

Police base shake-up sees 70 new beat offices created

A project to reorganise police premises in Leicestershire to improve public accessibility to officers is already delivering many of its aims, it has been revealed.

Members of Leicestershire Police Authority have been told that the Force's Estates Review, which relocates Neighbourhood Teams to premises within the heart of the communities, has progressed quicker than expected and is already well on the way to meeting savings predictions.

The project has been greatly assisted thanks to the support of partner organisations which have made 70 Beat Offices available for police use at no extra cost to the force, greatly increasing public accessibility to Neighbourhood Police Teams and providing enhanced reassurance.

Under the proposals, first drawn up in 2009 and agreed by the Police Authority last July, 12 police buildings across the force were earmarked to be sold or lease agreements terminated as the force attempted to identify savings to meet the funding gap.

In an update to the Police Authority, the force said Anstey, Bottesford, Quorn, Castle Donington, Kegworth, Oadby, Uppingham and Shepshed had all been, or were in the process of being sold or their leases terminated and the facilities moved to Beat Offices in partner buildings at no cost. An alternative for Ashby is still being identified.

A total of 61 Beat Offices are now operational with a further nine close to becoming operational.

The force is also already on target to meet the £1.45m capital and £0.5m running costs it predicted to save as a result of the review.

Meanwhile, work is ongoing to secure premises next door to the current Hinckley LPU which better suits its needs while Wigston is currently being partly demolished and refurbished. Blaby LPU has been relocated to Braunstone and the building sold.

Barrie Roper, chairman of Leicestershire Police Authority, said: "We are very encouraged at the progress made so far in delivering the objectives of the Estates Review and it has to be said at the outset that the support of our partners in offering free accommodation for use as Beat Offices has been instrumental in the success of the venture.

"We understand the anxiety these plans may have caused among the public however we hope that this updated picture helps to address some of their concerns and reassure our communities that access to their local police officer is growing rather than being stripped back.

"Our priority remains protecting our communities and achieving the best outcome for Leicestershire residents and as such the Police Authority will continue to carefully monitor future developments and public feeling regarding the estate review to ensure

its impact is positive on performance and public expectations on services continue to be met.”

Ends

Media Enquiries: Sallie Blair, 01283 821012 / 07702 541401