

ESTATE STRATEGY



2026 - 2029





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FOREWORD



Communities expect to be able to see and access local police officers easily.

From the first day of my election to office, in 2021, I have not wavered from delivering on this top public priority.

I am absolutely committed to maintaining a strong policing footprint in the force area. I will not close a police station without putting in place a viable, accessible alternative.

And you can rest assured that I will continue to keep policing right in the heart of our communities.

I believe firmly that officers and staff should work in environments that are well-resourced, well-equipped and well-designed to help them perform their duties effectively. The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee emphasises the importance of a local base for our strengthened Neighbourhood Policing Teams for promoting direct interaction with the community - a position I share strongly.

But the fact of the matter is that much of our policing estate is ageing, presenting us with high maintenance costs and environmental inefficiencies. It needs significant investment - for which we need capital funding - to bring it up to the standard that we all want to see.

Capital funding from the Government has been sadly missing in recent years and while I will continue to campaign for its reinstatement, currently we must live within our means.

To this end, I will explore every opportunity to stretch budgets further, with joint ventures, with sustainable energy solutions, and with external funding to create a modern, safe and efficient police estate.

But I will go much further. Alongside optimising our infrastructure and technical capabilities, I will ensure the social value ethos is embedded in every project I fund or support to deliver maximum value for our local economy, communities and our environment. We must work harder to squeeze value from our precious public funds to help local people thrive and this is exactly what I will continue to do.

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Our police officers and staff work relentlessly to keep our communities safe. How well they respond and can be accessed has a direct bearing on public confidence and trust and this is why I am adamant that a robust policing footprint is maintained across our communities.

We already have an excellent track record of optimising the way officers work. These

improvements have put Durham on the map. Our ground-breaking Central Investigative Hub, for instance, showcases the very latest and best of police design, and is looked on with envy by the rest of the country.

We will work hard to deliver an estate that is fit for 21st century policing, putting our people and our communities at the very epicentre of our vision.

1	I will keep our Public Contact Points local and accessible
2	I will keep Neighbourhood Policing Teams in the heart of our communities
3	I will not close a police station without putting in place a viable, accessible alternative.
4	We will explore opportunities to share premises with partner organisations where it makes financial and operational sense to do so eg Fire and Rescue, the NHS and Local Authorities
5	We will maximise operational delivery from the Investigative Hub
6	We will provide accessible and flexible accommodation to support both our workforce and the public
7	We will seek best value in all our estates buildings including where there are upgrades, new builds or when a building is surplus to the force and public requirements
8	We will explore every opportunity to stretch the budget further, and secure additional funding to keep our estate effective and efficient
9	We will embrace the principles of sustainability and environmental protection in every project
10	We embed the social value ethos in every project to deliver maximum value for our local economy, communities and environment
11	We will work hard to deliver an estate that is fit for 21st century policing, putting our people and our communities at the very epicentre of our vision
12	We will review our plans on a regular basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose



INTRODUCTION



As Chief Constable, my primary responsibility is the delivery of effective and efficient policing services for the communities of Durham and Darlington. Central to this is ensuring our communities trust us and have confidence in what we do daily to keep them safe.

I recognise that our communities expect us to protect them by the relentless pursuit of criminals, providing the best possible services for victims, protecting the most vulnerable and to do all we can to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

The nature and quality of the police estate plays a significant role in delivering an effective service. Our buildings provide operating bases for local policing teams, detectives and other specialists. As a result, they need to be fit for purpose so that officers and staff can properly undertake their duties. This is complex in the fast changing and increasingly digital world we live in.

In this modern world, very few people report issues or access our services physically at a police station. Many people now live their lives through use of digital technology and how they expect to be able to interact with us is no different. We must meet this demand by being digitally inclusive and providing a more agile service. This means that in turn, as our officers are not tied to completing paperwork at a desk, they can be more physically

visible in our local communities.

As the most senior police officer in the constabulary, I have a legal obligation to ensure that our buildings meet legal and regulatory requirements and remain fit for purpose for both our workforce and the public who visit them. The upkeep and maintenance of our buildings is a significant, yet necessary cost in helping us deliver excellence for our communities. With increasing financial challenges across the public sector, it is also my duty to ensure that all expenditure is the most efficient and effective it can be.

While the basic principles of policing have remained fixed for over a century, crime and the associated demands on our service are constantly changing and we must respond to this with new ways of working. As such our buildings must also adapt to remain fit for purpose.

We have a long history in Durham and are routinely seen as one of the best forces in the country, both operationally and in how we use our funding. However, there is no room for complacency, and this strategy sets out our intention for the continuous evolution and improvement of our estate. By providing the best facilities for our workforce, we will continue to provide excellent policing services with our communities at the heart of everything we do.



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The current estate extends to just over 47,000 square metres with 38 sites to include HQ, main stations and section offices – some of which are Grade II listed. We also have a number of specialist facilities including a new investigative hub, training, dog kennelling, workshops, a sexual assault referral centre, laboratories and archive storage. The changing nature of policing, with increasing operational and wider business requirement means that the estate is continually evolving.

Operation of the estate is one of the highest annual costs to the force behind our people and in 2023/24, we spent £6m keeping our buildings running. Allocation of this budget has been a challenge over recent years where work to ensure the safety of our officers, staff and visitors has had to be the main priority alongside other essential payments such as business rates and

utility charges. Estate management is conducted in house by a small team of professional surveyors and administrative staff. Building cleaning, repairs and maintenance services are outsourced where good working relationships have been established with the incumbent contractors.

Given the fact that around 40% of our estate is over 25 years old and 29% predates 1975, the ageing condition of some of our buildings means that repair requirements continue to increase. These buildings are also not easy to adapt to modern technology and flexible ways of working which are now essential to our police officers, staff and public. We know that, due to these issues, we have a growing backlog of maintenance needed to bring some of our sites up to modern standards and good condition.



Over the last decade, these issues have been emerging and we have implemented a programme to address transformation of the estate. Schemes to date have included:

- Provision of a new investigative hub to provide a 48 cell modern custody suite to comply with Home Office guidance as well as an ISO standard CSI facility and a centralised evidence related property store.
- A new open plan headquarters facility with a substantially smaller footprint than the former 1960s cellular building
- Provision of new warehouse/workshop facility to accommodate non-office based functions from HQ site and creation of an archive facility
- Refurbishment of section offices to include Sherburn
- Continued estate collaboration with partners such as Fire and Rescue Services, NHS and Local Authorities
- Implementation of modern methods of working including open plan, hot desking and agile working as part of a wider cultural change across the force.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

External Factors

How we conduct our business is related to a number of external factors which in turn affect our estate requirements.

There is an assortment of regularly changing legislation, regulations and guidance which require us to put procedures in place to include complying with something as simple as how we service boilers to how we model and function our custody estate. Legislative compliance, good practice and implementation of standard asset management practices are therefore important elements of running the estate to provide safe, efficient and suitable facilities.

National policy and trends also affect how we need to operate our estate. The nature of crime has become more complex and there are growing non crime, social demands on policing. We must handle this with an increasing reliance on technology and through meeting recognised quality standards associated with investigation and the way we support the public. The public has also changed how they interact with us making digital, mobile methods of communication key to service delivery. We must also consider recruitment and retention of good officers and staff which places an increasing demand for high quality communal and wellbeing spaces to support agile working. Some of our existing buildings are not capable of meeting these demands without substantial development and investment.



Internal Factors - Strategic Fit

Durham Constabulary strives to build on our success and continues to deliver a service to our communities which provides value for money to the people of County Durham and Darlington. This will be achieved while working towards the NPCC's 6 Policing missions in its 2030 vision. To succeed in this the Chief Constable has identified a spectrum of key deliverables, in conjunction with the Police, Crime and Justice Plan, which identifies our goals to support in the prevention of crime and how we will relentlessly pursue criminals, how we remain determined to protect vulnerable people and how we will continue to provide a first-class service to victims. The four pillars of the Chief Constable's Delivery Plan (CCDP) are Organisational, People, Operational and Prevention aligned with the five productivity levers of:

- Process Improvement / Problem Solving
- Technology / Assets
- Staff Resource
- Partnerships / Collaboration
- Data Analytics

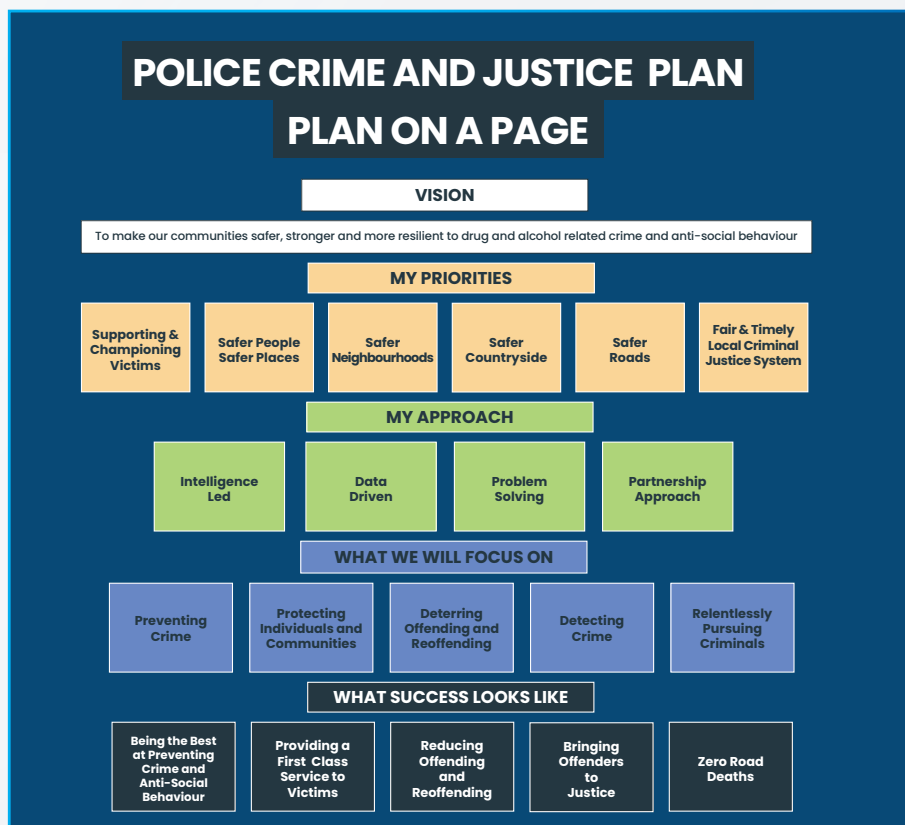
The CCDP is set out on the next page.



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The Police, Crime and Justice Plan will be set around the following Plan on a Page







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The estate is a resource required to enable and deliver the CCDP and Police, Crime and Justice Plan. An understanding of our physical operational requirements is therefore essential and, as crime and policing methods are continuously changing, our estate must also evolve.

Similarly, many of our buildings are nearing end of life. Budget pressures present barriers to ideal solutions and therefore a degree of creative problem solving is required to ensure estate solutions are affordable.

Environment and Sustainability

Environment protection and sustainability have been on the national and international political agenda for many years and with increasing concern about climate change, the associated legislation, regulation and policy has a growing impact on the operation of our service. We accept our corporate social responsibility to meet these ongoing political sustainability objectives. We know that our day to day business has an impact on the environment and, as a responsible public sector body, we have a long history of trying to manage this in line with Government policy. We were one of the first 100 organisations in the UK to achieve the Carbon Trust Standard in 2008 having previously received the Energy Accreditation Standard for a number of years. It is worth noting that the force is the first to use the Construction Innovation Hub's Value Toolkit value in delivering objectives and a benefits realisation framework for the Investigation Hub.

Our increasing reliance on power to our buildings not only increases our carbon footprint but requires a significant part of our police budget. The lifecycle of our building materials and components through manufacture, use and disposal also affects the natural environment. Buildings with old plant and machinery generally use more power and also premises that are not flexible need to be physically adapted often.

Heating, cooling and lighting buildings uses vast amounts of electricity before we plug in equipment and devices. We do however monitor this and take measures to try to control energy use such as lighting replacement programmes, renewables such as solar panels and ensuring that equipment is turned off when not in use. We have also actively sought to reduce our estate footprint through adoption of modern methods of working such as open plan and remote access. We have developed a separate Sustainability Strategy that outlines our approach further [include link when published].

Protection of the environment also features within Building Regulations where we are required to meet certain standards under part L which seeks to conserve the use of fuel and power. This directly affects the building materials and method of construction we use in our estate projects. When undertaking a roof replacement for example, we are often required to install suitable insulation improvements to reduce heat loss. We also engage ecologists in our estate projects when appropriate.

Despite all we have achieved, we understand that management of climate change requires continued commitments to sustainable business so there is still much we can do to reduce our environmental impact, including adopting new and emerging technologies.



Durham Constabulary Sustainability Strategy 2024 - 2029

Our policies and procedures | Durham Constabulary





HOW DO WE GET THERE?

To ensure our estate aligns with the Police, Crime and Justice Plan and the Chief Constable's Delivery Plan, an estate transformation plan based on key estate objectives has been developed. This will be supported by a detailed annual action/capital plan which sets out the projects and workstreams to deliver a modern, fit for purpose estate which meets the needs of operational policing.

This Estate Strategy focuses on the 3-year period of 2026-2029 and will be reviewed at regular intervals. However, due to the long lead in time for many estate projects, it must look beyond this period with an acknowledgement of what is achievable with the staffing and financial resources available.

Key Estate Objectives

The key objectives of the estate strategy are to transform our buildings into an estate that is:

- The right size and in the right location to meet operational requirements
- Managed safely in line with property related legislation and is compliant, as far as reasonably practicable, with guidance, best practice and industry standards
- Is supportive of the public's ability to access policing services and instil confidence
- Modern, flexible and welcoming to officers, staff and visitors
- Affordable, efficient and sustainable

These objectives are set out within the estate transformation plan which will provide an achievable, realistic pathway to success. In terms of methodology, high level operational requirements will be reviewed by the Chief Constable in relation to provision of services and location of operational/business functions and the Police and Crime Commissioner will be consulted. To achieve the estate objectives and fully measure performance of the estate against operational requirements, a full estate evaluation is also required. This will ensure that estate decisions are both data led and in line with operational requirements. This assessment

will involve detailed condition surveys, a backlog maintenance assessment, running cost assessment, suitability review, and compliance audit. In addition, financial viability and estate staff capacity needs to be correlated with the transformation plan. Annual action/capital plans can then be agreed via the Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group in consultation with the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner.



Estate Transformation Plan

The estate transformation plan is set out below demonstrating indicators of success, alignment with the CCDP and milestone tasks to be achieved within the timeframe of this estate strategy.

Key Estate Objectives An estate that is:	Success	CCDP Pillars	CCDP Productivity Levers	2026-2029 Milestone Tasks
Right size & right location to meet operational requirements	Design and location of buildings that are fit for purpose and support operational policing An estate that enhances public visibility and promotes confidence in policing	All 4	All 5	Establish operational requirement Evaluate estate performance Develop capital programme and estate workstreams via Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group
Managed safely in line with property related legislation and is compliant, as far as reasonably practicable, with guidance, best practice and industry standards	Buildings that meet property related Health and Safety requirements, Building Regulations and national security standards Facilities that, where reasonably practicable accessible, meet disability and equality legislation Buildings that provide facilities in line with Home Office guidance and wider industry standards such as ISO	Organisational, People and Prevention Organisational, People and Prevention	Process Improvement/ Problem solving; Technology/ Assets; Partnerships/ Collaboration; Data Analytics	Establish current, relevant standards Consult with staff associations and groups to establish DEI innovations Evaluate estate performance Develop capital programme and estate workstreams via Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group Deliver estate improvements that are cognisant of legislative and regulatory requirements, including Equality Act considerations
Modern, flexible and welcoming to officers, staff and visitors	Maximised space within buildings by enabling modern, agile ways of working Buildings that enable adoption of modern technology; Adoption of good practice in relation to the needs of officer, staff and visitor wellbeing to include consideration of neurodiversity where reasonably practicable An estate that is flexible to meet changing demands	Organisational, People and Prevention	All 5	Space standards review Liaison with ICT to establish demand and align strategy Consult with staff associations and groups to establish wellbeing/neurodiversity innovations Develop capital programme and estate workstreams



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Key Estate Objectives An estate that is:	Success	CCDP Pillars	CCDP Productivity Levers	2026-2029 Milestone Tasks
Affordable, efficient and sustainable	<p>Adoption of good practice and asset management standards in the development and running of the estate</p> <p>Good liaison/working relationships and collaboration with estate partners and key suppliers</p> <p>Incorporation of sustainable building related technology, where practicable and affordable</p> <p>An estate which enables the demands of the force fleet where possible</p>	Organisational and Prevention	All 5	<p>Identify key areas of good asset management practice and agree implementation through Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group</p> <p>Review planned versus reactive maintenance programmes</p> <p>Ensure capital projects contribute to extension of life of assets</p> <p>Identify key suppliers and partners and develop engagement opportunities</p> <p>Consider use of estate related data management systems to inform decision making and communication of information</p> <p>Align estate and sustainability strategy actions</p> <p>Align estate and fleet strategy actions in relation to electric vehicles and consider site capacity assessments</p>

GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

The PCC is the legal owner of the estate and is responsible for ensuring an efficient and effective police service in County Durham and Darlington and has representation on the Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group. The Chief Constable occupies the estate assets with responsibility for their management acting as the duty holder in relation to property related liabilities.

This strategy will be overseen by the Deputy Chief Constable under delegation from the Chief Constable, with the support of senior leaders and, in particular the Assistant Chief Officer to ensure financial prudence and value for money considerations are properly addressed. The

primary reporting mechanism will be through an established Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group which will report into wider Executive and PCC governance structures as determined over time. The strategy is also considered within the strategic planning cycle and our internal performance management system.

This strategy is a 3 year plan for 2026-2029 underpinned by a number of force and PCC strategic documents to include specific annual plans in relation to estate investment. Actions will be revised in accordance with any changes in legislation, policing policy or funding streams.





COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Chief Constable and PCC remain committed to collaboration with key strategic partner organisations and agencies in relation to the implementation of this estate strategy in the interests of mutual gain and efficiency savings.

This strategy will be available electronically on the internal force intranet, the internet or by email request. Hard copies can also be provided on demand.

GLOSSARY

Capital Funding/ Capital Programme	Capital funding/programme relates to spending on long-term assets like property, equipment or major upgrades to provide business benefits over a period of years, while revenue expenditure covers day-to-day running costs such as salaries, repairs, utilities, rates etc. The primary difference lies in the timing and nature of the benefit: Capital provides long-term, non-recurring value and is recorded as an asset, whereas revenue is a short-term, recurring cost.
Chief Constable	The most senior officer of a territorial police force in the United Kingdom, responsible for leading the force, ensuring public safety, and directing operational policing responses. They establish the force's vision and strategy, answer to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for delivering effective policing and are accountable to the public for the force's actions.
Chief Constable's Delivery Plan (CCDP)	Durham Constabulary's Strategic Plan to support the Police and Crime Commissioner's vision to make the communities of County Durham and Darlington safer, stronger, and more resilient to crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.
DEI	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a framework of values and practices designed to create environments where all individuals, regardless of their background, are welcomed, respected, valued, and have fair opportunities to succeed. Diversity refers to the presence of differences, Equity ensures fair treatment and resource allocation based on individual needs and Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance for all.
Estate and Fleet Asset Delivery Group	Durham Constabulary's strategic governance board to oversee and direct Estate matters.
HQ	Police Headquarters at Aykley Heads in Durham accommodating functions to include Force Executive, Communications, ICT, Human Resources, Finance and the PCC's office.
ICT	Information and Communication Technology, referring to the various technical tools and resources (such as computers, the internet, and mobile devices) used to create, store, retrieve, transmit, and share information digitally. ICT encompasses the hardware, software, and networks that facilitate communication and information processing, playing a vital role in policing.



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Investigative Hub	Durham's centralised 48-cell custody facility is based in Spennymoor. The building accommodates a range of teams to support the investigation function of the force to include evidence related property, Crime Scene Investigation, Prisoner Handling Teams, Safeguarding, Firearms Licensing and Criminal Investigation Department.
ISO	Non-governmental, international organisation called the International Organisation for Standardisation that develops and publishes international standards to ensure products, services, and systems are safe, reliable, and of high quality. These globally recognised standards, created by experts, promote efficiency, interoperability, and consistency across industries including policing.
Main/Police Station	Term used to describe a building within Durham Constabulary's estate which is usually located in or near a town centre to accommodate response, neighbourhood and certain operational specialist policing teams. These sites generally have a public front counter facility.
Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee	UK government pledge to increase the number and visibility of neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by 13,000, with the goals of increasing public confidence, enhancing police capability in communities, improving crime prevention, and tackling issues like anti-social behaviour. Key elements include visible, intelligence-led patrols, named/contactable officers for each community and a commitment to addressing specific local problems identified by the public.
Neurodiversity	The principle that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways accepting that there is no one correct way of thinking, learning or behaving.
Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)	Directly elected official in England and Wales responsible for overseeing the police force in their area. PCCs represent the public, set police and crime plans and budgets, appoint the Chief Constable, and hold the police force accountable for delivering an effective and efficient service to the community.
Police Crime and Justice Plan	Statutory document created by a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) that outlines their priorities for policing and community safety in their force area. It details objectives for reducing crime, allocating police resources, and how the Commissioner will work with partner agencies to achieve these goals. The plan is developed following public consultation and serves as a framework for holding the police and other agencies accountable for improving community safety and the effectiveness of the justice system.

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Section Office	Term used to describe a building within Durham Constabulary's estate which is smaller than a main police station to accommodate neighbourhood policing teams. These sites generally do not have a public front counter facility.
Social Value	Social value recognises the social, economic and environmental benefits that can be delivered to local communities over and above the direct purchasing of goods and services. Social value outcomes can deliver tangible benefits ranging from an increase in the number of apprenticeships to a reduction of CO2 footprint, or softer benefits such as reducing the risks of modern slavery in the supply chain.



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