

STATES OF JERSEY



RELOCATION OF POLICE HEAD QUARTERS TO GREEN STREET CAR PARK (S.R.19/2012) – RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS

Presented to the States on 22nd February 2013
by the Minister for Home Affairs

STATES GREFFE

**RELOCATION OF POLICE HEAD QUARTERS TO GREEN STREET
CAR PARK (S.R.19/2012) –
RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS IN CONJUNCTION
WITH THE ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR TREASURY AND RESOURCES**

Ministerial Response to: S.R.19/2012

Review title: Relocation of Police Head Quarters to Green Street Car Park

Scrutiny Panel: Education and Home Affairs

INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the Panel for undertaking this review in a short space of time so as to inform the original debate of P.92/2012. This response follows on from the joint interim response that was published shortly before the debate in November 2012. We have made comments separately on the Addendum to S.R.19/2012, which deals with the comments made by the Police Association and Civil Servants.

In setting out our response, we think it is important to make clear the status of the current plans and the work that needs to be done before the design is completed. Whilst the plans for the new Police HQ have been subject to considerable development and internal consultation, they are for the purposes of making a planning application (Stage D of the design process), which determines whether the scheme is acceptable in planning terms. Should the scheme achieve planning consent, considerable further design work and consultation with users will be undertaken to finalise the design (Stage E of the design process) for the more detailed Bye-Laws submission and the construction process. With this in mind, some of the issues identified by the Panel would naturally be the subject of more detailed design and development as the scheme is refined.

FINDINGS

Findings	Comments
Key Finding 1 – Future expansion: The Panel remains unconvinced that there will not be a need at some point in the future to look for additional accommodation for the Police Force as new operational needs emerge. While this may not be an argument against the current plans at Green Street, the Panel believes that the major disadvantage that the site does not offer any possibility of future expansion ought to be acknowledged.	It is not accepted that the need for additional accommodation in the future would be ‘inevitable’. The Panel has provided no evidence to support this statement. The Panel’s report identifies the evidence provided by the States of Jersey Police about the nature of future policing, in particular the emphasis on embedding officers in the community, the use of technology in the future and falling crime rates, which will result in a

Findings	Comments
<p>The Panel believes that, while the current plans will undoubtedly improve the working conditions for police officers and civilian staff, pressures on the office accommodation may increase in the future. There being no apparent opportunity to extend the planned building at Green Street there will be a risk of overcrowding in the new building. The inevitable solution will be that the States of Jersey Police will require at some point in the future additional premises.</p>	<p>reduced requirement for traditional accommodation in the future.</p> <p>The Panel also received evidence about the flexibility and expansion capabilities built in to the new building which are designed to support a workplace strategy which will continue to promote more flexible working and facilities.</p> <p>Far from suggesting the need for additional accommodation in the future, the above supports the current building design which is flexible and adaptable to meet the changing demands of a modern police force.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that expansion was required in the next 30 years, the new Police HQ would adjoin Green Street car park, which is owned by the public and is scheduled to be redeveloped sometime over the next 10–15 years. The site does therefore provide scope for expansion space in the future.</p>
<p>Key Finding 2 – The Panel notes that the 10% expansion allowance mentioned above provides, not for any additional extension to the building, but for yet more intensive use of the internal office space. Members would be concerned that this might mitigate against the principle of providing a pleasant yet efficient working environment.</p> <p>The Panel notes that the 2009 review resulted in a significant reduction in the size specifications for the building. Whilst it is clear that the new planned accommodation will provide much improved working conditions for the police, the Panel believes that there would be a risk of compromising some of these gains if too much pressure was placed on the working environment by further reductions in spatial arrangements.</p>	<p>Evidence provided to the Panel about the built-in flexibility and capacity, along with the design parameters used, do not suggest there would be a compromise to working conditions in the future. The office areas have been designed by professionals with vast experience of police buildings and reflecting best practice guidelines for UK police buildings and British Council of Offices (BCO) recommendations.</p> <p>The 2009 review was undertaken before the Green Street site was identified; and the evidence provided to the Panel identified that this work was necessary to address an over-specification of the area brief and to take account of developments in modern policing.</p> <p>In its report, the Panel recognises that this work is in accordance with BCO guidance, but states that it has</p>

Findings	Comments
<p>The suggestion that new technology will lead to a reduction in the numbers of officers requiring office space to write reports is also regarded with some scepticism. The Panel is not convinced that the provision of new technology in police cars will significantly alter the preference for police officers to return to the Police station to write reports.</p> <p>Working in a crowded and cramped environment, should the need to provide additional workstations become apparent in the future as operational requirements change and expand, would not be conducive to good morale within the police force nor effective working.</p>	<p>reservations about the Police having specific requirements beyond commercial office buildings. It has been made clear to the Panel that the plans include both office areas designed to modern office standards, and many purpose-designed specialist spaces include a custody suite, forensic laboratory, control room, lockers, armoury, training facilities and incident rooms.</p> <p>The Panel's 'scepticism' about the use of technology in the future is unfounded and not supported by evidence. The evidence provided to the Panel was based on <i>current</i> practice within a UK Police Force seeking to keep officers in the community as much as possible, whilst reducing the use of expensive accommodation. The Panel was also informed that the Jersey HQ had not been designed assuming the use of this level of technology. Such a development would further reduce pressure on accommodation in the future, rather than increase it. Finally, it is the needs of the community rather than the preference of Police officers that will dictate future developments in policing.</p> <p>The Panel provides no evidence to support the view that operational changes would result in a 'crowded and cramped environment' in the future. The evidence provide to the Panel has demonstrated how the building meets standards and the flexibility and expansion space provided by the design. Impact of technological change and adoption of modern working practices should not be underestimated.</p> <p>As noted in the Panel's report, the proposed scheme meets the internal area requirements set in the 2009 brief and would not be constructed any larger if it were to occupy an alternative site.</p>

Findings	Comments
<p>Key Finding 3 – Parking provision: The Panel believes that there are significant issues with regard to parking provision, both for visitors and for police officers and civilian staff, which have not been fully considered.</p>	<p>We set out a response to the issues of visitor and staff parking below.</p>
<p>Key Finding 4 – The Panel believes that the current planned provision in Snow Hill is inadequate and too distant from the Police station. The Panel is particularly concerned that members of the public who arrive at the Police Headquarters in a distressed state (for example when they have been the victim of a crime, reporting criminal damage or injury or to collect family members from detention) will find access arrangements difficult, particularly at times of the day when nearby car parks are full or late at night and in the dark.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant number of distressed visitors to the current Police station at Rouge Bouillon regularly park as closely to the Reception as they can regardless of inconvenience of other drivers. This problem is likely to be exacerbated at the Green Street site and may cause traffic problems on Route du Fort or clog up the designated disabled provision in front of the building.</p> <p>The Panel believes that current visitor parking provision is inadequate, and the lack of convenient nearby parking in an area with congested parking provision will cause considerable frustration.</p>	<p>We note the Panel’s concerns about visitor parking and its reference to ‘anecdotal’ evidence about the need for visitors to park close to the building. Based on the actual number and profile of visitors to Police HQ, it is believed the visitor parking arrangements to be appropriate and the same as arrangements that are widely accepted at many public buildings in St. Helier.</p> <p>The new building is close to the town centre, closer than the current HQ and just minutes away on foot. Green Street car park has availability from early afternoons until the following morning, though it is accepted that this car park is generally full from 9:00 a.m. to early afternoon, and would have limited availability for visitors over this time. This is why it is proposed to allocate 3 spaces in Snow Hill car park specifically for visitors to the States of Jersey Police. In addition, the La Route du Fort/ Cleveland Road car park, which is some 2 minutes away from the new building, typically has more than 20 spaces available throughout the day.</p> <p>Nonetheless, we believe the Panel’s thoughts on this matter to be very helpful, and a further review of visitor parking arrangements will be undertaken as part of the next design stage with the aim of improving the current arrangements. However, this is not a reason to delay the progress of the project.</p>

Findings	Comments
<p>Key Finding 5 – The Panel believes that the impact of the additional parking demand created by the new police headquarters may have been downplayed. This will create additional pressure on the Green Street Car Park, which is the most convenient parking provision for the new building. Police officer parking will displace commuter parking.</p> <p>The Panel also believes that there are special considerations for police officers which might make it appropriate to provide some dedicated parking. For example, officers work rotating shifts and may have difficulties finding vacant space close to the building at particular times of the day. The Panel noted that the Police Buildings Design Guide recognised that overlapping shift patterns should be considered.</p> <p>In addition members believed that officers being recalled at short notice to respond to a Major Incident might find difficulties in parking locally. Also consideration should be given to officers who might encounter safety issues in leaving the building at night to get to their cars if these are parked in public spaces.</p>	<p>Detailed evidence has been provided to the Panel setting out staff parking requirements through a Transport Assessment, which was based on a States of Jersey Police travel survey.</p> <p>The States of Jersey does not generally provide dedicated staff parking and the removal of a significant amount of staff car parking from the original specification of requirements in 2009 was appropriate. It is also debatable as to how acceptable the provision of dedicated staff car-parking in Green St would be to the public.</p> <p>We do, however, recognise that this is one of the key issues raised by the Police Association and some Civil Service staff, which has been identified as part of the Panel’s addendum to this report, which we have responded to separately. We also recognise the need to work with the States of Jersey Police staff in terms of travel to work and to identify solutions to address specific issues relating to parking for members of staff.</p> <p>This will be undertaken as part of the next stage of design and will be included as part of the development of a Workplace Travel Plan. However, this is not a reason to delay the progress of the project.</p>
<p>Key Finding 6 – Members would welcome the provision of additional parking at Snow Hill to reduce the current parking congestion in the area. The Panel notes however that funding and cost viability remains an issue, therefore this development is far from certain.</p>	<p>This work is being undertaken by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services, and the options have recently been published. We understand that this will be presented to the States in due course.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	Recommendation 1 – The Panel recommends that the parking provision for visitors is reviewed with a view to providing greater and more convenient parking provision for visitors. The Panel believes that Green Street would be a better option for this purpose.	Minister for T&R	Accept	A review of visitor parking arrangements will be undertaken as part of the next design stage with the aim of improving the proposed arrangements.	Design Stage E (timings to be confirmed)
2	Recommendation 2 – The Panel notes the brief statement by the States of Jersey Police that the provision of staff parking was not considered necessary or appropriate. Members respectfully disagree with this view and recommend that it would be sensible to acknowledge the need for staff parking in the area by designating a suitable area of Green Street to staff parking with additional provision for visitors.	Minister for T&R	Reject	Whilst the Panel’s specific solution is not accepted at this stage, it is accepted that there is a need to work closely with States of Jersey Police staff in terms of travel to work, and to identify solutions to address issues relating to parking for members of staff. This will be undertaken as part of the next stage of design.	Design Stage E (timings to be confirmed)

CONCLUSION

We would like to reiterate our thanks to the Panel for its work on this review. We accept that there are issues relating to visitor parking which require further exploration, and we will undertake to do this as part of the next stage of design. We will also commit to working with the States of Jersey Police staff to find solutions to the issues relating to staff parking.

We note the Panel has not made recommendations with regard to its views on the area specification and the perceived need for additional accommodation in the future. The Project Team has provided much evidence about the basis of design of both office and specialist areas, the nature of future policing and the standards within which the design has been developed. Whilst the Panel notes that the key elements of the design comply with established guidelines and standards, it still states that it is unconvinced about the future expansion capability and of the site and the internal accommodation. The Panel provides no evidence to support these views and they therefore cannot be accepted.

Whilst the project team will review the above issues as part of the next stage of design, neither recommendation is something that should hold up the progress of the project.