

Proposed Wrexham Town Police Station

1) Estate Strategy Proposal and Feasibility Study

1.1) The Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales' Estate Strategy 2013-16 dated 19th March 2013 included a proposal to vacate the current Bodhyfryd police station site and relocate the custody suite, administrative functions and command team to a suitable site on the outskirts of Wrexham which subsequently turned out to be Llay for which planning consent has been obtained.

1.2) Further to feedback obtained during the 'Estate Strategy' public consultation period there was a strong desire for a police facility to remain in Wrexham town centre and the final strategy document included a proposal for a town centre police station to accommodate a public front counter service, response police officers and neighbourhood policing services. This would ensure that an enquiry counter service and an operational base were retained in the town centre to complement the proposed facility on the outskirts of Wrexham.

1.3) A number of town centre sites were considered for the town police station but the majority were deemed unsuitable due to either an unsuitable location for public interface and reassurance; insufficient parking provision and poor security for police operational vehicles; restricted highway access/egress; premises too small or too large or in poor condition; too expensive to adapt into a police station.

1.4) Further to numerous discussions with Wrexham CBC's Assets and Economic Development Department it was agreed that a feasibility study would be commissioned by North Wales Police on the Oriel building, adjacent the town library, to assess its suitability for a town centre police station as this was considered a preferred option in a central and visible location and not too far away from the current Bodhyfryd site.

2) Carparking for Operational Vehicles

2.1) The feasibility brief provided to the design consultant engaged by the Force set out a requirement for 25 vehicle parking spaces for police operational vehicles to operate from the police station. It was made clear at the outset of the feasibility study that the provision of a secure car park for police vehicles was an absolute necessity for a town centre station and the full feasibility study proceeded after confirmation from Wrexham CBC representatives that the staff parking and the accessible spaces area at the rear of the library could be considered as part of the feasibility, subject to an approvals process.

2.2) The final feasibility report by the design consultant confirmed that the Oriel building was suitable for adapting into a police station and a secure compound could be created for 26 vehicles. On this basis, draft Heads of Terms for a lease agreement for the Oriel were discussed with Wrexham CBC who also agreed to explore the options for relocating the staff library parking and accessible parking spaces to release the space for North Wales Police.

2.3) The detailed design of the proposed secure compound parking area subsequently provides 20 police vehicle parking spaces within the compound due to restrictions attributable to tree preservation orders, access required for library deliveries and parking for a library vehicle. This has reduced from the original 26 spaces and 20 is now the minimum number of spaces that can be accepted to provide an effective service from this location.

2.4) There is no provision in the secure compound for parking privately owned vehicles and the 20 spaces makes allowance for operational vehicles (e.g. Roads Policing Unit, Crime Scene Investigation) visiting from other stations and operational support vehicles such as 'response cell vans'. Rhosllanerchrugog police station is an example of where there are too many operational cars for the size of the secure compound and we wish to avoid this scenario arising from the outset in the proposed Wrexham town station.

2.5) The 'National Police Chiefs Council's Security of Police Vehicles Advice' document states that *'the security of both in-house and outsourced premises should be paramount to any operational requirement. Unattended vehicles should always be stored in a secure compound or building, never on the street.'*

Open-air compound should have good perimeter fencing with secure access gates.' A smaller vehicle compound is therefore unacceptable as it compromises the aforementioned requirement and if the accessible spaces remain in their current location there will be a potential traffic flow conflict on egress between response vehicles and those vehicles using the accessible spaces. If there is inadequate provision for parking operational police vehicles in a secure compound the viability of the town police station in this location becomes questionable.

3) Alternative Location for Accessible Spaces

3.1) Following further discussions with representatives of Wrexham CBC the latest proposal is to create 5 accessible blue badge spaces off King Street near the Shop Mobility and Bus Station. The cost of the relining and signage will be met by North Wales Police. These spaces will be in addition to the 8 spaces proposed in Chester Street car park.

3.2) The proposed 5 spaces off King Street will be nearer the town centre and will also be available to all blue badge holders. The creation of 13 accessible spaces compared to the current 8 spaces is considered a reasonable compromise in the circumstances.

4) Town Centre Presence

4.1) North Wales Police want to maintain a visible and accessible policing presence in Wrexham Town Centre due to the demands created by the retail and night time economy. Should the decision be taken to not afford the required parking facility for operational vehicles we would be forced to locate patrol and neighbourhood officers at the Llay facility. This is located just over 5 miles outside of the Town Centre and the estimated travel time is 12 minutes without traffic. This could significantly increase at peak travel times. We would ensure that officers are forward deployed during their shift to best mitigate the effect of not having a town centre base, however, by the very nature of them starting and finishing their tour of duty and taking their refreshment breaks in Llay this would decrease police presence and increase vehicle running costs.

Superintendent Sian Beck, Commander, Eastern Area

Date: 18th January 2016