a police officer / PCSO on the street. Few respondents had visited the police at a Police Information Point (1%) or in person at another location (5%).

### 6.2.3 Ease of Making Contact



More than three quarters of respondents said they had found it either very (39%) or fairly (38%) easy to contact Bedfordshire Police. Among the 21% of respondents who had experienced difficulties when contacting Bedfordshire Police, only 6% said it had been very difficult to do so.

## 7.0 Findings: Police Stations and Front Counters

### 7.1 Local Police Station

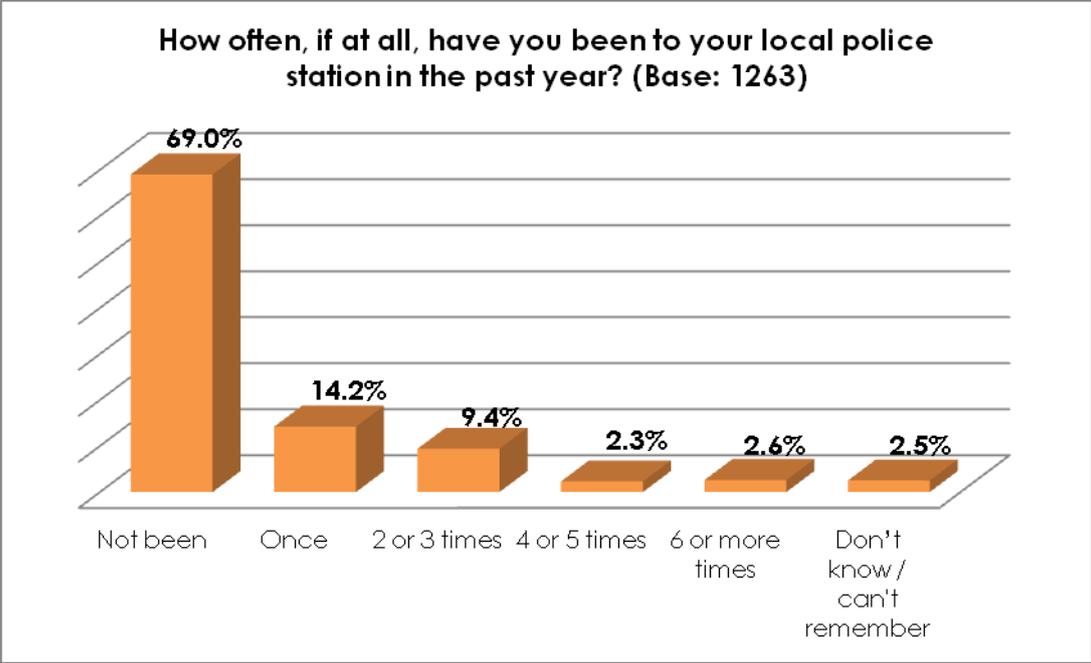
#### 7.1.1 Local Police Station

Which is your local police station? (Base: 1145)		
Station	Number	%
Greyfriars	266	23.2
Dunstable	159	13.9
Amphill	146	12.8
Biggleswade	134	11.7
Luton	119	10.4
Leighton Buzzard	104	9.1
Risely	71	6.2
Luton North	53	4.6
Houghton Regis	34	3.0
Kempston	27	2.4
Shefford	9	0.8
Luton Futures House	4	0.3
Hitchin	3	0.3
Woburn Sands	3	0.3
Sandy	3	0.3
Flitwick	2	0.2

Among the 1,612 residents who completed a questionnaire 1,145 provided the name of their local police station. Among respondents who provided a response, around a quarter (23%) said their local station was Greyfriars. Dunstable (14%) Amphill (13%), Biggleswade (12%) and Luton (10%) were also commonly selected as the local police station.

Throughout this section comparisons by local station have been added. When considering differences by station, only stations where sample sizes are 50 or above have been included.

### 7.1.2 Frequency of Visiting Local Police Station



Around seven out of ten (69%) respondents had not visited their local police station in the 12 months prior to taking part in the consultation. Around a quarter (24%) had visited on one to three occasions, while only 5% had been to the local police station four or more times within the previous year.

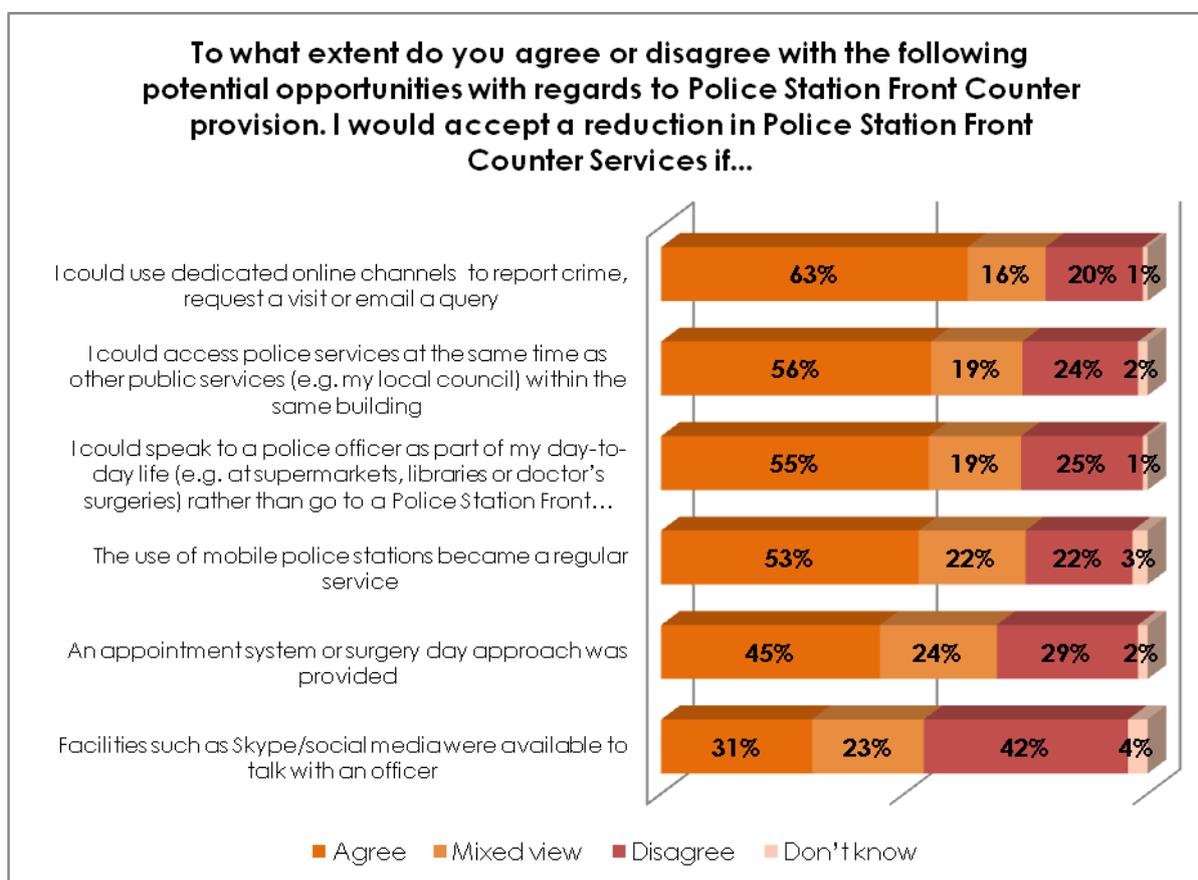
A greater proportion of younger respondents had visited a police station in the previous year, with 39% of those aged 44 and under saying they had visited on at least one occasion in the past 12 months. Among respondents aged 55 and over, around a quarter (24%) said they had accessed a police station within the timeframe considered.

How often, if at all, have you been to your local police station in the past year?			
Area	Base	Visited on 1 or more occasion (%)	Not visited (%)
Bedford	385	25.5	73.2
Central Bedfordshire	683	28.9	67.9
Luton	153	32.1	64.7

Accessing the police station was higher among respondents living in the Luton area, as almost a third (32%) had visited a police station on one or more occasion in the 12 months prior to taking part in the consultation. Fewer respondents living in the Bedford area had visited their local police station in the past year (26%).

## 7.2 The Future

### 7.2.1 Future Opportunities



Respondents were asked for their level of agreement towards various ideas which could be implemented if police station front counter services were reduced.

Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents agreed that they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if they were able to use dedicated online channels to report a crime, request a visit or email a query. Only 20% of respondents disagreed that the introduction of these online channels would result in them accepting a reduction in front counter services.

More than half of respondents agreed they would accept a reduction in front counter services if they could access police services at the same time as other public services within the same building (56%), if they could speak to a police officer as part of their day to day life (55%) or if the use of mobile police stations became a regular service (53%). For all of these opportunities the proportion of respondents who disagreed with the suggestion did not exceed a quarter.

Respondents were less willing to accept a reduction in police station front counter services if facilities such as Skype / social media were made available to speak with

an officer. Although 31% agreed that the introduction of this facility would make them more accepting of a reduction in police station front counter services a further 42% disagreed that this was the case.

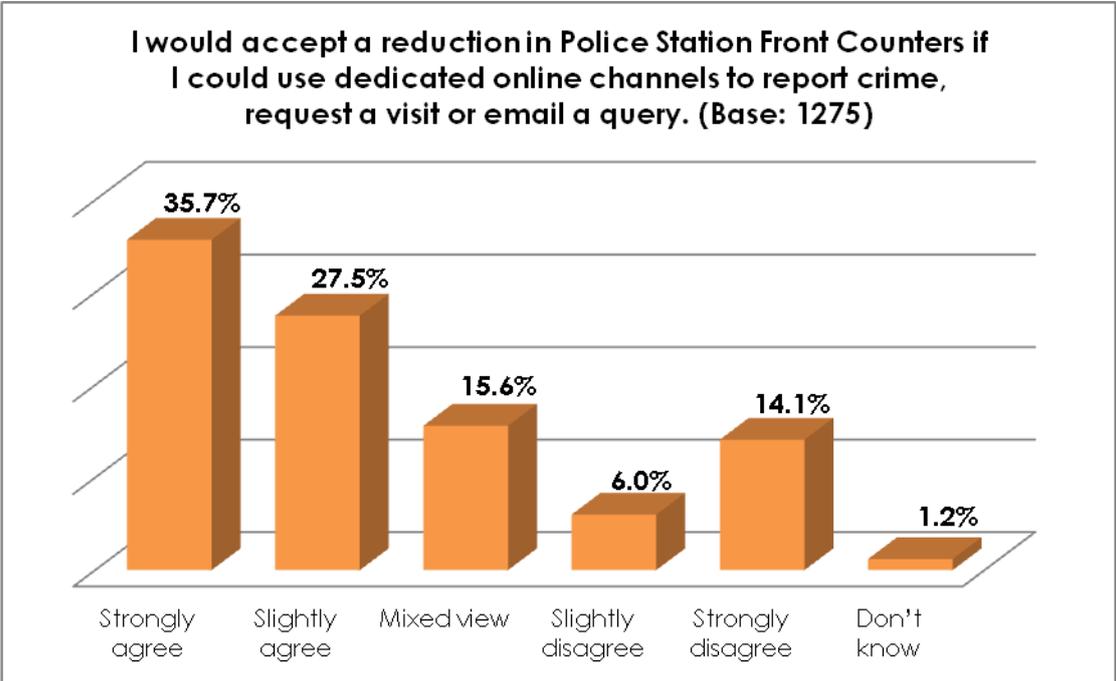
<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following potential opportunities with regards to Police Station Front Counter provision. I would accept a reduction in Police Station Front Counter Services if...</b>						
<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Bedford</b>		<b>Central Bedfordshire</b>		<b>Luton</b>	
	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
I could use dedicated online channels to report crime, request a visit or email a query	<b>68.2</b>	14.3	<b>59.6</b>	23.9	<b>66.2</b>	17.9
I could access police services at the same time as other public services within the same building	<b>61.2</b>	18.1	<b>50.7</b>	28.0	<b>59.6</b>	22.5
I could speak to a police officer as part of my day-to-day life rather than go to a Police Station Front Counter	<b>62.4</b>	20.2	<b>50.1</b>	27.9	<b>61.7</b>	22.7
The use of mobile police stations became a regular service	<b>56.4</b>	17.1	<b>48.1</b>	25.4	<b>61.6</b>	20.5
An appointment system or surgery day approach was provided	<b>47.8</b>	27.8	<b>43.0</b>	29.6	<b>46.0</b>	27.3
Facilities such as Skype/social media were available to talk with an officer	<b>33.3</b>	38.0	<b>27.8</b>	45.7	<b>39.1</b>	39.7

Agreement that each idea would mean the acceptance of reduced police station front counter services was consistently lowest among those living in Central Bedfordshire. In Central Bedfordshire agreement was particularly low when asked if a reduction in police station front counter services would be accepted if the respondent was instead able to speak with an officer as part of their day to day life (12% lower than agreement among those living in both Bedford and Luton).

Respondents living in Bedford were most willing to accept the use of dedicated online channels, with 68% of those living in this area agreeing that if this type of communication were introduced they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services.

Respondents living in Luton expressed the highest agreement that the reduction of police station front counter services could be counter-balanced with more regular use of mobile police stations (62%) or the introduction of facilities such as Skype / social media to speak with officers (39%).

**I could use dedicated online channels to report crime, request a visit or email a query**



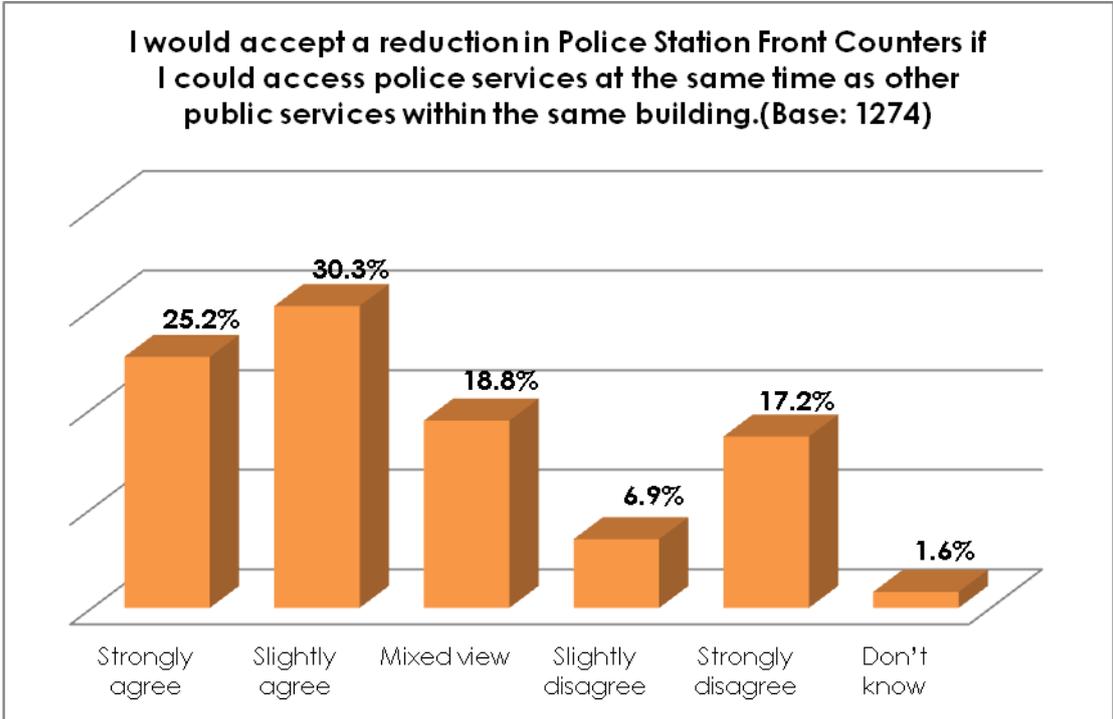
Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents agreed that they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if they could use dedicated online channels, with 36% in strong agreement that this was the case. Although a fifth of respondents disagreed they would accept a reduction if online channels were available, a further 16% held a mixed view.

Across most age groups around two thirds agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if they could use dedicated online channels however, fewer respondents aged 35 to 44 (54%) expressed this opinion.

Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents who did not have a disability expressed agreement with this statement; 6% higher than agreement among those with a disability (59%).

At least seven out of ten respondents whose local station was Greyfriars (72%) and Luton (70%) agreed that online channels would mean they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services. Agreement was significantly lower among those whose local station was Leighton Buzzard (54%) and Dunstable (53%).

**I could access police services at the same time as other public services within the same building**

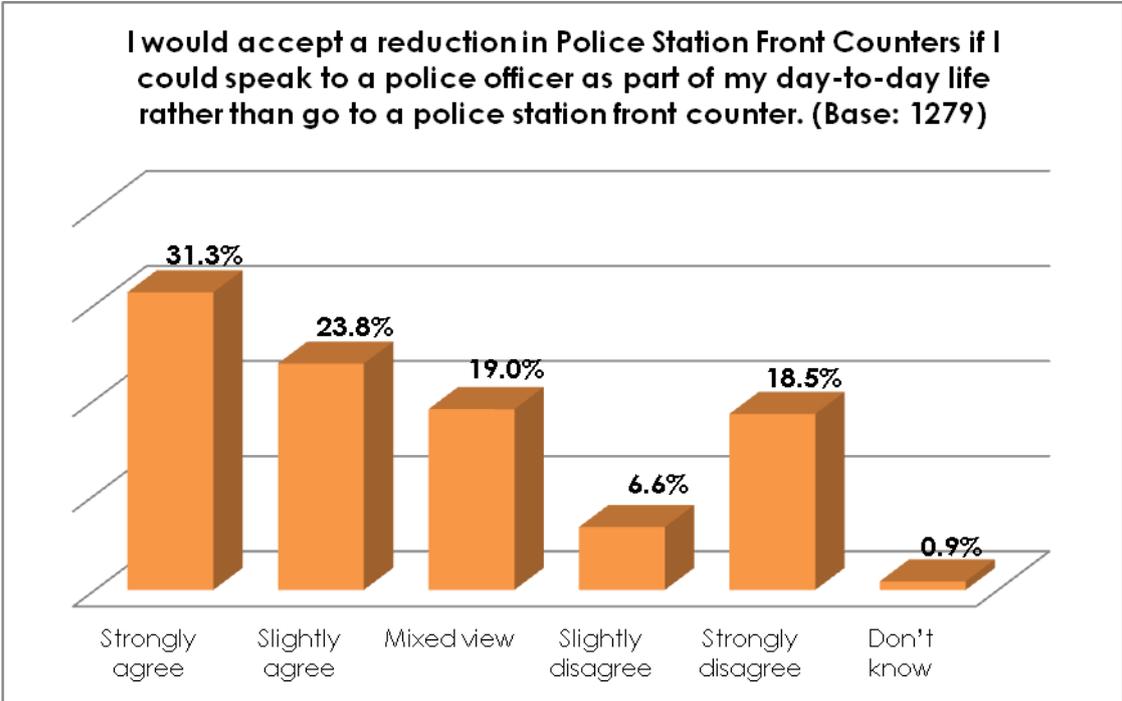


Among the 55% of respondents who agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if they could access police services at the same time as other public services, 30% slightly agreed this was the case whereas 25% strongly agreed. Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, with 17% expressing strong disagreement.

Six out of ten respondents aged 65 to 74 agreed they would accept a reduction if they could access police services at the same time as other public services; less than half (47%) of respondents aged 34 and under expressed agreement with this statement.

Around two thirds (67%) of respondents whose local station as Greyfriars either strongly or slightly agreed that they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if they could access police services alongside other public services; agreement was also high among those who cited Luton (61%) as their local station. Less than half (46%) of respondents whose local station was Dunstable agreed they would accept a reduction if police services were available at the same time as other public services.

**I could speak to a police officer as part of my day-to-day life rather than go to a Police Station Front Counter**



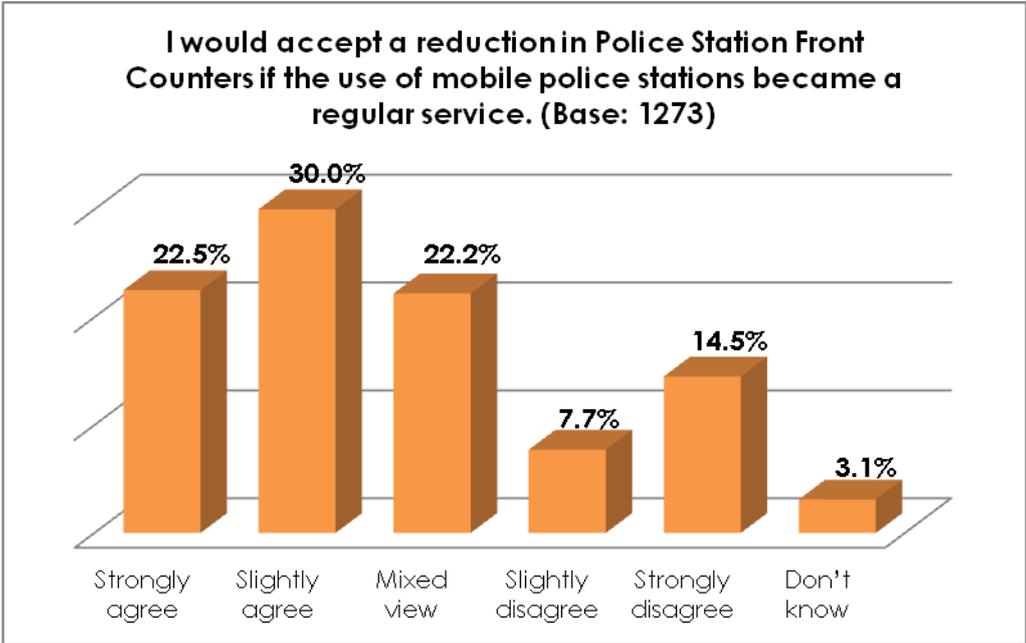
Around a third (31%) of respondents strongly agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if they were able to speak with a police officer as part of their normal life, a further 24% slightly agreed with this statement. A quarter of respondents disagreed that the ability to speak with an officer would mean they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services however, almost a fifth (19%) said they held mixed views towards this proposal.

Agreement towards this statement tended to increase with age, with less than half (48%) of respondents aged 16 to 34 expressing agreement compared with six out of ten respondents aged 65 and over.

Agreement that the ability to speak to an officer as part of day-to-day life would increase acceptance of the reduction of police station front counter services was ten percentage points higher among respondents who did not have a disability (57%) when compared with those with a disability (47%).

More than six out of ten respondents whose local police station was Greyfriars (63%) or Luton (62%) agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if they could speak with a police officer as part of their day-to-day life. Agreement was significantly lower among those whose local police station was Leighton Buzzard (42%) or Dunstable (41%).

**The use of mobile police stations became a regular service**



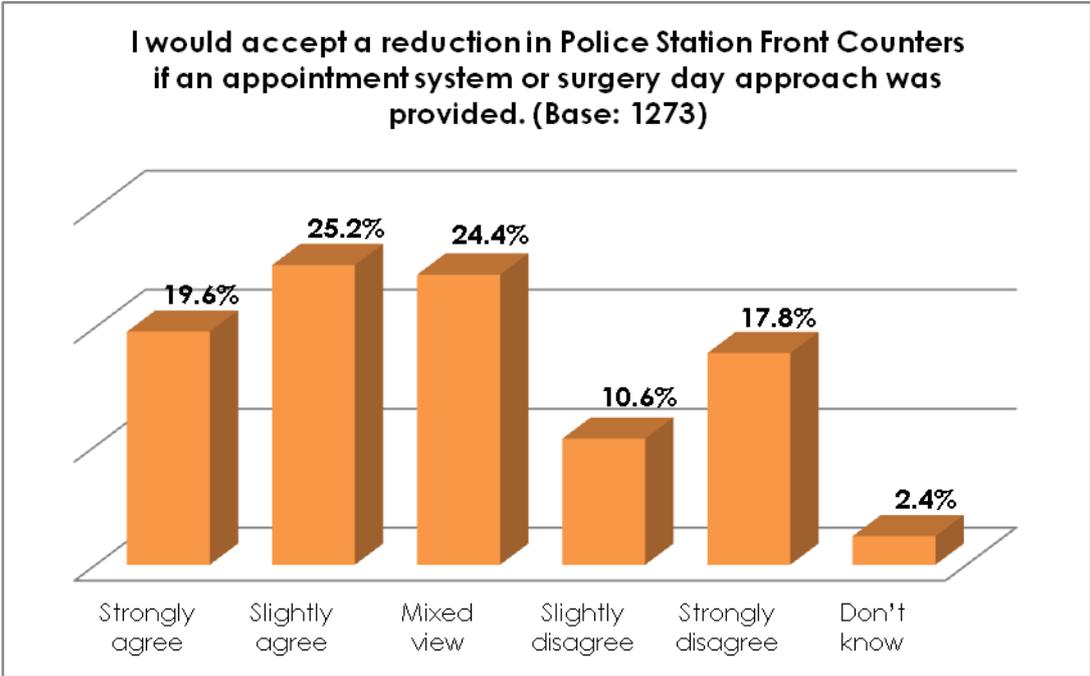
More than half (55%) of respondents agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if the use of mobile police stations became a regular service, however a significant proportion either disagreed (22%) or expressed a mixed view (22%).

Female respondents (57%) expressed significantly higher agreement than male respondents (49%) that they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if the use of mobile stations became a regular service. Agreement was also higher among those who did not have a disability (54%) when compared with those with a disability (48%).

Agreement varied greatly by age. More than three fifths (62%) of respondents aged 65 to 74 agreed with this proposal however, less than half of respondents aged 35 to 44 (49%), 55 to 64 (47%) and 75 and over (44%) expressed agreement that they would accept a reduction in services if the use of mobile police stations became a regular service.

Similar to previous statements, respondents whose local station was either Greyfriars (58%) or Luton (67%) expressed the highest agreement towards the proposed changes. Agreement that a reduction in police station front counter services would be accepted if the use of mobile stations became a regular service was lowest among respondents whose local police station was Dunstable (42%).

**An appointment system or surgery day approach was provided**



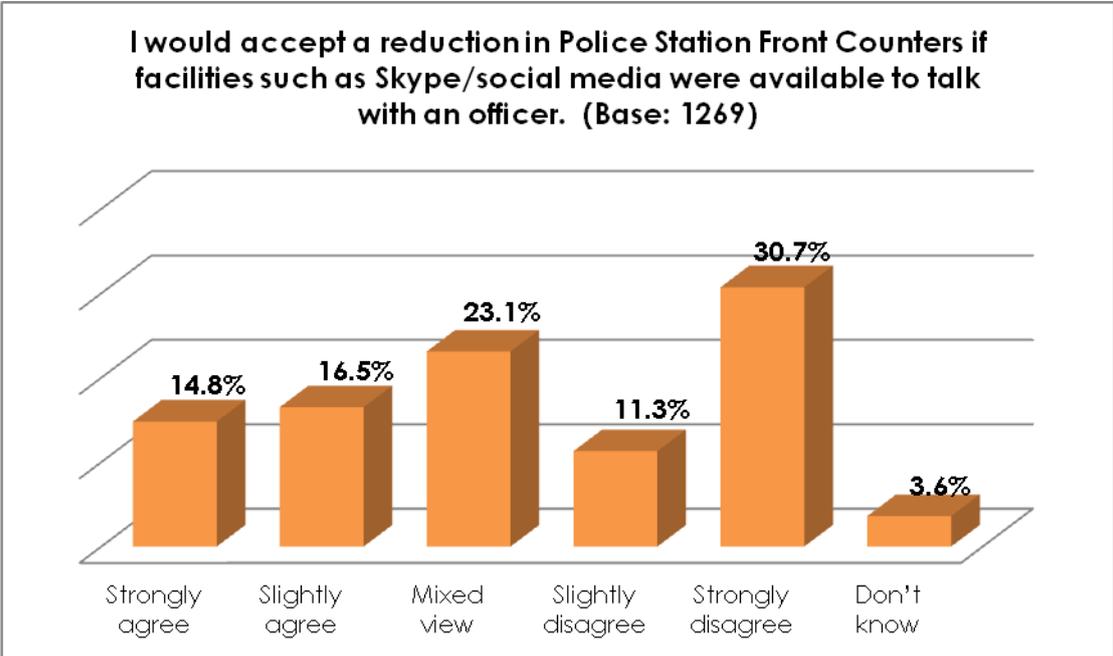
A fifth of respondents strongly agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if an appointment system or surgery day approach was provided however, a similar proportion (18%) strongly disagreed that this would be the case.

Similar to the previous statement, agreement was higher among female respondents (49%) when compared with their male counterparts (42%).

More than half (52%) of respondents aged 45 to 54 agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if an appointment system or day surgery approach was introduced; around a third (35%) of respondents aged 35 to 44 expressed agreement with this statement.

Agreement with this statement was highest among respondents who specified that Biggleswade was their local police station (52%); agreement was significantly lower among respondents whose local police station was Leighton Buzzard (37%) or Dunstable (36%).

**Facilities such as Skype/social media were available to talk with an officer**

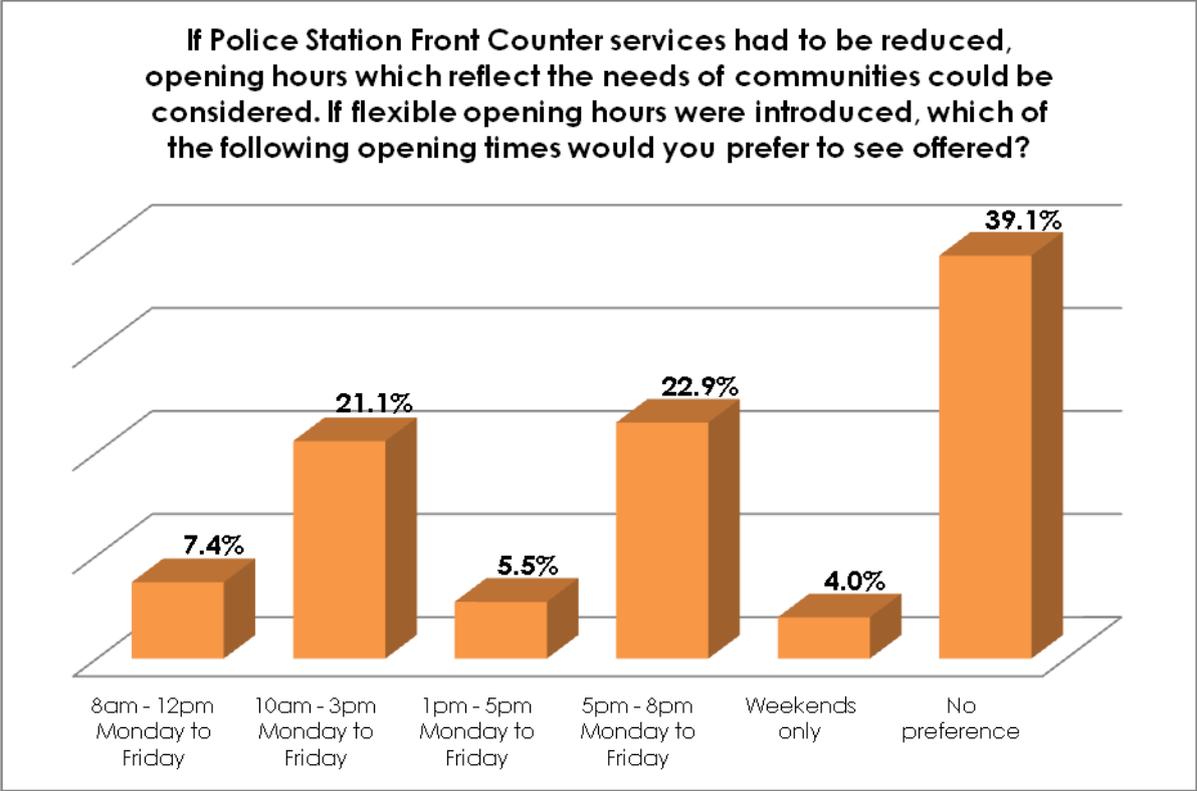


Around a third (31%) of respondents agreed that they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if they could speak with an officer using facilities such as Skype / social media however, a larger proportion (42%) expressed disagreement. Around a quarter (23%) of respondents held a mixed view as to whether they would accept a reduction in police station front counters if facilities such as Skype / social media were utilised.

Agreement with this statement was significantly lower among respondents aged 65 and over, as around a quarter (26%) of respondents in this age group agreed either strongly or slightly.

Two fifths of respondents whose local station was Luton agreed they would accept a reduction in police station front counter services if they were able to use Skype, social media, etc to speak with an officer. Fewer respondents whose closest station was Dunstable (25%) or Leighton Buzzard (24%) expressed agreement towards this proposal.

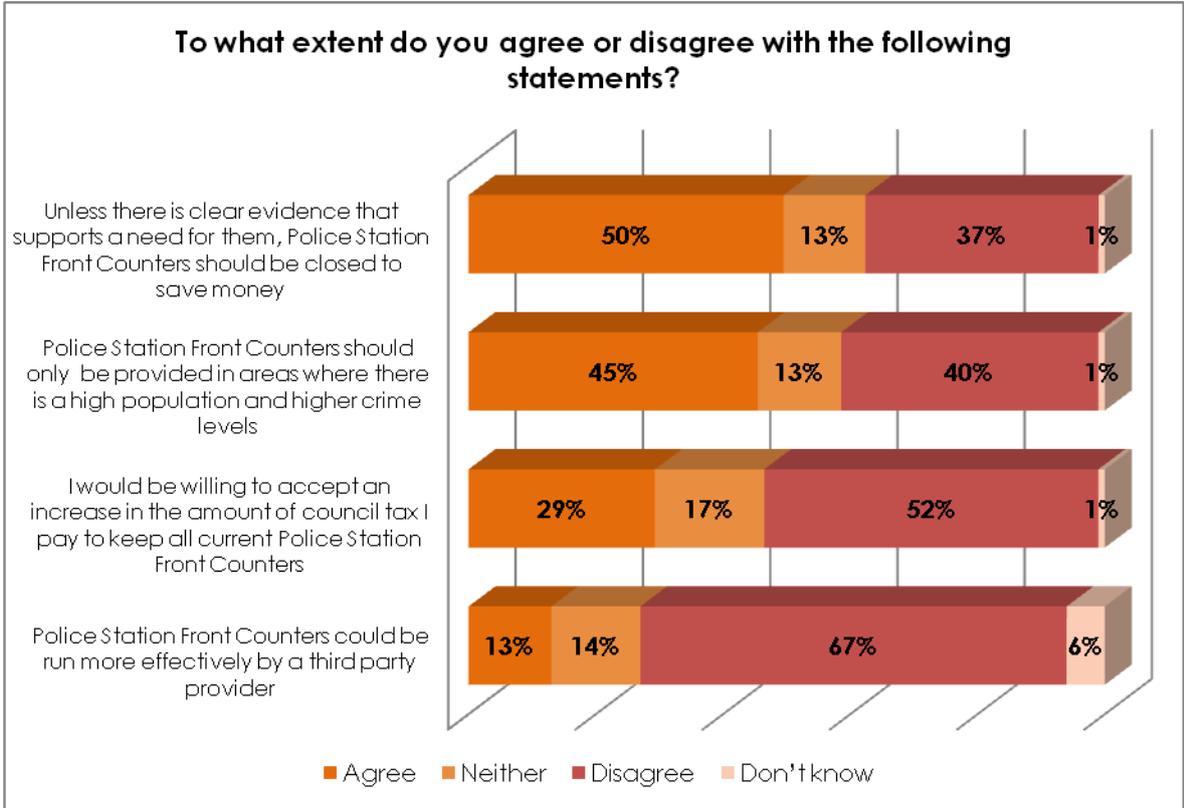
### 7.2.2 Flexible Opening Times



Respondents were given various options with regards to the times which police station front counters could be open if flexible opening hours were introduced however, the largest proportion (39%) of respondents expressed no preference.

The times which were most preferable were Monday to Friday between either 10 am to 3 pm (21%) or 5 pm to 8 pm (23%). Few respondents said they would like police station front counters to be open only on weekends (4%).

### 7.2.3 Provision of Front Counter Services



A half of respondents agreed that police station front counters should be closed unless there is clear evidence which supports a need for them, while 45% were in agreement that police station front counters should only be provided in areas of high population and higher crime levels.

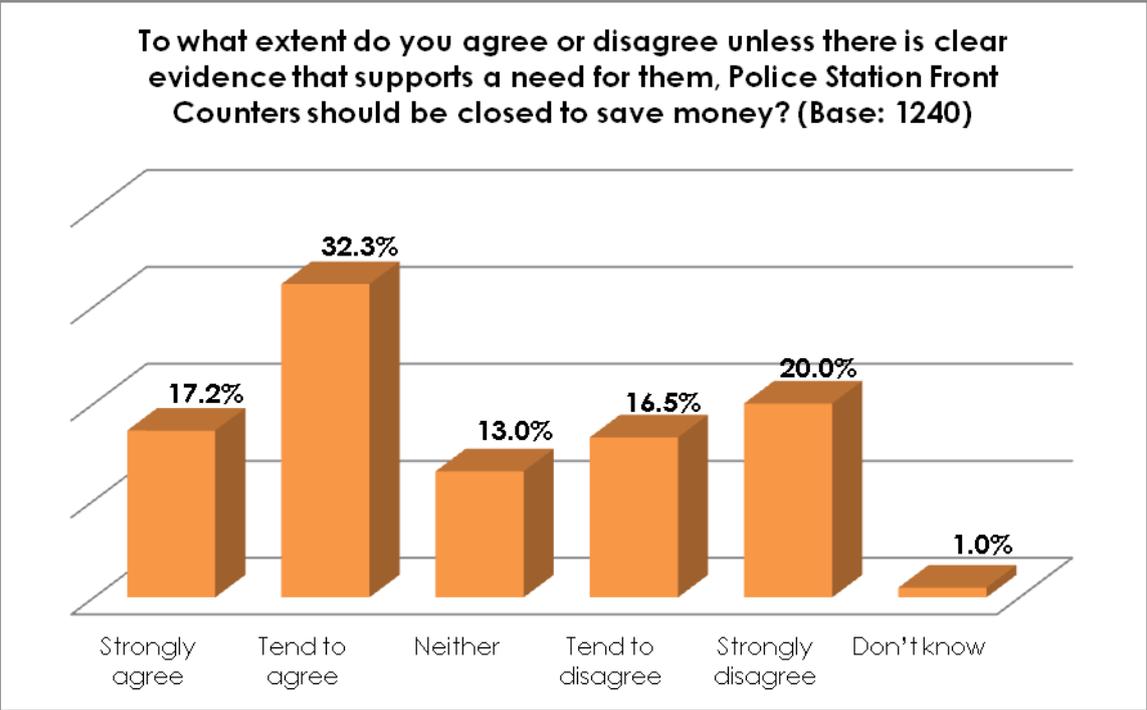
Fewer respondents agreed that they would be willing to accept an increase in council tax to keep all current police station front counters (29%) or that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider (13%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?						
Statement	Bedford		Central Bedfordshire		Luton	
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Unless there is clear evidence that supports a need for them, Police Station Front Counters should be closed to save money	53.5	34.7	47.0	38.4	54.0	32.7
Police Station Front Counters should only be provided in areas where there is a high population and higher crime levels	47.5	36.0	42.7	44.1	52.6	31.6
I would be willing to accept an increase in the amount of council tax I pay to keep all current Police Station Front Counters	25.9	54.2	31.9	50.1	25.8	54.3
Police Station Front Counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider	12.9	65.4	14.1	67.4	10.7	71.1

Respondents living in Luton expressed the highest agreement that police station front counters should be closed unless there is evidence that they are needed (54%) and should only be provided in areas with high population / crime (53%). In this area agreement was significantly lower that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider (11%).

Respondents who lived in Central Bedfordshire were most accepting of an increase in council tax if it would mean all police station front counters were to remain open (32%). In this area agreement was also higher that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider (14%).

**Unless there is clear evidence that supports a need for them, Police Station Front Counters should be closed to save money**

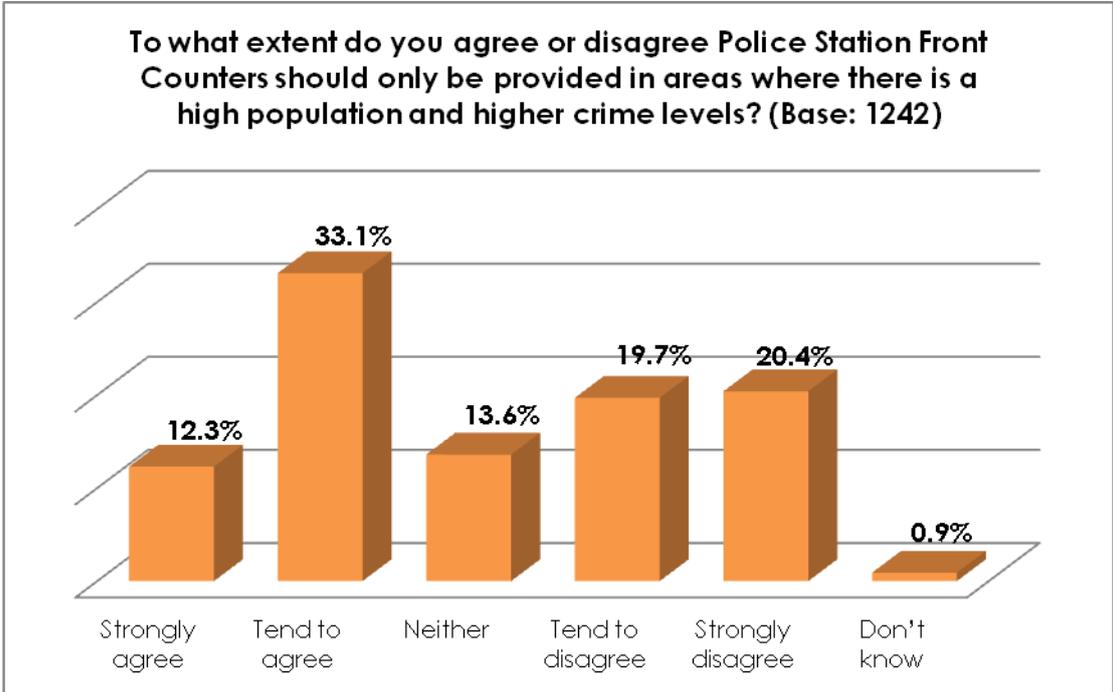


A half of respondents expressed some level of agreement that police station front counters should be closed unless there is clear evidence that supports a need for them, with 17% indicating strong agreement towards this proposal. Despite this high level of agreement, a significant proportion of respondents either tended to disagree (17%) or strongly disagree (20%) that police station front counters should be closed unless there is evidence of a need for them.

Older respondents (i.e. those aged 65 and over) expressed the highest agreement towards the proposal to close police station front counters where there was no evidence which supported a need for them (55%). Agreement was slightly lower among respondents aged 35 to 44 (46%).

Almost three fifths of respondents whose local police station was Greyfriars (58%) or Ampthill (57%) agreed that police station front counters should be closed unless there was evidence to support the need for them to remain open. Less than two fifths of respondents whose local station was Riseley (38%) or Leighton Buzzard (31%) expressed agreement towards this statement.

**Police Station Front Counters should only be provided in areas where there is a high population and higher crime levels**



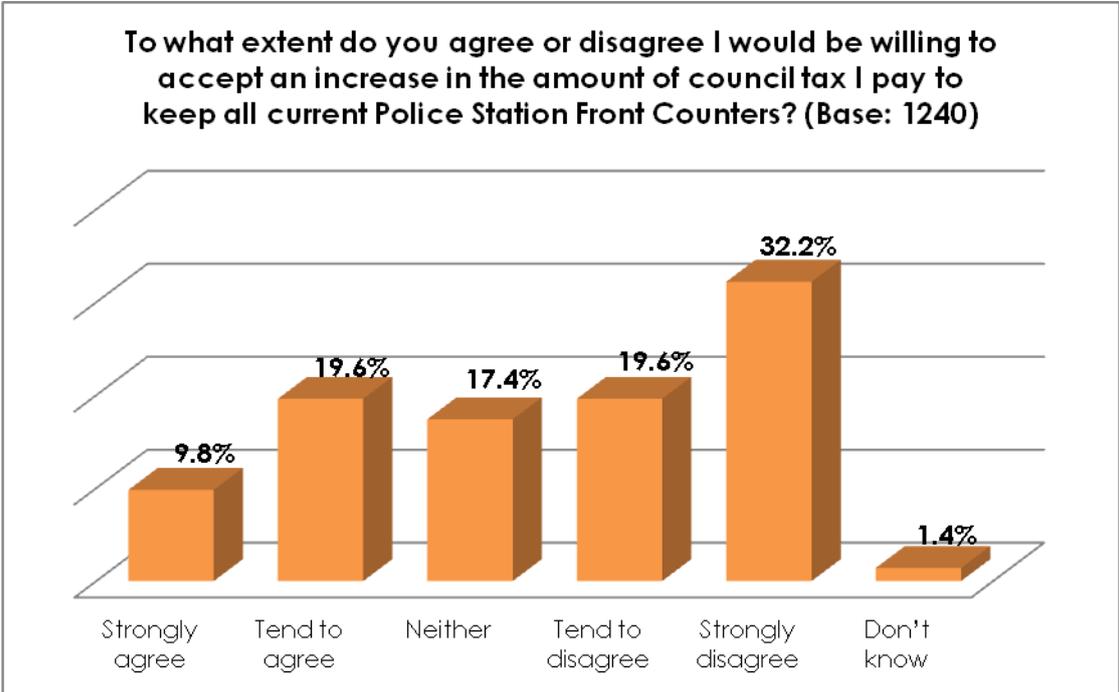
Among the 45% of respondents who expressed agreement that police station front counters should only be provided in areas of high population and higher crime, 12% strongly agreed that this was the case while 33% tended to agree. A fifth of respondents strongly disagreed that police station front counters should only be provided in areas of high population and higher crime; a further fifth tended to disagree that this should occur.

Male respondents (48%) most frequently agreed that police station front counters should only be provided in areas of high population / high crime; agreement was six percentage points lower among female respondents (42%).

Agreement was highest among older respondents; with 54% of respondents aged 65 and over expressing some level of agreement that police station front counters should only be provided in areas with high population and higher crime. Agreement was lower among respondents aged 45 to 54 (38%).

Respondents whose local police station was Luton (57%) and Greyfriars (51%) expressed the highest levels of agreement for police station front counters to only be provided in areas of high population and high crime. Agreement was lower among respondents whose local police station was Riseley (36%) and Leighton Buzzard (35%).

**I would be willing to accept an increase in the amount of council tax I pay to keep all current Police Station Front Counters**



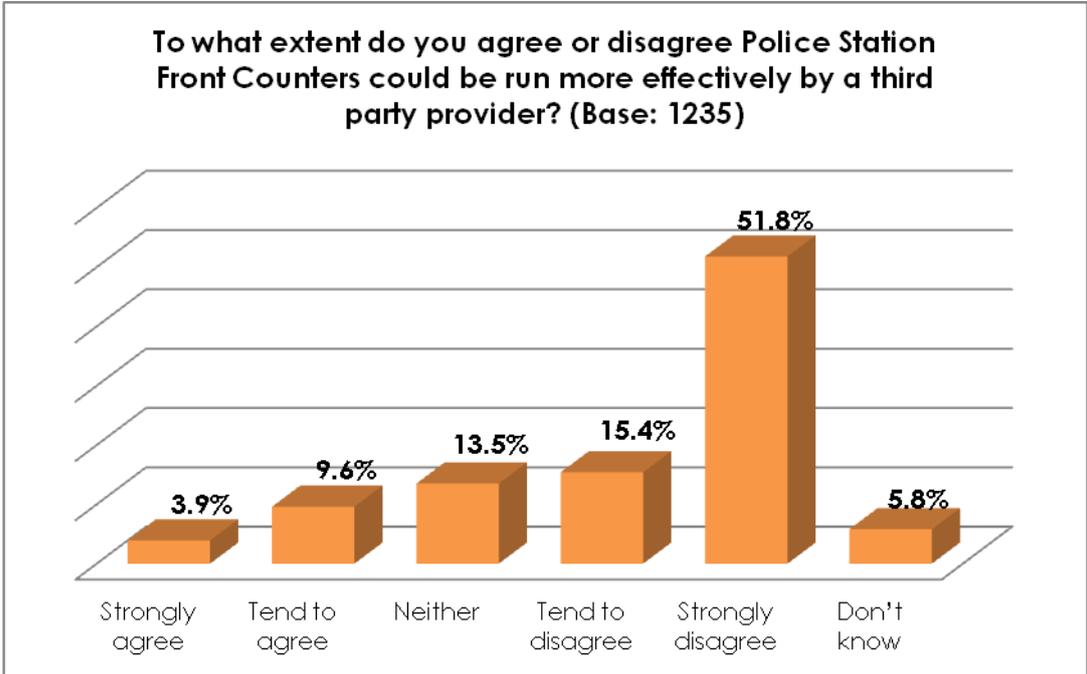
Around three tenths of respondents agreed they would be willing to accept an increase in council tax if it would mean all police station front counters would remain open, however two tenths tended to disagree and a further 32% said they strongly disagreed that they would accept such an increase.

A third of male respondents agreed that they would accept an increase in their council tax; 8% higher than agreement among female respondents (25%).

Respondents aged 35 to 44 (33%) most frequently agreed they would be willing to accept an increase in their council tax; fewer respondents aged 25 to 34 (24%) agreed that they would be prepared to pay such an increase.

Levels of agreement (38%) and disagreement (40%) were similar among respondents whose local station was Leighton Buzzard. Agreement (24%) was significantly lower than disagreement (55%) among respondents who cited Greyfriars as their local police station.

**Police Station Front Counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider**



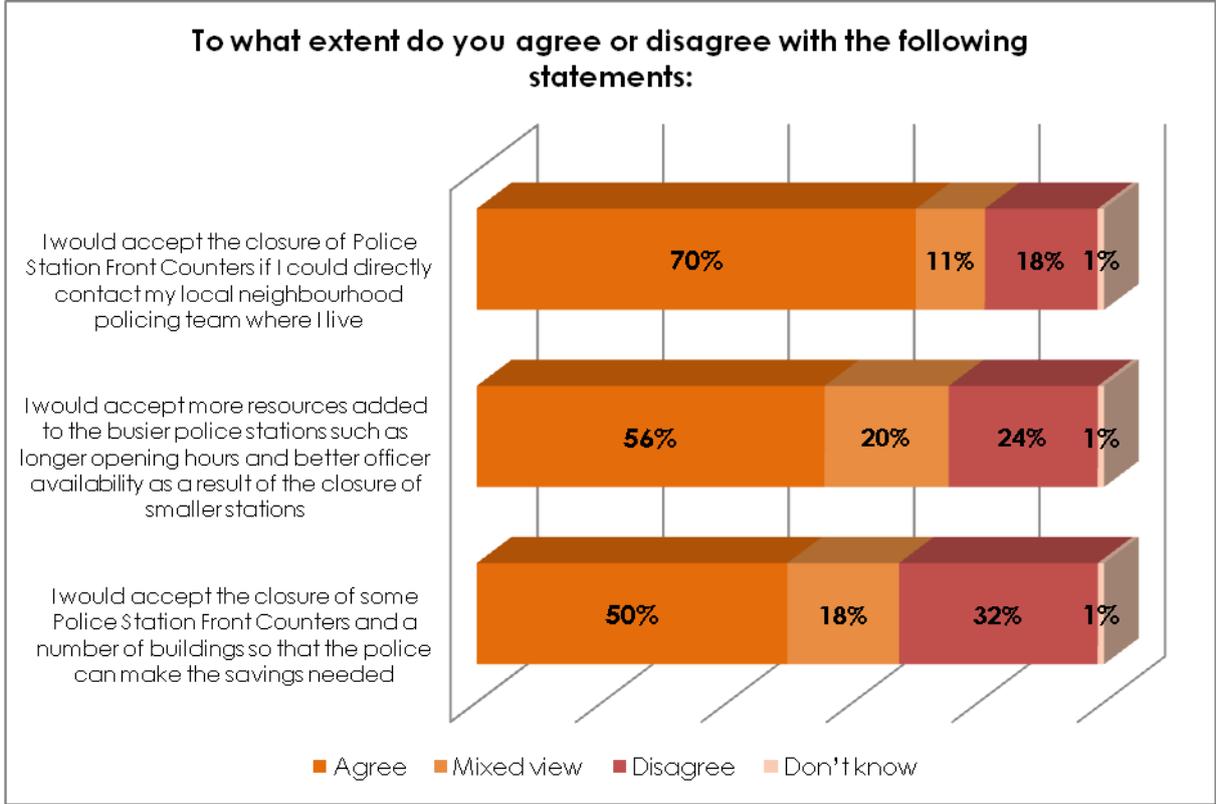
More than a tenth (13%) of respondents agreed that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider however, around half (52%) strongly disagreed that this was the case.

Respondents aged 75 and over (18%) most frequently agreed that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider; few respondents aged 25 to 34 (5%) agreed with this statement.

Almost a fifth (18%) of respondents whose local police station was Riseley agreed that police station front counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider; agreement fell to a tenth among respondents who cited Luton as their local station.

### 7.3 Closure of Police Stations and Police Station Front Counters

#### 7.3.1 Opinion of Closures



A half of respondents agreed that they would accept the closure of some police station front counters in order for the police to make the required savings however, almost a third (32%) disagreed that they would accept such closures. Acceptance of the closure of police station front counters increased to seven tenths if respondents were able to contact their local neighbourhood policing team directly.

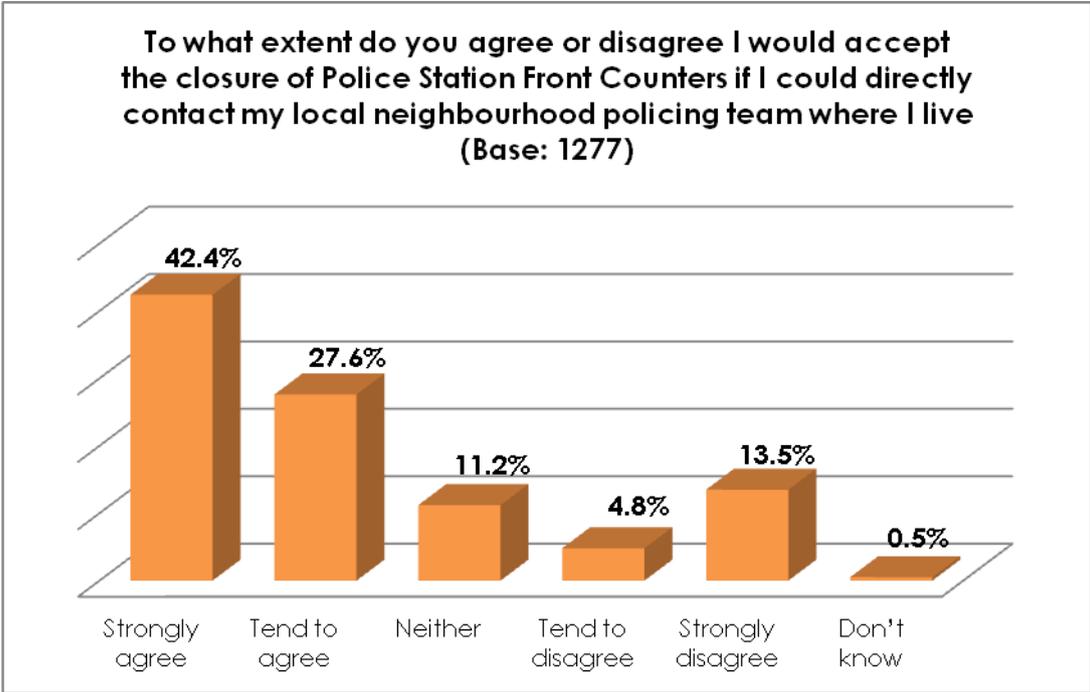
Opinion was divided when considering if smaller stations should close to enable the resources to be utilised at busier police stations. Although the largest proportion (56%) agreed that they would accept this shift in resources almost a quarter (24%) disagreed they would be accept such changes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?						
Statement	Bedford		Central Bedfordshire		Luton	
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
I would accept the closure of Police Station Front Counters if I could directly contact my local neighbourhood policing team where I live	76.1	12.7	66.3	20.9	71.9	19.6
I would accept more resources added to the busier police stations such as longer opening hours and better officer availability as a result of the closure of smaller stations	63.0	15.0	49.1	29.9	65.1	16.4
I would accept the closure of some Police Station Front Counters and a number of buildings so that the police can make the savings needed	60.8	24.4	42.4	36.8	54.5	25.3

Respondents living in Bedford were most accepting of the suggested changes, with at least six out of ten agreeing with each of the statements relating to police station front counters. Agreement among those living in Bedford was particularly high that the closure of police station front counters would be accepted if it would help the police to make the savings which were needed (Luton: +6%, Central Bedfordshire: +18%).

For all statements agreement was lowest among those living in Central Bedfordshire.

**I would accept the closure of Police Station Front Counters if I could directly contact my local neighbourhood policing team where I live**

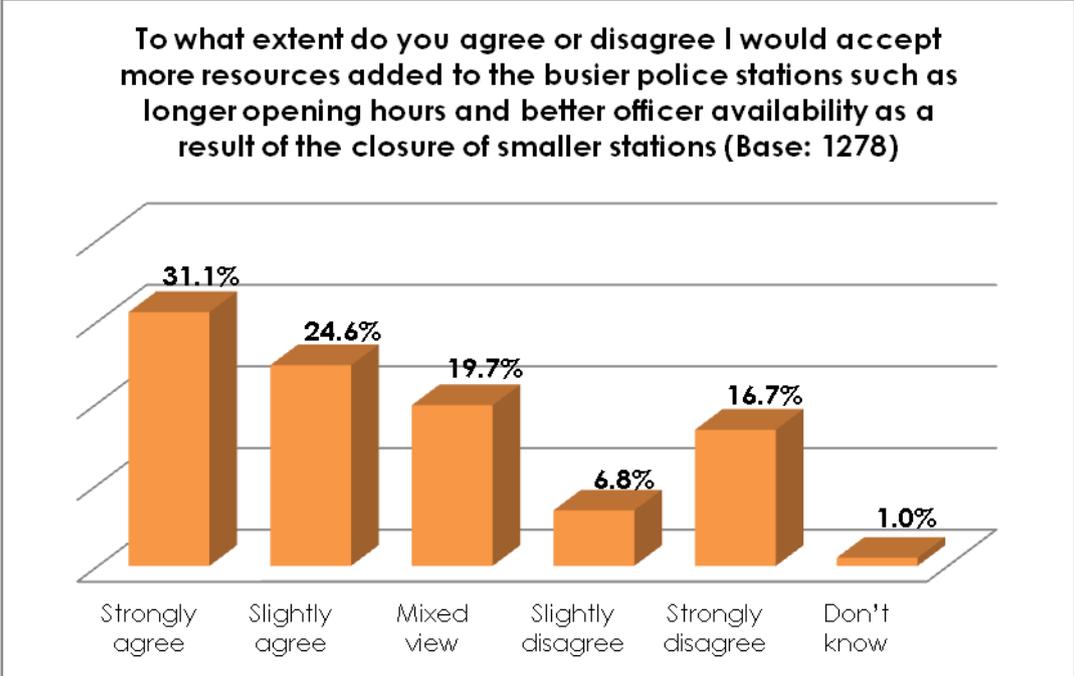


Seven out of ten respondents agreed that they would accept the closure of police station front counters if they could directly contact the neighbourhood policing team where they lived, with 42% strongly agreeing that they would accept such closures. Among the 18% of respondents who disagreed with this statement 5% said they tended to disagree while 14% strongly disagreed.

Agreement was highest among older respondents as around three quarters (76%) of respondents aged 65 and over agreed they would accept the closure of police station front counters if they could contact their neighbourhood policing team directly. Less than two thirds (64%) of respondents aged 45 to 54 expressed agreement towards this proposal.

Agreement that the closure of police station front counters would be accepted if the respondent could contact their local neighbourhood policing team directly was highest among those whose local station was Greyfriars (77%), Riseley (75%) and Ampthill (75%). Respondents who said Leighton Buzzard (60%) or Dunstable (57%) was their local police station less frequently agreed that they would accept the closure of police station front counters if they were able to contact the neighbourhood policing team directly.

**I would accept more resources added to the busier police stations such as longer opening hours and better officer availability as a result of the closure of smaller stations**



Around a third (31%) of respondents strongly agreed that they would accept the closure of smaller stations if it allowed additional resources to be allocated to busier stations; a further 25% of respondents slightly agreed with this proposal. Although around a quarter (24%) of respondents disagreed with the suggestion of transferring resources from smaller stations to those which were busier, a further 20% expressed a mixed view.

Female respondents (58%) expressed higher agreement than male respondents (53%) that smaller police stations could be closed if it would allow additional resources to be given to busier police stations. Agreement was also higher among respondents who did not have a disability (57%) when compared with those who did (52%).

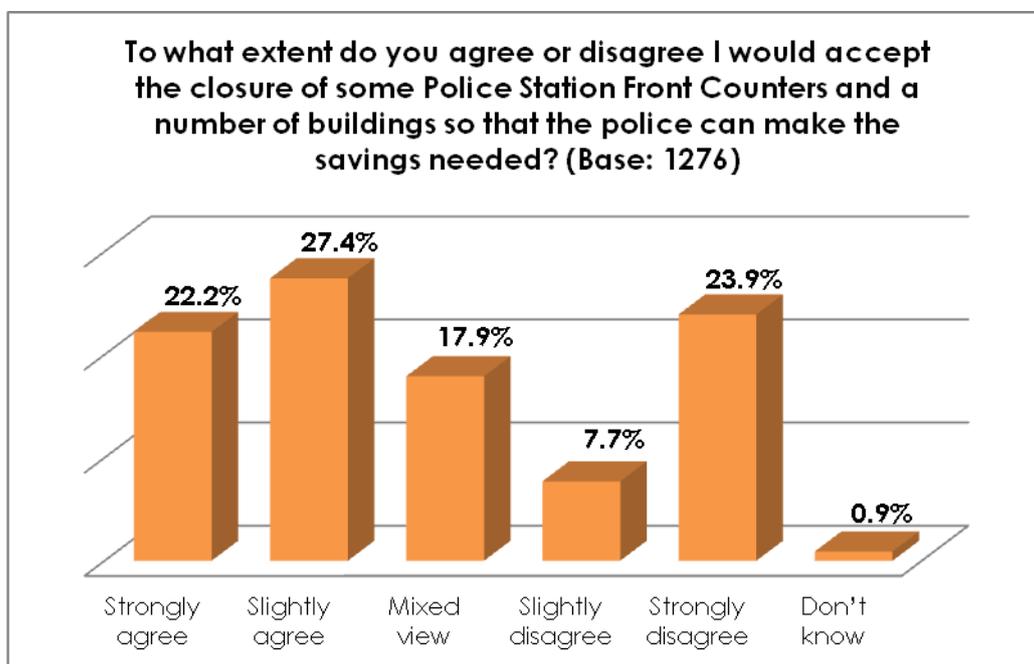
Younger respondents most frequently agreed that additional resources should be given to busier police stations even if it meant the closure of smaller stations (66% of respondents aged 16 to 34). Agreement tended to be lower among respondents aged 45 to 54 (52%).

**To what extent do you agree or disagree I would accept more resources added to the busier police stations such as longer opening hours and better officer availability as a result of the closure of smaller stations?**

Local police station	Base	% Agree	% Disagree
Luton	118	71.2	12.7
Greyfriars	266	69.5	11.3
Ampthill	149	58.4	27.5
Biggleswade	133	51.1	27.8
Dunstable	157	49.7	31.8
Riseley	73	47.9	27.4
Leighton Buzzard	105	28.6	44.8

Agreement towards this statement was greatly influenced by the respondents' local police station. At least seven out of ten respondents whose local police station was Luton (71%) or Greyfriars (70%) agreed that they would accept more resources added to the busier stations even if it would result in the closure of smaller stations. Only 29% of respondents whose local station was Leighton Buzzard agreed that they would accept such shifts in resources.

**I would accept the closure of some Police Station Front Counters and a number of buildings so that the police can make the savings needed**



A half of respondents agreed that they would accept the closure of some police station front counters if it would mean that police could make the required savings, with 22% in strong agreement that this was the case.

Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents strongly disagreed that they would accept the closure of police station front counters if it would ensure the police could make the savings which were needed.

Agreement with this statement was highest among respondents aged 65 to 74 (57%) whereas agreement fell to 42% among those aged 35 to 44.

More than half (51%) of respondents who did not have a disability agreed that they would accept the closure of some police station front counters and other police buildings if it would help the police to make the savings that were needed. Agreement was lower (45%) among respondents with a disability.

<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree I would accept the closure of some Police Station Front Counters and a number of buildings so that the police can make the savings needed?</b>			
<b>Local police station</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>% Agree</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>
Greyfriars	266	62.8	20.3
Riseley	71	57.7	33.8
Biggleswade	134	53.0	26.9
Luton	119	52.9	25.2
Amphill	146	49.3	29.5
Dunstable	159	34.0	44.7
Leighton Buzzard	104	29.8	50.0

Similar to the previous statement, agreement varied significantly by the respondents identified local police station. Agreement was again highest among respondents whose local station was Greyfriars (63%). Agreement that respondents would accept the closure of some police station front counters and other police buildings if it would mean the police could make the savings needed was significantly lower among respondents whose local police station was Dunstable (34%) or Leighton Buzzard (30%).

### 7.3.2 Concerns

What would be your <u>main</u> concern in relation to Police Station Front Counter and Police Station changes or closures? (Base: 1283)		
Concern	Number	%
There will be an increase in the time taken to respond to emergency incidents	245	19.1
It will reduce my feelings of safety in the local area	220	17.1
There will be an increase in the time taken to respond to non-emergency incidents	186	14.5
There will be a reduction in the standard of service provided by the local Neighbourhood Officers	181	14.1
I will be unable to visit the local police station	155	12.1
Other	83	6.5
I have no concerns about closures	213	16.6

When asked to select the main concern with regards to police station front counter / police station changes or closures, respondents most frequently indicated concern over response times to either emergency (19%) or non-emergency (15%) incidents. Less than a fifth (17%) of respondents also expressed a general concern that closures / changes would lower their feelings of safety when in the local area.

Almost a fifth (17%) of respondents had no concerns in relation to police station front counter / police station changes or closures.

Among the 83 respondents who said another concern, 28% (23 respondents) said the changes / closures may lead to a lack of police presence. Other concerns raised included the following:

- More difficult / time consuming / inconvenient to contact a front counter (9 respondents)
- Service provided would suffer (7 respondents)
- All / most things listed would concern me (6 respondents)
- No physical place to go if needed (6 respondents)

**What would be your main concern in relation to Police Station Front Counter and Police Station changes or closures?**

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Bedford (%)</b>	<b>Central Bedfordshire (%)</b>	<b>Luton (%)</b>
There will be an increase in the time taken to respond to emergency incidents	17.8	<b>19.9</b>	16.1
It will reduce my feelings of safety in the local area	13.4	19.2	<b>19.4</b>
There will be an increase in the time taken to respond to non-emergency incidents	16.3	13.8	14.8
There will be a reduction in the standard of service provided by the local Neighbourhood Officers	16.0	12.9	12.9
I will be unable to visit the local police station	9.3	13.4	12.3
Other	6.7	6.0	9.0
I have no concerns about closures	<b>20.4</b>	14.9	15.5

The greatest cause of concern was different in each of the Bedfordshire areas.

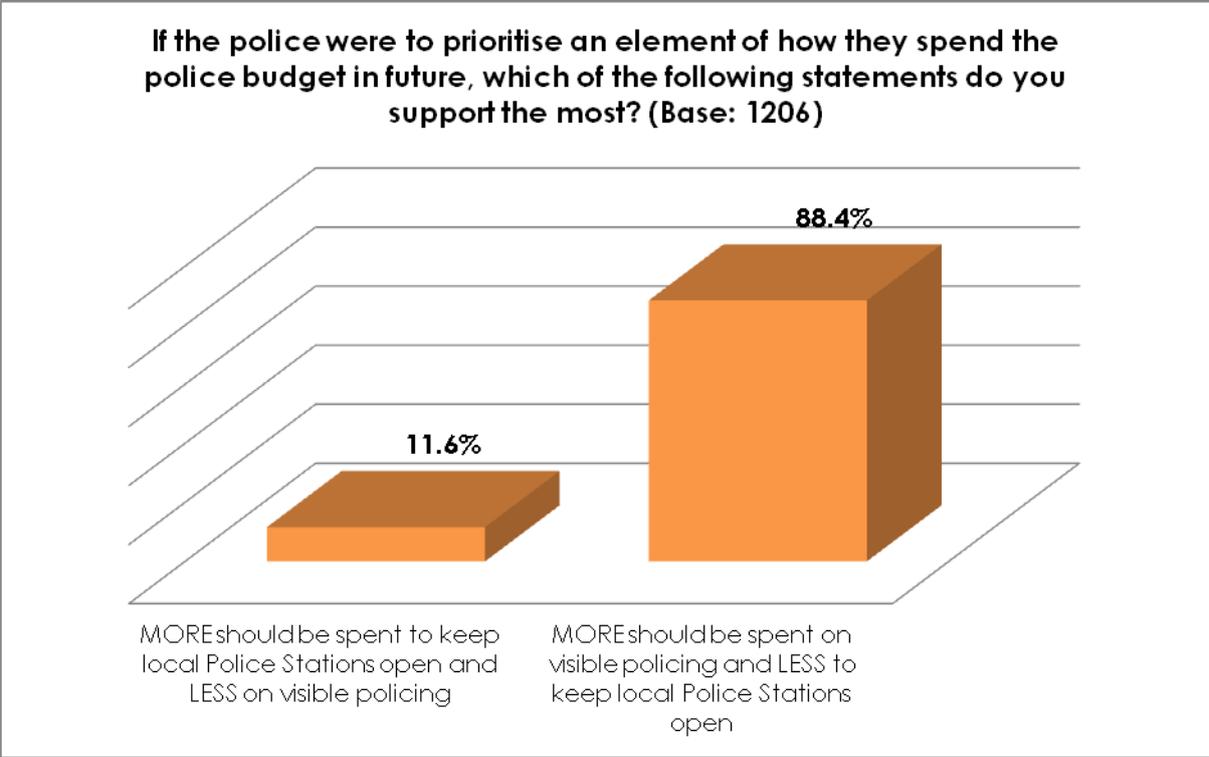
A fifth of respondents living in Central Bedfordshire said their main concern was an increase in the time it would take to respond to emergency incidents; this was also the most frequently selected concern among those living in Bedford (18%).

Respondents living in Luton most frequently expressed concern that the changes / closures would reduce their feelings of safety (19%); this was selected as the main concern by fewer respondents living in Bedford (13%).

Indicating no concerns about closures was highest among those living in Bedford (20%).

## 7.4 Policing Budget

### 7.4.1 Allocation of Policing Budget



Respondents were asked how they would prioritise the policing budget in the future if they could choose to allocate a greater proportion of the budget to either visible policing or keeping local police stations open.

The majority (88%) of respondents felt more should be spent on visible policing and less on keeping police stations open.

Across all demographic groups less than a fifth of respondents said a greater proportion of the budget should be spent on keeping local police stations open.

Respondents who had accessed a police station in the 12 months prior to taking part in the consultation (24%) were more likely than those who had not (6%) to say a greater amount of the budget should be spent on keeping police stations open.

The preference for allocating more funds on keeping police stations open was also higher among those whose local police station was either Leighton Buzzard (20%) or Dunstable (18%). More than nine tenths of respondents whose local police station was Greyfriars (94%), Luton (91%) and Luton North (94%) said they would prefer more to be spent on visible police rather than keeping police stations open.

If the police were to prioritise an element of how they spend the police budget in future, which of the following statements do you support the most?			
Area	Base	MORE should be spent to keep local Police Stations open and LESS on visible policing (%)	MORE should be spent on visible policing and LESS to keep local Police Stations open (%)
Bedford	370	7.0	93.0
Central Bedfordshire	653	14.9	85.1
Luton	149	9.4	90.6

In all areas the majority of respondents felt more should be spent on visible police and within Bedford and Luton this opinion exceeded nine tenths (93% and 91% respectively).

## 8.0 Additional Comments

### 8.1 Additional Comments

Respondents were lastly asked to give any comments they had, whether in relation to the topics covered in the survey or not. Comments have been grouped and the responses given most frequently are shown in the table below.

Do you have any other comments in relation to any of the subjects in this survey, or is there anything else that you would like to tell us? (Base: 690)		
Comment	Number	%
Lack of visible policing in my area / increase visible policing	142	20.6
Local stations / visible policing give reassurance and feelings of safety / community	78	11.3
Efficiencies can be found elsewhere (e.g. reduce management)	60	8.7
Police stations / visible policing act as a deterrent to crime	35	5.1
More community policing (open days, contact from named officer, etc)	32	4.6
Visible policing and keeping stations open is equally important	31	4.5

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Questionnaire

### Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Contacting the Police in a Non-Emergency Situation Survey



Over the next two years cuts in government funding mean that Bedfordshire Police has to make savings of £7.5m, which is on top of the £15m already taken out of our police budget since 2010.

The police estate, including local stations, costs £3m a year to run and maintain. The greater the savings that can be made from our buildings, the more we will be able to protect visible policing out in our communities.

By looking at what buildings Bedfordshire Police has, where they are, and whether they meet the public's needs there may also be opportunities to make savings on under-used, out-dated and unfit buildings that can be invested in new and more accessible facilities.

Although it is clear that there are tough choices to be made between police stations and police on patrol no decisions have yet been taken. Your views will help shape our plans to improve how you can access and contact the police in non-emergency situations, while making savings that will keep as many police officers and PCSOs as possible on our streets.

Please let me know what you think by completing the following survey; it should take you no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for your help.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Olly Martins'.

Olly Martins,

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner.



Q1 Thinking about your local police in general, how easy or difficult do you feel it is to contact them when you need to? (Tick one box only)

- Very easy .....
- Fairly easy .....
- Fairly difficult .....
- Very difficult .....
- Don't know .....

Q1a Why do you say that? (Write the answer into the open box)

Q2 Have you contacted Bedfordshire Police in the last 12 months? (Tick one box only)

- Yes .....  Go to Q3
- No .....  Go to Q6a
- Can't remember .....  Go to Q6a

The following questions are about your experience of contacting Bedfordshire Police. If you have contacted the police on more than one occasion, please could you think about your most recent contact.

Q3 For what reason(s) were you in contact with Bedfordshire police? (Tick all that apply)

- To report a crime or incident as a victim .....
- To report a crime or incident on behalf of somebody else .....
- To give the police information about something .....
- To report anti-social behaviour .....
- As a suspect or as a result on having been stopped on suspicion of committing a crime or an offence .....
- Speaking to an officer on patrol .....
- Attended a local event at which police were present .....
- They knocked on my door .....
- Other (please specify below) .....
- Don't know / can't remember .....
- Prefer not to say .....

**Q4** Which of the following ways did you make contact with Bedfordshire Police?  
(Tick all that apply)

By phone – via 999 or 101.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
In person, at a police station front counter.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
In person, to a police officer or PCSO on the street.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
In person, at a Police Information Point.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
In person, at another location.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online / email.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attended a local event / community meeting.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
By post / letter.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know / can't remember.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	

**Q5** On this occasion, how easy or difficult did you find it to contact Bedfordshire Police?  
(Tick one box only)

Very easy.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly easy.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly difficult.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very difficult.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did not succeed in making contact.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q6** In each of the following circumstances, what would be your preferred method of contacting the police?  
(Tick one box per statement only)

	To a police officer or PCSO on the street	At a police contact point at a high street location	In person at a police station front counter	Internet (including social media)	Email	Post /Letter	Telephone
Telling the police what's going on in your neighbourhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making an appointment to talk to the police/PCSO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out who your local officer is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To get an update on an existing crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting a crime where your property has been stolen (e.g. from your home or car)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting personal crime (e.g. assault/robbery)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out about levels of crime in your area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To pay a fine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To hand in or claim lost property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To make a complaint about the police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7 The following are ways to access Bedfordshire Police services. Please indicate whether you are aware of the following methods. (Tick one box per statement only)

	Yes	No
Non-emergency telephone (101)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text phone (for the hearing impaired)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacting your local PCSO directly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking to a police officer/PCSO on patrol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the phone boxes outside a police station to call for assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in police related group or meeting such as Neighbourhood Watch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting a police station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting a neighbourhood base where police officers/PCSOs visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting a local public police meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact through website/online enquiry form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police social networking sites - Facebook, Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) to report crime anonymously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email to an individual officer or group (for example a local policing team)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter or fax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As mentioned earlier Bedfordshire Police is having to make significant savings in line with Home Office funding cuts.

We also have police stations that were built in a time before the advent of the mobile phone or the internet, and that are sometimes no longer in the most easily accessible locations in terms of where people live, work and shop.

The following questions are ideas we want to test with you to find out your level of support for different ways of contacting the police that could help put policing back at the heart of the community.

Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following potential opportunities with regards to Police Station Front Counter provision. (Tick one box per statement only)

I would accept a reduction in Police Station Front Counter Services if....

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Mixed view	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
...I could speak to a police officer as part of my day-to-day life (e.g. at supermarkets, libraries or doctor's surgeries) rather than go to a Police Station Front Counter	<input type="checkbox"/>					
...I could access police services at the same time as other public services (e.g. my local council) within the same building	<input type="checkbox"/>					
...I could use dedicated online channels to report crime, request a visit or email a query	<input type="checkbox"/>					
...an appointment system or surgery day approach was provided	<input type="checkbox"/>					
...facilities such as Skype/social media were available to talk with an officer	<input type="checkbox"/>					
...the use of mobile police stations became a regular service	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Q9 In light of the previous questions, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Tick one box per statement only)

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Mixed view	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I would accept the closure of some Police Station Front Counters and a number of buildings so that the police can make the savings needed	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I would accept the closure of Police Station Front Counters if I could directly contact my local neighbourhood policing team where I live	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I would accept more resources added to the busier police stations such as longer opening hours and better officer availability as a result of the closure of smaller stations	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Q10 What would be your main concern in relation to Police Station Front Counter and Police Station changes or closures? (Tick one box only)

- There will be an increase in the time taken to respond to emergency incidents .....
  - There will be an increase in the time taken to respond to non-emergency incidents .....
  - It will reduce my feelings of safety in the local area .....
  - There will be a reduction in the standard of service provided by the local Neighbourhood Officers...
  - I will be unable to visit the local police station.....
  - I have no concerns about closures .....
  - Other (please specify below) .....
- 

Q11 Which is your local Police Station? (Write the answer into the open box)

Q12 How often, if at all, have you been to your local Police Station in the past year? (Tick one box only)

- I have not been to my local Police Station in the last year .....
- Once .....
- Two or three times .....
- Four or five times .....
- Six or more times .....
- Don't know / can't remember .....

**Q13** If Police Station Front Counter services had to be reduced, opening hours which reflect the needs of communities could be considered. If flexible opening hours were introduced, which of the following opening times would you prefer to see offered? (Tick one box only)

- 8am -12pm Monday - Friday .....
- 10am - 3pm Monday - Friday .....
- 1pm - 5pm Monday - Friday .....
- 5pm - 8pm Monday - Friday .....
- Weekends only.....
- No preference .....

**Q14** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Tick one box per statement only)

	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Police Station Front Counters should only be provided in areas where there is a high population and higher crime levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unless there is clear evidence (i.e. significant numbers using them) that supports a need for them, Police Station Front Counters should be closed to save money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Station Front Counters could be run more effectively by a third party provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would be willing to accept an increase in the amount of council tax I pay to keep all current Police Station Front Counters open	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q15** The police has to consider all elements of how the policing budget is spent and difficult decisions will have to be made. If the police were to prioritise an element of how they spend the police budget in the future, which of the following statements do you support the most: (Tick one box only)

- MORE should be spent to keep local Police Stations open and LESS on visible policing.....
- MORE should be spent on visible policing and LESS to keep local Police Stations open.....

**Q16** Do you have any other comments in relation to any of the subjects covered in this survey, or is there anything else that you would like to tell us? (Write the answer into the open box)

The following questions will help us to understand how opinions vary between different groups of the population. It will also help us to ensure we are speaking to a wide range of people. The information that you provide will remain confidential.

Q17 Are you male or female? (Tick one box only)

- Male .....
- Female .....

Q18 What age were you on your last birthday? (Tick one box only)

- 16 to 24 .....
- 25 to 34 .....
- 35 to 44 .....
- 45 to 54 .....
- 55 to 64 .....
- 65 to 74 .....
- 75 or above .....
- Do not wish to say .....

Q19 To which of these groups do you consider you belong to? (Tick one box only)

- White - British .....
- White - Irish .....
- White - Any other white background (Please specify) .....
- Asian or Asian British - Indian .....
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani .....
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi .....
- Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background (Please specify) .....
- Black/Black British - Caribbean .....
- Black/Black British - African .....
- Black/Black British - Any other Black background (Please specify) .....
- Chinese .....
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean .....
- Mixed - White and Black African .....
- Mixed - White and Asian .....
- Mixed - Any other Mixed background (Please specify) .....
- Other ethnic group (Please specify) .....
- Do not wish to say .....

Q20 Are your day to day activities limited because of any physical or mental health condition, impairment or disability? (Tick one box only)

- Yes .....  Go to Q20a  
No .....  Go to Q21  
Do not wish to say .....  Go to Q21

Q20a Please describe the nature of your condition, impairment or disability.  
(Write the answer into the open box)

Q21 Please enter your full 7 digit postcode or just the four digits if you prefer. This information helps us to identify where residents in a particular area are voicing similar concerns

Q22 Which of the following local authority areas do you live in? (Tick one box only)

- Bedford Borough .....   
Central Bedfordshire .....   
Luton Borough .....   
Not Sure .....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you would like to take part in future consultations and receive updates and newsletters from the Police and Crime Commissioner please provide your details below.

Name   
Address 1   
Address 2   
Address 3   
Postcode   
Telephone number   
Email address

Thank you for completing this survey, please return your completed survey before  
Tuesday 1st October 2013.

## Appendix E: Additional Information

### PCC EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES Monday 15 April 2013

#### PRESENT

Chair: Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Councillor Tafheen Sharif  
Police and Crime Commissioner - Olly Martins  
Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner - Simon Bullock  
Chief Executive - Stephanie McMenamy  
Deputy Chief Executive - Dr Julie Wymer  
Chief Constable - Alf Hitchcock (From Item 5)  
Deputy Chief Constable - John Fletcher  
Chief Finance Officer - Philip Wells  
Business Support Director, Corporate - Parjinder Basra  
Better Times - Sallie Blair  
Secretariat for the Board - Janet Wardell

#### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Legal Advisor - John Atkinson

#### Part 1 for Publication

1	<b>Chair</b>  Due to a prior engagement the Commissioner was absent for the start of the meeting the and Deputy Commissioner agreed to Chair the meeting.
2	<b>Minutes</b>  The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2013 were agreed to be a true and accurate record.
3.	<b>Matters Arising</b> There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.
4	<b>Oral update on current performance</b> The new performance year had only just begun so the Deputy Chief Constable considered it appropriate to reflect on the performance of the previous year. He was pleased to report some excellent results from the previous year which had been a year of change and challenges. He highlighted that the force had largely achieved its ambition to be in the top 20 in detections and the final rankings were as follows: Burglary dwelling           12 <sup>th</sup> Robbery                       22 <sup>nd</sup> Vehicle Crime               19 <sup>th</sup> Most Serious Violence    18 <sup>th</sup> Serious Acquisitive Crime (as a whole) 14 <sup>th</sup> Some excellent results had also been achieved in crime reduction which

	<p>included a year on year reduction in robbery of nearly 20% and 10% in vehicle crime. Burglary dwelling, whilst ranked 37<sup>th</sup> nationally, had also seen a 20% year on year reduction. Year on year reductions had also been in overall Serious Acquisitive Crime and Most Serious Violence with national ranking now at 35<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> position respectively.</p> <p>Overall crime had reduced by 12.5% year on year.</p> <p>There had also been some improvement around victim satisfaction and improvements in the latter part of the year were expected to improve the current ranking of 41<sup>st</sup> up to 34<sup>th</sup> and this would be confirmed within the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>The Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner asked how the force intended to improve the national rankings for crime reduction. In response the Deputy Chief Constable advised that although the overall crime was not high in Bedfordshire it would take at least two years to meet the national average. Whilst the Force was doing things differently and developing lean thinking in its approach to policing it would require this approach being rolled out to partners to make the best use of resources. It was considered that the desire to have an integrated approach for dealing with ASB matters would be an appropriate vehicle to move this forwards. The Deputy Chief Constable advised that the HMIC would be revisiting Bedfordshire to review its progress on ASB in the next few weeks which would determine the actions to be undertaken internally and inform the work that was required with partners. The Deputy Chief Constable agreed to bring this to a future meeting of the Board.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p><b>That following the revisit by HMIC on the implementation plan for dealing with ASB matters the Board consider how this can be integrated across the county through partners.</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Estates Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Note the Estates Strategy was in draft format for internal purposes only and was therefore not for publication at this stage.</b></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer presented a draft Estates Strategy for 2013 - 2018. The Strategy focused on ensuring that the police estate provided the most effective solution to meet operational needs as well as ensure that the public had access to the police, that the use of ICT in particular, hot desking, mobile data and video conferencing was maximised and that a fully operational deployment base with custody facilities for Bedford within the force HQ site be realised.</p> <p>The strategy also focused on ensuring that the estates was appropriately maintained and that the ongoing revenue costs being no more that 3% of the overall forces budget.</p> <p>This would reflect a 6% reduction on current costs of running the estate.</p> <p>At this stage detailed work on the implementation plan to deliver the strategy had yet to be started and would commence once the strategy had been approved.</p> <p>There was general discussion on the progression of the implementation plan and the agreement that key to the delivery of the strategy was public accessibility to policing services. The Commissioner expressed a clear desire to consult with the public and it would be useful to consult on the principles of accessibility. The findings from the consultation would then inform decisions about the future of estates and the medium term investment strategy. The Board agreed to consider the options at their next meeting.</p>

	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Estates Strategy be approved.</li> <li>2. That the Board consider at their next meeting a range of consultation options based upon market research data or best practice from other forces.</li> <li>3. That the Chief Constable in consultation with the OPCC produce an implementation plan for the delivery of the strategy.</li> </ol>
6	<p><b>Audit Committee Minutes</b></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer presented the minutes from the first meeting of the joint PCC and CC Audit Committee.</p>
7	<p><b>End of the formal meeting</b></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Informal Meeting – Matters not for publication</b></p> <p>The following matters were discussed and a brief summary on the decisions reached are highlighted.</p> <p>(a) Update on Medium Term Resources: including development of the Business Transformation plan 2013/14 – 2016/17</p> <p>The Business Transformation plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 was in draft form and would be considered by the Force Executive. The principles of the document were summarised by the Business Support Director. Since the document had been drafted recent decisions around the future of the strategic alliance beyond Protective Services would need to be reflected in the plan.</p> <p>(b) Stage 2 Transfers</p> <p>At this stage there was no national model for Stage 2 Transfers. It was agreed that the Commissioner’s Office and the Chief Constable’s Office should each consider what the model should look like locally with a view to inform future discussions between the two organisations.</p>
	<p><b><u>Meeting closed at 11.30am</u></b></p>

**PCC EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES**  
**Monday 20 May 2013**

**PRESENT**

Chair: Police and Crime Commissioner - Olly Martins  
 Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner - Simon Bullock  
 Chief Executive - Stephanie McMenamy  
 Deputy Chief Executive - Dr Julie Wymer  
 Deputy Chief Constable - John Fletcher  
 Chief Finance Officer - Philip Wells  
 Better Times - Sallie Blair  
 Secretariat for the Board - Janet Wardell

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Councillor Tafheen Sharif, Chief Constable Alf Hitchcock, and Legal Advisor, John Atkinson

Part 1 for Publication

1	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 15 April 2013 were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p>
2.	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The Deputy Chief Constable advised the Board that the HMIC had recently concluded its re-inspection of the effectiveness of processes and approaches to ASB. The initial feedback from HMIC had been positive particularly around the quality of the initiatives that had been put in place to deal with ASB. The HMIC had also recognised how the culture of the Force had changed making ASB a priority.</p> <p>There were some process issues to be addressed but overall this was a positive inspection. The full report was due to be issued to the Chief Constable by the end of June.</p>
3	<p><b>Annual Performance Review</b></p> <p>The Board received the Chief Constable's review of performance in 2012/13. In the absence of the Chief Constable the Deputy Chief Constable presented the report.</p> <p>He was pleased to say that overall the 2012/13 performance built upon the previous improvements in 2011/12 with more priority crimes being detected and the level of priority crimes being further reduced.</p> <p>Robbery continued to be an area where improvements were required in both crime detection and crime investigation although performance in the first few weeks of 2013/14 were encouraging.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Constable also highlighted reductions in ASB rates and the improving picture of victim satisfaction levels.</p> <p>The report also provided data for the number of recorded complaints and the Board noted the following inaccuracies in the report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Para 3.9.2 – the increase in the number of complaint cases should read</li> </ul>

	<p>18% and not 34%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Para 3.9.5 – should read ‘Black complainants are under represented in the complaints system ‘</li> </ul> <p>The report provided some detail about the Crime Reduction Plan and the Deputy Chief Constable agreed to circulate a copy of the Plan to the Commissioner’s Office highlighting the contribution that each activity had made to crime reduction.</p> <p>The Commissioner questioned whether or not the recent incidences of gun crime in Luton would impact upon the resourcing of the policing operations aimed at reducing local priority crime. In response the Deputy Chief Constable advised that this was being reviewed on a daily basis and balanced against any emerging situations in Luton.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to see that ASB rates were 16% lower than the previous year which had been achieved through the change in recording practice whereby some incidences were recorded as a crime where they may have previously been recorded as ASB as well as working with partners and the local community. The Board also received assurances that the staff in the Call Handling Centre were confident in using the new Storm Command and Control System to assess the vulnerability of the victim and determine an appropriate response.</p> <p>The Annual Performance report would be presented to the Police and Crime Panel and it was agreed that the report should incorporate information about the value of using sanctions detections and restorative justice as a means of a detection disposal may wish to have an understanding of whether or not disposals</p> <p>The Commissioner was pleased with the final 2012/13 performance report which was consistent with the positive report considered at the meeting of the Board on 15<sup>th</sup> April.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. That the Executive Board endorse the Force’s maintained and improved crime investigation, reduction, satisfaction and anti-social behaviour performance in 2012/13.</b></li> <li><b>2. That the Executive Board note and endorse the approach to reporting performance to deliver the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan in 2013/14</b></li> </ol>
4	<p><b>Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2012/13</b></p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer gave a verbal update on the estimated Revenue and Capital Programme outturn for 2012/13. The figures would be finalised at the end of May and the Board would receive a detailed report at its meeting in June. The Board was informed that the Revenue Budget was estimated to be underspent by £2M which comprised underspends in mutual aid, end of year adjustments, collaboration, debtors and creditors and stock processes. £0.9M of the underspend had already been earmarked and the utilisation of the remaining £1.1M would need to be determined by the Commissioner. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the underspend included £200K set aside for the use of</p>

	<p>A19 pending the decision of the court judgement, but at this stage didn't account for the potential underspend on PCSO grant as confirmation was awaited from the Home Office.</p> <p>In terms of in the Capital Programme there was no change expected to the level of underspend reported during the course of the year</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer also provided a brief update on the 2013/14 Budget and drew the Board's attention to the forecast of a £0.75M underspend which could rise to £1M and comprised underspends in the staffing budget through staff vacancies, the number of Police Officers leaving and the number transferring to collaborated units. In terms of the Capital Programme there was concern that the implementation date for Project Athena had not yet been finalised. The Chief Executive mentioned that a briefing was to be held later that week on the progress of Project Athena and would update the PCC and DCC on the outcome the briefing, and the capital programme would be amended accordingly.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p><b>1. That the CFO provide an outturn report at the next meeting</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Public Accessibility to Policing Services in Bedfordshire – Consultation Options</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive presented a report advising that changes to the ways in which the public now accessed policing services, especially first contact with the police, required the Commissioner to consider the future of the estate and the extent of the investment required to ensure it remained fit for purpose while at the same time making it easier and more convenient for the public to access the police when they need them.</p> <p>In order to inform the Commissioner's decision-making it was proposed that consultation was undertaken with the public to ensure they have an opportunity to design and shape the way they will access policing services in the future. A range of consultation options were presented with a preferred option for consideration.</p> <p>The Commissioner fully supported the proposed approach as this was the public's opportunity to influence the decisions being taken. The Commissioner was keen to be clear when consulting on accessibility that it is made clear that this was about the Estate and includes local level cop shops.</p> <p>The preferred option was endorsed with the proviso that the university be approached to provide support with the survey.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p><b>1. That consultation with the public is undertaken for the reasons set out in the report.</b></p> <p><b>2. That the outcome and principles for consultation are agreed.</b></p> <p><b>3. That the preferred option for consultation, option 3, is progressed with agreement that there will be some financial investment.</b></p>
6	<p><b>End of the formal meeting</b></p>
	<p><b>Informal Meeting – Matters not for publication</b></p> <p>The following matter was discussed and a brief summary on the decisions</p>

	<p>reached are highlighted.</p> <p><b>Communications</b></p> <p>The recent spate of gun crime incidents in Luton highlighted the need for an effective communication mechanism between the Commissioner's Office and Chief Constable's Office for major incidents that had not been classified as critical for which there was a separate policy.</p> <p>The Board agreed that for the current policing operation in Luton the Gold Commander would provide a daily briefing for the Commissioner which could be face to face or over the phone. The suggestion that the Commissioner's office should be represented on the Gold Command Group would be considered if this helped to deliver a better joined up working arrangement. This process would be reviewed at the conclusion of the operation.</p> <p>The Critical Incident Policy was also being reviewed in so far as it related to the criteria for determining when the Commissioner would be required to sit on the Gold Group.</p>
	<p><b><u>Meeting closed at 11.00am</u></b></p>

## PCC Report, Policing and Public Access in Bedfordshire

### REPORT TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

<b>Date</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	<b>Report No</b>	6
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#### **Title**

Policing and Public Access in Bedfordshire

#### **Purpose**

To consider options for public consultation

#### **Executive Summary**

The report sets out the reasons why the Commissioner should undertake consultation with the public in relation to future accessibility of policing services in Bedfordshire. Changes to the ways in which the public now access policing services, especially first contact with the police, requires the Commissioner to consider the future of the estate and the extent of the investment required to ensure it remains fit for purpose while at the same time making it easier and more convenient for the public to access the police when they need them.

In order to inform the Commissioners decision-making it is proposed that consultation is undertaken with the public to ensure they have an opportunity to design and shape the way they will access policing services in the future. A range of consultation options are presented with a preferred option for consideration.

#### **Recommendations**

- 4. That consultation with the public is undertaken for the reasons set out in the report.**
- 5. That the outcome and principles for consultation are agreed.**
- 6. That the preferred option for consultation is progressed with agreement that there will be some financial investment.**

#### **Background/Supporting papers**

Report to the Police & Crime Commissioner For Bedfordshire – 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 – Estates Strategy  
Policing and Public Access in London: Mayor of London, Office for Policing & Crime, 2013  
Front Counter & Police Premises: Lancashire Constabulary, August 2011  
Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> C survey: Humberside Police Authority and Humberside Police, 2010  
Public Consultation on Police Front Counter Services: Cumbria Constabulary, May 2012  
The Future of Policing in Bedfordshire: Bedfordshire Police Authority 2011

Confidence in Policing Among Seldom Heard Audiences, A National Report for the Association of Police Authorities: Ipsos Mori, 2010

### **Contribution to the Police and Crime Plan**

The ease of access for the public to policing services in Bedfordshire is central to building confident communities and a safer Bedfordshire.

### **Implications**

**1. Strategic Risk Implications – Ensuring the right balance is struck between operational demand and public accessibility.**

**2. Financial Implications – to inform the medium term investment strategy**

**3. Equality and Human Rights Implications – will be considered as the consultation methodology is agreed.**

**4. Legal Implications – the Commissioner has a statutory duty to obtain the views of the public**

**5. Regional/Collaborative Working Implications – none at this stage**

### **Report**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Police & Crime Commissioner considered and approved the Estates Strategy at the April Executive Board meeting and requested that an approach to public consultation be developed.

This paper sets out the context and reasons why public consultation should be undertaken together with a range of options for consulting with the people of Bedfordshire.

#### **2. Appendices - None**

#### **3. Issues for consideration**

The Estates Strategy sets out to provide the most effective and efficient solution to operational needs whilst maintaining the ability of the public to access the police when they need them. Recognising the current financial climate and the investment required to maintain the police estate, future investment into front line resources may be a better use of scarce resources rather than investing in estates. It is therefore critical to understand how the estate, and in particular Police Station front counter services are utilised by the public in order to inform the Commissioners decision-

making in relation to his medium term investment strategy.

Research<sup>1</sup> undertaken by a range of Police Forces is demonstrating that the way people want to access the police has changed. The numbers of people reporting crimes at front counters has fallen by almost 100,000<sup>2</sup> as people turn to other forms of communication, including online. The preference for reporting crime in Bedfordshire highlights similar findings with 74% of people preferring to report a crime by telephone, 19% online and just 6% wanting to report a crime in person<sup>3</sup>.

It must be recognised that reporting a crime is just one of a few things that can be done at a front counter. According to the same MPS survey the most common reason for visiting a police station is to hand in lost property, accounting for 20% of the activity and 12% of people seeking general information or asking directions. The criminal justice system also generates over a third of visitors who are responding to bail conditions or providing documents.

As technology develops it may be the case that many of the activities undertaken at front counters can be undertaken in a different way. In the future the public will have a range of options for contacting the police, from telephone and online services through to the more traditional front counter services.

As decisions are taken about the future of how the estate and front counter services are used the desired outcome should be to:

**Make it easier and more convenient for people to access the police when they need them.**

Ensuring the police are accessible is key to building confidence and whether people prefer to have face to face contact perhaps with a special constable working in their locality or talking to someone on the telephone will help to reassure them that the police are tackling the issues that matter most to them. It is therefore important that local people are able to design and shape the way they access policing services and influence the decisions taken by the Commissioner.

As stated earlier a number of Forces have already conducted surveys with the public on the accessibility to policing services and the principles below have been derived from the questionnaires used.

- **Flexibility and Choice** – this recognises that people will want to use a range of different methods depending on their circumstances. Choices should range from face to face contact, including appointments in their home, telephone contact, including individual police officer numbers, on-line services such as ‘track my crime’, reporting crimes and contacting individual officers.

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<sup>1</sup> Policing & Public Access in London. Mayor of London, Office for Policing and Crime, March 2013

Lancashire Constabulary, front Counter & Police Premises, August 2011

Humberside Police Authority and Humberside Police, Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2010 survey

Cumbria Constabulary, Public Consultation on Police Front Counter Services, May 2012

Bedfordshire Police Authority, The Future of Policing Survey, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan Police, Methods for Reporting Crime in the MPS (FY2011-12) January 2013

<sup>3</sup> Bedfordshire Police Authority survey 2011.

- **Putting the Customer First** – the services and choices available need to ensure usability in relation to meeting differing needs. The customer determines the right approach for them-selves and access to police buildings be they in towns or villages, need to have reasonable opening times, good levels of accessibility and good transport links.
- **Ensuring value for money** – savings that are made from using the estate in a different way must be reinvested into front line policing services. Reinvestment could see more special constables or police community support officers working with local people in towns and villages.
- **Harnessing innovation** – making best use of technological advances, working with partners in co-located premises.
- **Access to Information** – widely advertising ways of contacting the police and providing timely up to date information to enable people to help themselves.

Given the importance of this consultation in informing the Commissioners medium term investment strategy the consultation should be robust and stand-up to scrutiny. No consultation methodology is without flaw whether it be quantitative or qualitative. However, it is possible to design consultation to provide a high degree of confidence in the results.

The consultation should use both methodologies. The quantitative methodology should use a professionally designed questionnaire and have a representative sample size that is statistically robust. The downside of using a questionnaire, particularly if a telephone survey is employed, is the limited amount of information/context that can be conveyed in a short interview. The qualitative methodology, probably using focus groups, would overcome the shortcomings of the telephone survey by enabling more contextual information to be given to the respondents.

To further ensure the robustness of the consultation consideration will be given to using a quality assurance process once the survey data is complete. This approach would provide the Commissioner with some confidence if the outcome of the consultation leads to the closing of front desks.

Set out below are a range of options for achieving a robust consultation keeping in mind the available resources for undertaking this piece of work. All options require investment.

### **Option 1**

A telephone survey (external provider) across the three local authorities with a booster if necessary for under-representative groups. Indicative costs for a sample size of 1,100 would be approximately £11k (this sum is dependent on the number of questions asked). Survey would also be placed on-line and managed by external provider. Could also undertake focus groups to provide qualitative research to support quantitative research.

**Advantages:** Professional questionnaire design, statistically robust, analysis and report produced, work completed within prescribed timeframe, limited demand on OPCC resources

**Disadvantages:** Disadvantages households who do not use a land-line telephone and would possibly exclude young people.

### **Option 2**

Buy a professionally designed questionnaire (approximately £500) and manage in-house by placing survey on-line and hand out to the public. Survey would need to be widely advertised and possibly boosted with focus groups to reach under-represented groups. The Police & Crime Panel could also be asked to spread the survey amongst their constituents.

**Advantages:** Low cost and using a professionally designed questionnaire to ensure no leading questions or bias.

**Disadvantages:** Difficulty with gaining representative sample and not robust, demand on resources to set-up focus groups, possible time constraints.

### **Option 3**

A hybrid version of the two options above is put forward as a preferred option. Acknowledging the unique position of the Commissioner and his team to advertise the survey to a wide range of community groups and stakeholders the survey could be distributed by hand and placed on line. A review of numbers completing the survey could be undertaken after one month and a decision taken as to whether an external provider is commissioned to undertake a telephone survey to ensure a representative sample size. The three Commissioners could also undertake some 'market research' with the public in high footfall areas.

**Advantages:** Low Cost, Commissioners profile raised, wide engagement with the public and access to community groups that are traditionally known not to respond to questionnaires/surveys.

**Disadvantages:** Demand on limited resources and could be under-represented particularly in rural areas.

### **Timing**

The consultation should be complete by end of September to allow decisions to be taken for the future investment strategy. Therefore a questionnaire should be designed and placed on line, widely promoted and advertised, by mid June with a review undertaken by end of July. If the sample size required boosting then an external provider should be asked to undertake a telephone survey during August/early September with analysis and findings known by end of September.

## **4. Conclusion**

The report sets out the reasons why the Commissioner should undertake consultation with the public in relation to future accessibility of policing services in Bedfordshire. Changes to the ways in which the public now access policing services, especially first contact with the police, requires the Commissioner to consider the

future of the estate and the extent of the investment required to ensure it remains fit for purpose while at the same time making it easier and more convenient for the public to access the police when they need them.

In order to inform the Commissioners decision-making it is proposed that consultation is undertaken with the public to ensure they have an opportunity to design and shape the way they will access policing services in the future. A range of consultation options are presented with a preferred option for consideration.

## 5. Recommendations

7. That consultation with the public is undertaken for the reasons set out in the report.
8. That the outcome and principles for consultation are agreed.
9. That the preferred option for consultation is progressed with agreement that there will be some financial investment.

### • Public Access to Information

Information in this report is subject to publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation. Any information that should not be made publically available should be included in an appendix to this report and the reason for restriction given.

Is any 'restricted' information appended to this report? NO  
If 'yes' please advise reason for restriction.

<b>Report Author</b>	Dr Julie Wymer
<b>Date of report</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2013

## PCC PARTNERSHIP DATABASE

### Request from the Bedfordshire Police & Crime Panel sub-group for additional information regarding the estates survey.

Notification of the Commissioner's consultation on access to policing services and the link to the survey was distributed to the Commissioner's partnership data base as detailed below (individual names have been removed in line with data protection guidelines). The link to the survey was sent out twice to the data-base – W/C 5<sup>th</sup> August and W/C 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

It is not possible to know the number of responses received from partners, nor the type of responses as the survey is anonymous. The survey has been hosted by an independent company who will analyse the data, including the coding of open text box comments.

<b>Police and Crime Commissioner - Partnership Data Base - Sept 2013</b>	
Bedford Borough Council including Councillors	88
Central Bedfordshire Council including Councillors	124
Luton Borough Council including Councillors	69
MPs	6
Parish and Town Councils	123
Council Services	23
NHS	2
Probation and Crown Prosecution Service	7
Fire and Rescue Service	13
Bedfordshire Police	12
Victim Support	2
Disability/Voluntary Sector	143
Rural/Wildlife	39
Domestic Abuse	23
Watch Schemes	17
Travellers	4
Race and Ethnicity	15
Misc	1
Ringmaster	13000
Members of the public	755
	<b>14466</b>