

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL MEETING – 25 JANUARY 2010

ESTATES & BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE ON CUSTODY RELATED PROJECTS/WORKS

REPORT BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the Panel of building projects and works related to custody provision either recently completed or currently in progress.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following projects are being managed by the Estates and Building Services Department and specifically relate to the provision of custody.

2. BOURNEMOUTH CUSTODY PROJECT

- 2.1 This scheme involves the construction and commissioning of a 34 cell capacity custody centre and combined reception point for the site. The building will adjoin the existing Divisional Headquarters and replace the existing 18 cell facility to the south of Madeira Road. The new Custody Centre has been designed in compliance with the 2005 Home Office Design Guide for Custody Suites and significantly improves both the standard and capacity of custody facilities for the Bournemouth conurbation.
- 2.2 The contract commenced in early February 2009 and is on target for a go live date of October 2010.
- 2.3 Construction work on the custody block itself is now taking place and it is intended to provide a sample cell to finished stage in the early part of 2010 to ensure all necessary criteria are taken on board. It is anticipated that will be achieved during February 2010.
- 2.4 The existing facilities in Bournemouth Police Station will remain in operational use up to this completion date.

3. POOLE JOINT EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING (DESPI)

- 3.1 This project including the provision of a 28 cell capacity custody centre, together with police station, property stores, and office accommodation for both Police and Fire & Rescue Personnel was handed over to the Authority in early December 2009. The building is situated near to the Poole Town Centre area on the site of the old fire station. This Custody Centre replaces the 16 cell facility on the old Civic Centre site and significantly improves both the standard and capacity of custody facilities for the Poole conurbation. This opened for use on 16 December 2009.

4. HOME OFFICE TECHNICAL ADVISOR VISITS

- 4.1 The Home Office Custody Technical advisor visited Dorset in November to view both new facilities. And which time The Chairman of this panel was invited to attend. As a

result Dorset Police have been able to gain valuable insight into a number of emerging Initiatives coming forward from the Home Office in relation to custody design and use.

5. UNANNOUNCED CUSTODY INSPECTION

5.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) made an unannounced visit to Dorset in November 2009 to undertake an inspection of all custody facilities both 24-hour and the smaller suites county-wide.

5.2 The remedial works identified by the Joint Inspectorate and by Dorset Police's own subsequent inspections, fall into a number of categories, these being:

- Filling of gaps which offer potential ligature points
- Mechanical toilet flushes that offer potential ligature points when the button is pressed in
- Unacceptable finish to benches
- Graffiti to cell doors
- Non-approved light fittings
- Holes of 3mm or more in ventilation grills to walls that provide potential ligature points
- Holes of 3mm or more in heating grills below benches that provide potential ligature points
- Cell door hatches that provide potential ligature points¹

¹ The standard being used for the inspection now means that none of our cell hatches are deemed acceptable by the HMIC. The Home Office currently has no approved hatches available at present. However, they are in dialogue with several manufacturers and they are funding the installation of two prototype hatches (from different manufacturers) for installation at Bournemouth. These will hopefully be installed during the next few weeks and can then be evaluated by our Custody staff. Should these prove acceptable the cost of these is likely to be in the region of £450 each.

5.3 Arrangements have been made for the initial phase of work to be undertaken and these are now complete. These 'quick fixes' include the sealing gaps in the benches, around the door/window frames, light fittings and in cracks to walls or floor finishes, using approved filler. In addition a number of the mechanical toilet flush buttons have been plated over, where the potential ligature point risk was deemed unacceptably high.

5.4 Other remedial works such as changing of around 30 No. mechanical toilet flushes to sensor operation, the renewal of over 70 vents & grills and 59 cell door hatches. These items have a potential considerable financial implication and are in the process of being costed. These costs will be reported to the next meeting of the Force Gold Group overseeing the unannounced custody inspection process for review and appropriate action.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 There are no other works or property related activity of significance currently being undertaken across the custody estate. As and when new works or projects take place or come forward they will similarly be reported in future update reports to the Panel.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Members are asked to note the report.

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