

# OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE

## Record of decision made by the Commissioner

Decision Notice Number/Date (009/2014)

**Title/Description:**

Closing the Northern Base project as a result of emerging options

**Executive Summary and recommendation:**

**The Commissioner is asked to take a decision to close the Northern Base project in light of developing opportunities with Cleveland Police.**

Since September 2013, North Yorkshire Police has been carrying out preparatory work on Northern Base – a new-build project at South Kilvington. The project was to have provided HQ accommodation to replace the current Newby Wiske building, operational policing facilities to replace the existing Northallerton station, and a new 10 cell (the minimum permitted by Home Office guidance) custody suite.

Concurrently, North Yorkshire Police has been progressing its Partnership and Collaboration and Operational Policing Model workstreams.

As a result of the Partnership and Collaboration workstream, a new opportunity has emerged to develop a partnership with Cleveland Police.

Following recent (late June and July) high-level discussions between the Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables of both North Yorkshire and Cleveland Police, there is now an “in principle” agreement to:

- Co-locate some accommodation and facilities (for example, IT infrastructure) at Cleveland Police’s proposed new Community Safety Hub facility on the North Yorkshire border, which will complete earlier than the Northern Base project
- Develop collaborative options for the provision of some operational policing services (excluding neighbourhood policing) which will enhance borderless policing along the Cleveland/North Yorkshire border

Given the geographical proximity and close timings of both organisations’ sets of new-build plans, co-location is a common-sense option, which offers potential cost benefits to both organisations, and this is recognised by the respective Commissioners.

Whilst the proposed co-location may provide an accommodation solution for some roles, it does not replace all accommodation currently at Newby Wiske. However, the reduced accommodation requirement provided through partnership with Cleveland Police, opens the way for North Yorkshire

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Police to progress alternative, more cost-effective accommodation options in North Yorkshire.

Wherever practical, these will take advantage of mobile and flexible working, which is made possible as a result of the investment in information and communications technology that has already been committed. Notwithstanding the co-location opportunity, it is envisaged that the majority of roles presently based at Newby Wiske will continue to be based in Hambleton and North Yorkshire.

Also in parallel with the Northern Base project, North Yorkshire Police has further developed its Operational Policing Model, which includes work to increase the efficiency of custody use. In the course of this, NYP has worked closely with the College of Policing to model custody requirements, and shown that there is no predicted need for additional custody facilities. This information impacts upon the Northern Base project which would have increased the number of custody cells by one (in accordance with Home Office guidance on the minimum number of cells for new-build facilities). In consequence, it is now apparent that refurbishment and improvement of the existing Northallerton facilities is more in line with custody models and working patterns.

Whilst some funds have been spent exploring the viability of a Northern Base at South Kilvington, and completing the necessary work in respect of a possible planning application, this should be balanced against the significant savings (circa £10m) that North Yorkshire Police can make by pursuing the recommended alternative.

The Northern Base project is now at a stage where a decision must be taken either to commit to intrusive site investigation work at South Kilvington, prior to submitting a planning permission application, or to pursue an alternative course of action to secure fit-for-purpose facilities for North Yorkshire Police for the future.

Taking both the new partnership and custody factors into account, and in consideration of best value-for-money, the Commissioner is invited to take this opportunity to close the Northern Base project.

In making this decision, the Commissioner is asked to note that:

- No other partnership arrangements for either North Yorkshire Police or Cleveland Police will be affected. These will continue to be explored and developed as planned.
- Staff will be fully consulted on any proposed changes that might affect them in due course, as the details of the partnership arrangement is finalized and implementation plans are worked up.

**Police and Crime Commissioner decision**

**Signature Julia Mulligan**

**Date 29 July 2014**

**Title Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire**

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## Part 1 – Unrestricted facts and advice to the PCC

### 1. Introduction and background

#### Organisational context

In common with other police forces across the country, North Yorkshire Police seeks to deliver a highly-responsive and effective service to its communities, against a backdrop of economic austerity and a requirement to make significant financial savings.

In order to achieve its operational and financial objectives, the organisation has been developing activities under four workstreams:

- Partnership and collaboration (achieving better results and efficiencies through working with others, sharing resources, reducing duplication, and increasing economies of scale)
- Fit-for-the-future (investment in estates, IT and equipment to improve productivity, in line with changing operational contexts and requirements)
- Operational Policing Model (reshaping and optimizing the structure of the police)
- People (investing in people and their skills through training, developing and valuing the workforce).

Whilst the planned progress has been made in all four areas, the pace of development across the workstreams has, of course, not been uniform. This was expected and inevitable, as some areas of activity – through their very nature – simply take longer to achieve.

Strategies and initiatives that “sit under” one of the workstream often inter-relate, and have an impact upon, the others. Sound project management has meant that such strategies and initiatives have been adapted as new factors have emerged, whilst robust organisational oversight through the Executive Board and other structures has meant that past decisions have been kept under review, and re-evaluated where necessary in light of emerging opportunities. It is the approach of continuous review that has led to this paper being submitted.

### 2. Matters for consideration

#### Fit-for-the-future: Northern Base, and IT strategy

In September 2013, in line with the Commissioner’s priorities in the Police and Crime Plan and the fit-for-the-future workstream, the Commissioner, in consultation with the Executive Board, approved a proposal to build a Northern Base (DN64/2013). This decision was informed by an Estates Strategy that had identified deficiencies in the existing provision, and an proposal, based on the options and opportunities open to NYP at that time.

The Northern Base building was to incorporate the teams currently operating in the HQ facility at Newby Wiske, the current Northallerton police station (allowing for a small local station to be retained in the town centre), and 10-cell custody suite (built to the latest Home Office standards) to replace the nine cell suite at the existing Northallerton station.

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It should be noted that the project is still in its preparatory stage, ie:

- No planning application has yet been made
- NYP has not paid for an option on the land, and no land has been purchased
- The project has been kept under close review, in light of developments in the other workstreams

Also under the Fit-for-the-future theme, and hand-in-hand with the Estates Strategy, is an IT Strategy. Recently, a Decision Notice was approved to commit significant investment to this strategy, in order to equip the organisation with the information system resources required by a modern police force. Included in this strategy is a force-wide roll out of technology to support mobile working, telephony solutions to support working across flexible locations, and online solutions to improve efficiency.

The Estates Strategy is now at a point where a decision must be made to proceed as per the original strategies, or reassess the options available and whether they offer opportunities for increased flexibility, improved service or better value for money.

### Partnerships workstream: state of play and inter-relation with Fit-for-the-future strategies

North Yorkshire Police has embraced a partnership and collaboration ethos for a number of years, working closely with other regional police forces and local services. The partnership approach is recognised as one that enables service quality to be secured and improved, whilst achieving necessary financial savings through economies of scale and new more efficient ways of working.

Under the Partnership and Collaboration workstream, this area of activity has been given further impetus, and NYP has been more far-reaching and ambitious in seeking solutions to service delivery with a mixed-economy of partners. Given the complexity of modern policing, developing the right opportunities, relationships and organisational "fit" takes time to achieve, so whilst this workstream has progressed steadily, some aspects and possibilities are only now emerging, that were not previously on the table.

In particular, following recent discussions amongst leaders in both organisations, NYP is now in a position to make further progress towards a partnership with Cleveland Police on operational policing matters. This would create opportunities for joint specialist services to enhance value-for-money and efficiency. However, it also opens up other avenues with implications for the Fit-for-the-future workstream strategies.

Cleveland Police is about to embark on construction of a new facility very near to the North Yorkshire border, which provides NYP with opportunities for accommodation sharing.

Whilst the possibilities presented by this co-location are both practical and cost-effective, there is still work to be done to firm-up (in consultation with staff) what functions/roles would be best co-located. Regardless, the vast majority of roles would remain in North Yorkshire, with a proportionate number in the Hambleton district. However, co-locating some aspects of delivery could provide potential alternative accommodation options for North Yorkshire Police, to the extent that it is legitimate for the Commissioner to question whether a new-build Northern Base plan remains best value for money.

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In relation to this Decision Notice, the Commissioner is asked to note the changed partnership landscape and new opportunities this presents. It is asked to evaluate whether, on balance, it is prudent to review and change existing strategies on the grounds that pursuing the partnership with Cleveland Police will offer NYP more flexibility to adapt to future (and likely) budget pressures, and demands on the workforce as the context for policing continues to change and develop.

The Commissioner is also asked to note that, following the meeting with Cleveland Police on 20 June, the Northern Base project was put “on hold” and the design partner asked to stand down on 30 June, pending a decision on this recommendation. This was to avoid incurring any unnecessary expense.

### Operational Policing Model: new models of working, and bearing on custody requirements

At the same time as work has been progressing on Fit-for-the-future and Partnerships workstreams, the Operational Policing Model has been rapidly developing.

Through the Model, North Yorkshire Police has been actively seeking new ways of working to increase the efficient use of custody facilities. This includes the introduction of Investigative Hubs to centralize custody arrangements into key centres, so that administration of detainees can be streamlined and under-utilized custody suites phased out. In planning this new way of working, North Yorkshire Police has drawn upon the support of the College of Policing to model custody demand in light of new working practice, and this modelling has shown a level/downward trend for custody use.

As the current Home Office guidance is that new-build custody suites should contain a minimum of 10 cells, it is not possible to reduce the number of cells that were planned for the Northern Base facility in line with this information.

In light of the OPM modelling findings, the Commissioner is invited to consider whether the considerable investment required to meet Home Office specifications is now necessary.

### People – maximising talent and development of agile working options

If pursued, co-location could provide an environment in which to develop and expand flexible and agile working options within the organisation. With the projected developments in technology that support these ways of working, the Commissioner is asked to support an investment in the development of this area of work. This would enable the team to fast-track options and discussions with employee representation and the workforce, and build new ways of working to enhance delivery flexibility.

### **3. Other options considered, if any**

Various options and courses of action have been considered within the individual workstreams. The recommendations in the Decision Notice take these into account, and are therefore offered to the Commissioner as representing the best available option, taking all aspects of the present position into account.

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### **4. Contribution to Police and Crime Plan outcomes**

The recommendations in this Decision Notice are offered on the basis that they will fully support the Police and Crime Plan priorities, in that they will allow the organisation to configure its resources more effectively, in alignment with those priorities.

### **5. Consultations carried out**

The content of this paper has been informed by recent meetings (in late June and July 2014) between the PCCs for Cleveland and North Yorkshire, and the respective Chief Constables. The Decision Notice recommendations are offered for an "in principle" decision, with the detail to be worked up subsequently. In light of this, it is not appropriate to carry out formal consultations on the recommendations at this point. Consultation on specific actions arising from the partnership opportunity would be undertaken with employee representation, staff and others at the earliest opportunity as part of the detailed communication and implementation plans to follow.

### **6. Financial Implications/Value for money**

If the recommendations in this Decision Notice were to be implemented, an initial analysis indicates a saving to North Yorkshire Police of circa £10m.

Whilst some funding (circa £620k) has necessarily been committed to preparatory work to bring the project to its current position (pre planning application), some of this can be repurposed towards the new recommendation.

If approved, a full review of expenditure on the project to date would be undertaken, together with detailed financial information to support the new proposals as they develop.

On balance, the recommendation to close the Northern Base project represents the best value-for-money option.

### **7. Legal Implications**

Having read this report and having considered such information as has been provided at the time of being asked to express this view, the Acting Force Solicitor and Head of Legal Services is satisfied that this report does not ask the PCC for North Yorkshire to make a decision which would (or would be likely to) give rise to a contravention of the law.

### **8. Equality Implications**

Having read the recommendations held with this decision notice, confirmation is given that there are no equality implications identified at this given time. Once implementation plans and consultation processes are commenced, all equality aspects will be considered and assessed in line with the proposals and relevant legislation.

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### 9. Human Resources Implications

This Decision Notice calls for an “in principle” decision, and the details of any effects on the workforce are therefore yet to be determined. Full consultation with staff and their representative bodies will be undertaken as plans reach an appropriate stage, to ensure that all decisions are shaped, taken and implemented with appropriate consideration of staff concerns.

Until that point, the direction of travel indicated in this Decision Notice will be communicated internally to staff at the earliest possible opportunity (and not later than the publication of the decision notice) in order that transparency and good internal communications practice is maintained.

### 10. Public Access to information

The Police and Crime Commissioner wishes to be as open and transparent as possible about the decisions he/she takes or are taken in his/her name. All decisions taken by the Commissioner will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

As a general principle, the Commissioner expects to be able to publish all decisions taken and all matters taken into account and all advice received when reaching the decision. Part 1 of this Notice will detail all information which the Commissioner will disclose into the public domain. The decision and information in Part 1 will be made available on the NYPCC web site within 2 working days of approval. Only where material is properly classified as restricted under the GPMS or if that material falls within the description at 2(2) of The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011 will the Commissioner not disclose decisions and/or information provided to enable that decision to be made. In these instances, Part 2 of the Form will be used to detail those matters considered to be restricted. Information in Part 2 will not be published.

Is there a Part 2 to this Notice – <b>NO</b>
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**Originating Officer Declaration**

	Name (Collar Number)	Date of completion (v)
<p><b>Head of Department</b> has reviewed the request and is satisfied that it is correct and consistent with the NYPCC's plans and priorities.</p>	<p>This decision notice has been prepared with input and consideration from across North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner areas of delivery and activity.</p>	<p>28.7.14</p>
<p><b>Legal Advice</b> Legal advice has been sought on this proposal and is considered not to expose the PCC to risk of legal challenge <u>or</u> such risk is outlined in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Notice.</p>	<p>Jane Wintermeyer (Acting Force Solicitor and Head of Legal Services) 3840</p>	<p>28.7.14</p>
<p><b>Financial Advice</b> The PCC CFO has been consulted on this proposal, for which budgetary provision already exists or is to be made in accordance with Part 1 or Part 2 of this Notice.</p>	<p>Michael Porter (Commissioner's CFO) 4317</p>	<p>28.7.14</p>
<p><b>Equalities Advice</b> Either there is considered to be minimal impact or the impact is outlined in Part1 or Part2 of this Notice. <b>Author to complete</b> as Equalities matters are mainstreamed within departments.</p>	<p>Ruth Williams (Legal Officer, Equalities and Human Rights) 4369</p>	<p>30.7.14</p>
<p><b>HR Advice</b> HR advice has been sought in relation to any people related matters</p>	<p>Rosie Holmes (Acting Director of HR) 4647</p>	<p>28.7.14</p>
<p>I confirm that all the above advice has been sought and received and I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted for a decision</p>		
<p><b>Signature</b>     <b>J Carter Chief Executive Officer</b></p>		<p><b>Date</b> 30.7.14</p>