BETTER POLICE BUILDINGS
“Good design and high quality stands the test of time and saves money in the long term”.

Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communication and Creative Industries.
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I warmly welcome this review. It comes at a time when Policing in England and Wales is undergoing significant change and modernisation. The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners have made the Police more publicly accountable, and new technologies and ways of working will help the police do more with less, focusing better on fighting crime. Increasingly in places such as supermarkets, libraries and council offices we are seeing a Police presence, offering greater accessibility to the public. Suitable Police buildings will also support these reforms.

As the Chancellor set out at the Spending Round, the Government is considering ways it can encourage more joined-up working between the police, fire and ambulance services. There is the tri-service emergency centre in Gloucestershire praised by the Audit Commission, and in Hampshire, fire, police and the local authority are joining up back office services and expect to save around £4 million a year. We want these examples to become the norm.

When there is still a need for a major new Police building, it is vital that it is well designed to meet the changing Police needs of the future. That it encourages staff to perform well, is sustainable and provides good value for money. The National Planning Policy Framework, which was launched last year, calls for high standards of design. It requires that local authorities, while making planning decisions, consider the recommendations of design review panels.

As this guide explains, the Home Office has appointed and funds an advisory panel of architectural and technical design experts, with considerable experience in all building types and the built environment. This panel has been helping Police Authorities and now PCCs to improve the standard of design in Police buildings since 2005, and I would commend its valuable service.

Police buildings should evoke civic pride and inspire confidence in those who see and use them. This publication shows that good design is much more than just façades and finishes. It is achieved through the approach, processes and adherence to high standards that the Home Office Design Panel, acting independently and impartially, has sought to provide to all those seeking its advice.

This publication will prove invaluable to all those involved in the key process of designing our new police buildings.
Better Police Buildings examines a number of key design and building issues. Police buildings are highly sophisticated and complex, particularly when custody facilities are involved. At their best they should be buildings of quality. They should be pleasant to look at, but also work well and stand the test of time. They should be flexible, sustainable, and uplift the spirits of those that work in or visit them.

Over the past eight years the Home Office Design Panel (the Panel) has been involved in many types of buildings in many different locations. However, it has been the Police Forces in England that have provided the bulk of its work. The Panel follows the model established by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) from 1999 onwards. The Panel is made up of a group of built environment experts who offer impartial - independent of client, profession or government - timely and sound advice regarding the quality of the design of a scheme. The Panel is not only for grand designs but for modest new schemes as well.

In 2005 the Home Office published the guidance Design Quality for Police Buildings to assist all those involved in commissioning new Police buildings. This document builds on that guidance. It is aimed at the Estate Managers, the Chief Constables and the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and also the local planning authorities and their decision makers.

Why the emphasis on improving the design of Police buildings? They provide value for money, a lasting legacy and in many instances, as our case studies show, a better quality of policing.

Good design is not costly design. Good design is not an extra, it is essential to providing value for money and Police buildings that are fit for purpose now and in the future. The examples here demonstrate the importance of considering the whole life costs of the project, providing flexible and energy efficient buildings. Good design will also provide safer custody, operational improvements and enhance morale. Contrast this with the “lowest cost” approach where buildings will prove to be inflexible and out of date even before they are occupied; they do not serve the occupants well, contribute to lower morale and operational inefficiencies.

Design Review can offer particular help to ensure that good design principles are followed and costly mistakes are avoided.

The cost of poorly functioning buildings and recruiting, training and retaining staff are significant. Reducing stress through good design is essential.

Better Police Buildings highlight ways to facilitate improved Policing methods through good design. Key to this legacy is to champion success across the client and supplier community.

This publication focuses on the role of the Panel and the contribution that good design can make. Everyone involved in Police buildings will find something of value here.
Better designed Police buildings will:

- Increase operational effectiveness and improve morale
- Arise from good stewardship of the existing estate and thoughtful master planning
- Are derived from an assessment of the benefits of refurbishment over demolition and new construction
- Are located where they are needed with respect to context and place
- Are fit for purpose for as long as they are needed
- Are designed to be accessible to all
- Respond to climate change and minimise their carbon footprint
- Create spaces that people will enjoy and be proud of
- Achieve powerful simplicity without blandness or mediocrity.

‘The Design Review Panel produced genuine, meaningful and most importantly measurable benefits to the design process and ultimately the final completed building. The true test is looking at the design prior to review and the final design. Is it better? At Durrnhill, yes.

Philip Robinson: Head of Estates & Facilities, Cumbria Police
“The Design Review process provided Hertfordshire Constabulary with a review structure which created a forum for focusing on design. It generated open, positive debate on the merits of various design approaches. The benefit of this process is realised still to this day in positive feedback from users and visitors to the building.”

Ian Potter, Head of Estates & Facilities, Hertfordshire Police.

For almost ten years the Home Office has been providing design advice to Police Forces and others involved in the procurement of new public buildings. Since 2005 the Home Office Design Panel has been involved in 36 projects across the UK, from Cornwall to Cumbria.

The Panel helps to achieve better Police buildings by providing well informed, impartial expert advice. This is known as Enabling (at the earliest stages of design procurement), and Design Review (throughout the subsequent design development). This advice is not exclusive it is part of a constructive dialogue between the Police, their design team and the Home Office.

The appointment of PCCs in November 2012 was a major aim of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, which came into force in 2011. The intention was, and still is, to make the Police more accountable to the public, instead of the government and to make them more visible and accessible. Police buildings play an important part in this.

While there is no formal requirement for the Police to use either Enabling or Design Review, advice offered has been well received.
Enabling and Design Review are tried and tested methods of promoting good design in all public building projects, in a cost-effective manner. Design Review is also enshrined in the NPPF as one of the ways of improving design and therefore the quality of the built environment.

The Panel is made up of relevant experts in the fields of architecture, planning and urban design and in Home Office design standards.
The Panel is not only concerned with the review of projects once designs have been produced, although this is important, it also provides an enabling role for Police Forces.

Project Enabling provides clients with expert and independent advice and is most effective at the early briefing stages of a project. Engagement is usually at the start of the briefing and design process, either before the appointment of a design team or contractor, or soon after.

Members of the Panel can help the Police Force develop the brief to ensure that good design is procured. It can help support the procurement and management of the design process. This is not a substitute for design professionals and consultants: enablers do not undertake design tasks. They are there to act as mentor and advisor to the client but not as an advocate for the scheme. They remain objective.

Each site, project and client is different. Within the remit of the Panel, it will respond to the needs and the concerns of the client and design team at that time. This is why there is no prescribed tick box or list of standard questions.

In recent years the function of the Enabling service has been to establish the client’s needs and aspirations for a project by developing a clear vision and a strong brief. Or by helping to ensure that client requirements for design are protected within contractual documents.

Design quality indicators are a method of evaluating the design of a new build or refurbishment project. They are also a useful tool at the bidding stage of a project.

**Enabling is best used alongside a Client Design Champion or similar project advocate, providing them with the confidence to encourage good design.**

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**Project Enabling**

Located on a three acre site on Waterwells Business Park, Gloucestershire, adjacent to the existing Police HQ Building and Tri-Service Centre, a new custody suite will complete the ‘Blue Light’ campus. The building is in response to an urgent operational need because of the extremely poor state of the existing cells in the County.

The Home Office Design Enabler was engaged in 2011 at an early stage of the procurement process and before the selection and appointment of the architectural team. At the Enabler’s suggestion a mini-architectural competition was arranged to aid the selection process with scores awarded on a balance between design and individual priced tenders for the design work. The Enabler then worked with the Constabulary and design team to develop the design to a fully-functional pre-construction stage.

“The Design Panel process has added value by ensuring compliance with the Home Office Police Building Design Guide and providing independent support to the project, enhancing quality and reassuring the Police Authority. The Enabler has added value by supporting the design team and acting as an independent guide on what the Design Review Panel are looking for as well as helping achieve the best value for money.”

*Richard Bradley, Project Manager, Gloucestershire Police*
“The Panel is not primarily concerned with a building’s appearance. It does not interfere with contractual relationships. It simply seeks to raise the standard of design for the benefit of you, the client, and those that will use the building for years to come.”

Tom Jestico, Architect and Panel Member

Government places great importance on the quality of design. While the guidance refers specifically to local design review panels and a national design review process, the guidance would equally apply to a government departmental design review process, particularly where it offers specific building type expertise like the Panel does.

Any brief to procure the services of architects and contractors should make provision for consulting and engaging with the Panel. The Panel is independent and impartial. It does not make decisions but its advice is directed towards the decision-makers in the Police Force. It is also a confidential process (although elements are subject to Freedom of Information Act, 2000).

Design Review and the Planning Process

On the 27th March 2012, a new national planning regime came into force with the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This makes it explicit that the process of design review is to be considered important by local authorities in determining planning applications. Paragraph 62 of the NPPF states that:

*Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. They should also when appropriate refer major projects for a national design review (currently provided by Design Council cabe). In general, early engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel.*

The reason for this is stated in the subsequent paragraph;

*In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.*
The Review

Each panel review will typically last three or four hours and is a combination of presentation of design material, discussion about issues and suggestions about the design or the approach.

Once engaged, the initial meeting of the Panel will usually take place in one of the Police Force’s buildings and include a site visit with all selected members of the Panel and the Force’s appointed team. It’s a good opportunity to talk through the approach to the new building and any cultural change that the Force is seeking through its new building programme.

There will be a minimum of four Panel members. They will be lead by an architect, include other architects and a planning/urban design expert. The Panel may be supplemented by other skills such as landscape design, sustainability, mechanical and electrical (M&E) engineering, and may include someone with expertise in Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE). Complying with the Home Office requirement for custody suite design is vital so the Panel also includes Home Office Technical Standards experts in custody accommodation.

Each Panel for the review is drawn from a long list of practitioners and experts. The Home Office considers them to be well placed to offer advice.

The aim of the Panel is to consider the project in the round. Many panellists have designed Police buildings themselves but having professionals from a variety of backgrounds adds perspective, it ensures that a wide range of issues about designing major projects can be covered.

Appointments will also be undertaken to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

The Police Force’s design team is encouraged to be open to the process and to share their thinking with the Panel. The Home Office encourages the use of master plans and urban design analysis and also various physical models of the design development.

A briefing about the project is requested in advance of the meeting. The meetings are not formal occasions rather they resemble interactive workshops.

It is likely that there will be several reviews of larger projects as the design develops and key stages are reached. There may be a series of Panel meetings or a combination of Design Review and Enabling. Each stage should be built into the brief with the consultants before their appointment.

Once a preferred design option has been arrived at it is good practice to consult the Panel before further design work is carried out. Meetings are offered which take the format of a formal presentation by the design team with the client present. This presentation takes no more than an hour, and is followed by a question and answer session from the Panel. Questions are not pre-determined but in general will go from macro issues to micro issues: from strategy to execution and from design concepts to design details. With each review the questioning becomes more focussed and the Panel more involved in the detailed design and operational issues.

It is advisable to consult the Panel at the early stages of the design to ensure that decisions are not taken that cannot be revisited. If the scheme first comes to the Panel when the design approach is fixed it is far harder to take the decision to revisit the concepts. It becomes costly, wasting time and resources.

Following the presentation and questions, it is usual for the Panel to have a closed discussion.
This ensures that all issues have been covered; that feedback is both comprehensive and coherent; that the Panel is united in their view and the approach needed.

It will sometimes be appropriate for the Police Force to be present through the closed discussion but not always. Following this discussion the meeting is reconvened and the chair will cover the issues that the Panel think are important. This is usually a combination of what is working well, and what could be improved.

Within ten days of the meeting a written report is issued to the Police Force, containing the thoughts and recommendations of the Panel. The report, in the form of a letter, comes from the Home Office. At this stage the letter remains confidential. There may be a series of reviews to examine how the team have responded to the Panel’s comments.

The Police Force should be aware of the NPPF and what it says about the importance of design and the encouragement of design review. It is likely that the Police will be able to use the Panel’s letter in support of their planning application with the Local Authority and other statutory bodies. On occasions it may be beneficial for observers, such as the local planning officers, to attend the review.
Project Summary:

Client:
Kent Police Authority, now the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

Form of Procurement:
PFI

Architects:
McBains Cooper / Glenn Howells Architects

Date of Completion:
May 2008

Review History:

Post Occupancy Evaluation:
Undertaken in July 2009 by ZZA Responsive User Environments

Accommodation:
11,500m² four-storey building for police and civilian staff, the division’s store for evidential and lost & found property and a custody suite of 40 cells.

Sustainable Design:
Ground Source Heat Pump drilled 30m into the aquifer providing heating and cooling; BREEAM Excellent
The Context

The building complex is located at Northfleet in an area that had been part of an open recreational ground. It is close to the Thames and Gravesend Town Centre but located outside the town. This provides operational access to the A2.

The original design envisaged a central ‘H’ plan of accommodation with a prominent 400-vehicle double storey car park. Following the Design Review process the concept was revisited.

Background

The project was conceived and built as the area HQ for North Kent, a busy Police Authority. When completed in May 2008 the facility was the Area HQ for North Kent but today, through the ‘New Policing Model’, it operates more along the lines of a satellite HQ. This rebalancing and collaboration with other Forces has resulted in the Serious Crime Directorate and Procurement Department for Kent and Essex being based in the facility.

Design Review

In September 2004, CABE was asked by the Home Office to review the three competing PFI bidder’s scheme. It found all three bidders proposals to be very poor in terms of concept and design. The Authority’s preferred bidder was the least acceptable. CABE questioned the brief, the site planning and the proposed design resolution and called for a fresh start.
In May 2005, the Home Office Panel reviewed the preferred scheme and while this design was functional it presented a very poor relationship with its context. The design was criticised for long narrow corridors, inadequate daylight to office spaces and a poor interface with the public entrances to the site. The Panel concluded that the scheme was not good enough and should not be submitted for planning in its present form.

Glenn Howells Architects was introduced to carry out a reappraisal of the concept with the existing design team. There were also two interim or informal presentations to the Panel. The concept fundamentally changed to provide a four storey office building separated from the custody suite by a central atrium and ‘street’. Car parking was reduced to service parking areas wrapped around the perimeter of the site and a much more coherent entrance sequence and landscape strategy were developed.

This time the Panel were confident that the revised concept could be worked up to be a good design and while they had some concerns about the resolution of some elements, the overall comments were more constructive suggesting areas to focus on as the scheme design progressed. The Panel commended the ‘simplicity, efficiency and cost effectiveness of the built form’. They also praised the ‘choice of materials internally and externally’ which today are a major theme of this project.
Outcome

In recruiting staff, Kent Police has to compete with the Metropolitan Police, but the high standard and popularity of the new accommodation has greatly assisted in recruiting and retaining good people at North Kent. The major success of North Kent is the ingenious way the designers have created a coherent, simple, and elegant composition out of a complex accommodation requirement, on a tight narrow site. The result is a distinguished public building, a design that will stand the tests and rigours of time and is enjoyable to work in.

The composition of the buildings at North Kent is coherent and the architectural language is one of crisp detailing. The exposed smooth concrete cladding and slim cross walls frame the tinted recessed glazing and the narrow dark grey louvres. The formal paved approach to the entrance and associated landscape is also well considered and attractive.

Natural daylight is achieved to the charge desk area but the narrowness of the available site, and the considerable operational, servicing and car parking demands placed on it, means that providing fully naturally lit cells has not been achieved other than by sun pipes.

CABE and the Panel have clearly been very influential. Their input at the early stage resulted in the rethinking of the concept design before the time and money had been spent on detailed design. The revised scheme was achieved through strong linear planning, the specification of three materials: glass, concrete, metal (louvres), and an assured approach to architectural composition in context. This approach also speaks volumes in terms of the image of the Police Force in North Kent as a coherent, more transparent, and impressive modern public entity.
Project Summary:

Client:
Cumbria Police Authority, now the North Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner

Form of Procurement:
Design and Build

Architects:
IBI Taylor Young

Date of Completion:
April 2010

Review History:
Informal review of short-listed submissions on 21st August 2007, full Review held at Durranhill Custody Centre on 10th October 2007

Post Occupancy Evaluation:
August 2011

Accommodation:
Three storey building with 4400 m² of working office space, canteen. A 1000m² 24 cell block was constructed alongside the Basic Command Unit (BCU) via a separate contract,

Sustainable Design:
Project features Ground Source Heat Pump (under garages), Photo Voltaics (PVs), rainwater harvesting, and is naturally cooled.
The Context

The North Cumbria Basic Command Unit (BCU), Durranhill, project arose out of an urgent need. Cumbria had sought to develop an alternative site within their estate close to the M6 but did not receive planning consent. Shortly afterwards the Police Station in the centre of Carlisle was flooded and badly damaged. The HQ building represents the largest capital investment in the Police Force’s history. It unites officers that had been spread across the district in many Police stations and occupies a key strategic position close to the Scottish border. The cruciform modular custody suite was constructed as a first phase. For the Durranhill BCU contractors were provided with a guide price figure to assist in obtaining value for money bids.

Background

A Home Office Design Enabler working closely with the Cumbria Estates Team and the Design Champion. A DQI workshop was also convened by the Enabler to help stakeholders better understand the benefits of good design. Working in tandem the Enabling and Design Review supported the Estates team’s negotiations with the two final bidders leading to the selection of preferred bidder.

Design Review

Both the reviews highlighted a number of design issues. For example, the public pedestrian access to the custody suite was complicated and greater assessment was required for the coloured glass shading; the effectiveness of shading to the rear elevation and the location and nature of the main reception space.
Outcome

The concept derived from the client’s desire to provide a highly sustainable building. The internal street is seen as particularly successful as it provides great scope for interaction as well as providing high levels of daylight into the building. The structural and services solutions are effective and provide excellent through-life value.

Some aspects of the functionality are constrained by the nature of the Brunel Way site, limiting the ability to deliver an optimal layout. The custody wing was constructed separately and as a consequence it is less integrated with the main building than it would be if they had been procured and built together. Additionally, the bold approach would have benefitted from additional testing, modelling and development. In such cases seeking advice from the Panel at the early stage in the procurement process is beneficial.

Durranhill illustrates how the Panel - through its collective experience and knowledge of Police design requirements and the wider principles of good design - is able to support Police Authority clients to ensure concepts can be effectively translated into workable buildings. The project benefited from the involvement of a Home Office Enabler who was able to work with the Estates Team and liaise with the Panel. This helped
support the competitive dialogue phase and resulted in more effective team-working.

Innovation in all its aspects was the principal consideration for this project. And the completed building is undoubtedly strikingly innovative. The street and open plan layout have resulted in a building that is both comfortable and enjoyable to work in, while also efficient and flexible in operation. In judging subsequent projects, Durranhill has established a benchmark across this Police Authority.

“It is quite simply a great place to work. I never thought that open plan would make such a difference to the working environment. Not having doors really does make it more open and inviting. It has made a difference to inter-departmental working.”

Comment from the POE
Project Summary:

Client:  
Devon and Cornwall Police  
Authority, now the Devon and  
Cornwall Police and Crime  
Commissioner

Form of Procurement:  
Design and Build

Architects:  
Stride Treglown

Date of Completion:  
Autumn 2009

Review History:  
Review Panel held on 7th June  
2006 at Bodmin to review two  
contending bidders, review of BAFO  
Design Submission held on 2nd  
August 2006 H.O in London, review  
of Hawkstone proposals held on 7th  
September 2006 at RPS Offices,  
Bristol (redesign following two  
design workshops involving Panel  
members).

Post Occupancy Evaluation:  
May 2010

Accommodation:  
Strategic Operating Policing  
Hub incorporating different  
departments; Traffic, Armed  
Response Vehicles, Major Crime  
Investigation Team, Scenes  
of Crime teams and Collision  
Investigators, in addition to  
the Patrol and Neighbourhood  
Teams, and single storey vehicle  
maintenance workshop and facility  
for dog handling. There is no  
custody provision.

Sustainable Design:  
Naturally ventilated, night purge  
cooling, BREEAM Very Good.
The Context

The Bodmin site was selected as a location central to the Devon and Cornwall Force’s area and with good access to the A30, the arterial route in Cornwall. The adequacy of parking and the ease of access by car and public transport seem to make it more accessible, physically and socially. The project was part financed through the sale of the surplus Police station.

Background

Bodmin Hub is viewed as a pathfinder for a more modern Force. This was the most significant new building for Devon and Cornwall Police in 30 years. Bodmin is not a traditional Police station but a Hub that can easily adapt to operational demands; it has no custody facilities but does have forensics and facilitates an armed response unit. The Hub has performed well as a major incident centre as designed. At times the building may seem under-occupied however it is actually functioning effectively as a key resource base.

The new Police Hub is a striking three-storey building, articulated in the centre to form a boomerang shape. The angled mono-pitch roof forms a prominent overhang emphasising the contour and slope of the site. The building is entered at the elbow between the two wings. There is a spacious full height lobby area that offers transparency through the ground floor circulation space.

The building is naturally ventilated, has high levels of insulation, uses rainwater harvesting and has solar thermal panels that pre-heat hot water for the showers. There is a carbon use display in the lobby and the low-energy blue light feature in the entrance is very simple but effective. Thoughtful elements such as the etched glass artwork to the dedicated briefing room reflect imagination and attention to details.

Landscape is used successfully to provide the necessary stand off security protection but the sense is of a welcoming and low security building.
Design Review

Bodmin represents an example of the integrated approach that the Panel can bring to projects. An Enabler worked alongside the project manager to help at the early stages of the project’s development. There were two competing bidders in the process when the Panel first saw the schemes. The Panel also recommended that the designers be allowed additional time to get the concept design to a stage where it could form the basis of a good scheme.

The Panel urged the team to look at the nature of the sloped site and to place the building with care. The Panel also made recommendations for the entrance and public ‘address’ of the building as well as highlighting the importance of detailed design. The Panel provided clear design advice at the early stages of the project.
**Outcome**

Bodmin is a successful Police project where design was given priority in the development of the brief. Importantly the Head of Estates was also the appointed Design Champion and was involved in every stage of development, reinforced by the Design Review process. The success of the Panel review was to lift the scheme from one they felt was inadequate to one of high quality.

The use of a narrow linear floor plan, with potential for expansion, ensures an appropriate mix of cellular and open plan accommodation. There is a great deal of attention paid to the public entrance and the visitor experience. The external appearance of the building, the layout of the car parking and the landscape are engaging. The building is dignified but not austere and suits its purpose as a Police Hub.

The building rests within the contours of the hill. It feels site specific and not generic. The reception area is particularly successful; it is a full height space, glazed at the front and back, offering views right through the circulation space of the building. It is calm and understated, airy and bright and there are few notices on the walls. Visitors, as well as those that work at the reception, appear to like it. There is good attention to detail throughout the project.
Project Summary:

Client: Hertfordshire Police Authority, now the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Form of Procurement: Pre-appointment of architect prior to the Design and Build Contract

Architects: Vincent and Gorbing

Date of Completion: 2007

Review History: Design Review Panel 30th November 2005 Hatfield Business Park Type 1+2 Police Station and Criminal Justice Centre

Accommodation: Gross floor area of 6900m², incorporating a Base Command Unit Area Headquarters, Police Station with Public Enquiry Office, and a Custody Facility with provision for 40 cells Criminal Justice Unit and a Magistrate Remand Court.

Sustainable Design: Passive cooling, embodied energy through re-use of historic buildings, BREEAM Very Good
The Context

The buildings form part of the redeveloped De Havilland aircraft factory based at Hatfield. The scheme is based around two Grade II listed Art Deco buildings formerly part of the Hatfield Aerodrome, built in 1934. The location is close to the centre of Hatfield and the A1.

Stakeholders such as the De Havilland Society and the local town planning officer were concerned that the two Grade II listed buildings were retained and sensitively incorporated into the new Police station.

The brief required office provision as well as a custody suite, a public enquiry office and significant parking. This required new extensions to the listed buildings. The area in front of the listed buildings has a water feature and mature landscape that forms part of the setting.

Background

The new facility partly arose out of Hertfordshire’s estate strategy. Six Police stations have been relinquished and services rationalised with some activities co-located with other public authorities. Hatfield features a Magistrates Remand Court as part of the accommodation and cells are shared with the Court.

Improving custody was a key driver for the project, with 100 new cells to be provided across the County.

A new public entrance, support accommodation and the custody suite were required. These factors necessitated an early appointment of the architects Vincent and Gorbing.

Design Review

Various options were presented to the Panel including the reuse of the original entrance of the older building. Considerable effort was applied to the detail of this remarkable and well-balanced project.

The Panel commented about the need for ‘an intellectual and philosophical debate’ at a level well above ‘the usual run-of-the-mill police station project’. It applauded the architects for their ‘considered approach in resolving the mass and form, treatment and ‘clothing’ of these new buildings’. The Panel also commented that the success of this ‘intelligent proposal' relied
heavily on ‘the manner that the new building presents itself inserted between the original De Havilland buildings.’ The Panel added value as a supportive champion to Hertfordshire Force and its architect, taking forward an innovative and challenging project.

In its use of accommodation, Hatfield is more cellular and relies more on formal corridors than other innovative new Police buildings; and in functional planning terms this is likely a consequence of the need to retain the historic buildings.
Outcome

Despite the scale of adjacent developments Hatfield Police Station is recognisable as a civic building. To the front, the assertive entrance and link block serves as a useful marker; the prominent overhanging roof and angled glazed walls draw attention to the new entrance. Though distinguished, the refurbished listed buildings remain low key. It is to the design team’s credit that the new link is a strong but not insensitive part of the ensemble.

To the north of this new entrance the original historic pond and stone detailing offer an elegant and pleasing approach to the former De Havilland office building. Commemorative plinths dedicated to significant De Havilland aircraft serve as a formal parade. At the rear the architects have introduced a curved roof encompassing the custody building that gives a contrast with the historic buildings.

Hatfield is notable for its combination of flair and thoughtfully realised, functional planning. The Panel advised the client and design team on how to resolve complex, sometimes conflicting requirements. It gave both the client and the local planning authority the confidence to re-use the buildings and insert something modern that could sit well within the historic buildings.
“There are only benefits with making use of these processes, it focuses the bidders attention on quality design and highlights issues which people close to the project may often fail to see.”

Philip Robinson: Head of Estates & Facilities, Cumbria Police

All these projects share an operational requirement that emerged from an estate strategy. All received input from the Home Office Design Panel and all share a commitment to sustainable design.

They tell us a good deal about success in the recent procurement of Police projects and the ways that the Panel have positively influenced outcomes through early engagement with the property managers and their design teams.

The projects were completed over a period of four years. Hatfield was the first in 2007, followed by North Kent in 2008, Bodmin in 2009, and Carlisle in 2010. Over this period there is evidence of ideas being exchanged within the Police estates community and the Home Office, for example Hertfordshire’s estate experience was shared with Devon and Cornwall. This is a successful process of collaboration and support that the Home Office facilitated.

Also apparent is the continuing effect of change as a backdrop to the estate strategy. The four built projects were conceived at a time of Force expansion and relative optimism. They are now operating during a period of consolidation and rationalisation. The introduction of the PCCs is another new factor that will further test the durability of the Police Force estates.

None of the examples is a Police headquarters building. North Kent is the closest in vision and designation; but now finds itself a ‘satellite HQ’, sharing key command functions with the neighbouring Force of Essex. The fact that its excellence and flexibility as a facility is influential in attracting both personnel and functions has meant that the building retains a major role and focus. This is one of the most positive lessons from the built projects: each facility can be operationally sustained through its quality as a valued Police property asset. This bodes well for the future.

Perhaps due to this changing landscape each building is exemplified by flexibility. Flexibility in terms of property solutions, flexibility in terms of potential to extend horizontally as in Bodmin and North Kent or vertically as with Durranhill, and flexibility in terms of the operationally usable space within the buildings themselves. All buildings have also been adapted to suit operational and personnel requirements. Communal spaces have been personalised, storage arranged and re-arranged, meeting rooms removed or changed.
Most buildings appeared generously laid out in their use of office space and desk space. In some cases this compromised ease of circulation, and areas for team meetings and informal discussions were squeezed. However, it is also clear that Police operate in unique ways. Some offices seemed busy but the buildings as a whole were under-occupied. This is the nature of Policing and a virtue as it means less operational people behind desks and more out in the community. However, Forces should question the requirements of different space users and test out how much more compact some of the buildings and spaces could be.

In terms of sustainable design there are still areas for improvement. All projects have sought excellence as sustainable architecture. However, the demands of operational use and complex accommodation requirements contribute towards variations in energy and running costs of the built projects. Managing building systems is as important as the building construction.
The Estate Strategy and Procurement

All projects were influenced by sophisticated estate strategies, often relinquishing out-dated town centre Police stations and in some cases, subsidising project cost through disposal receipts.

Suggestions:

• Appoint the design team early in the process

• Pre-commissioning of design team ahead of contractor helps protect design integrity

• Sharing knowledge from estate strategies between the Forces has powerful benefits

• Develop a masterplan for the site and services

Sustainable Design

Unlike many buildings, Police buildings operate continuously - so energy demands based on use can be higher overall.

Suggestions:

• Using energy managers can help negotiate energy reductions

• Carbon and energy performance should be visible to users - for example visual displays, such as at Bodmin

• Sustainable Design innovation is commendable, but actual performance effects on day-to-day running costs need to be understood

• Formal processes (BREEAM / DEC) should account for the unique aspects of Police buildings

Workspace and Interiors

The four Police buildings are modern and demonstrate a commitment to efficient working practices, flexibility and teamwork. However, the general design of workspaces is less convincing. The quality of interior design of workspace tends to detract from the freshness of approach of the buildings themselves.

Suggestions:

• Benefits of innovation through better workspace can be conveyed through evidence / case studies to senior Officers and PCCs

• Project architects should have influence over furniture, fittings and equipment (FFE) contracts and their integration into the design concept

• Design teams should always include experienced workspace designers
Post Occupancy Evaluation

While anecdotal evidence is useful, such as the senior officer who chose to relocate based on the strength of the building design despite a longer journey to work, evidence based assessment such as POE, is still needed. One important outcome of assessing the case studies here is that not all benefits are easily costed.

POEs should be a standard requirement, to a common template and available online to all Forces for comparison and information. POE’s should contain robust data relating to staff well-being, recruitment and retention levels as these case studies have shown that this is a major benefit of the investment in design. Forces should factor into their programme the use of POEs.

Diversifying Public Services

All four projects displayed varying degrees of shared use involving the home and adjoining Forces, and other public uses. The ability to flexibly accommodate different users is likely to increase placing demands on the adaptability of estates, buildings and users.

Suggestions:

- The potential for shared public services use should be examined
- Viability of shared circulation, access and use should be assessed at an early stage

The Panel will continue to support Forces through communicating best practice, benchmarking, and innovation, but also ones that are practical and bespoke solutions. Police projects are increasingly being procured through framework contracts and the Panel will have an increased role in monitoring their benefits.
Whether by observation, anecdote or interview of users, the evidence suggests that the process of design review has markedly improved all four buildings featured here. As a result of the process each building better reflects a modern, open and efficient Police Force.

In short, when the Panel have been involved, the buildings work better and they look better.

Crucially, design review adds most value when applied early to the process but is also effective when applied at key stages in the procurement and competitive dialogue process. Notable is the flexibility, functionality and coherence of the buildings that have been improved by the Panel. It has benefitted each project, recognising that the operation, efficiency, morale and future use of each is tied to design.

The requirements of these buildings and the estates strategy need to be understood by decision makers. Involving key stakeholders, including town planning in the process, helps achieve quicker statutory consents.

Flexibility in how the Panel is deployed allows leverage during the procurement cycle and adds value to the project. Mixing the use of ‘informal’ review with ‘formal’ review reserved at the end of the pre-construction process, can better tie into procurement timetables. Selecting architects before construction partners results in a more even sharing of responsibility and higher quality design.

Specialist input as part of the Panel, for example custody requirements and public realm design, streamlines the whole design process. Greater Panel input to benchmarking and POE could help provide wider lessons and evidence.

In its assessment of schemes the Panel looks for quality of thought and execution and not for a particular style, which is a matter of preference, or formula for standardisation.

At its best the design review process offers support for those doing good work. It objectivises aesthetic arguments, it cuts through the nitty-gritty and day-to-day of design to deliver reason and coherence. It is a valuable tool and produces results valued by its users.

CONCLUSION
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List of Images

**North Kent Police Station, images by McBains Cooper / Keith Collie**

**North Cumbria Police HQ, images by Richard Mallinson, IBI Taylor Young.**

**Bodmin Police Hub, images by Steve Townsend of Commercial Property Photography.**

LOCATION OF PROJECTS REVIEWED

**Case Study Durranhill**

**Case Study Bodmin**

**Case Study Hatfield**

**Case Study North Kent**

- Location / identifying number of Case Study
- Location / identifying number of Police Facility
LIST AND DATES OF PROJECTS REVIEWED

Police Facilities:

1. Lancaster Police Station - 1
   Review: 02/03/2005

2. Stevenage Police Station - 1
   Review: 12/05/2005 (on site)

3. Warwickshire Motorway Depot / Deployment - 1
   Review: 20/05/2005

4. North Kent PFI (Case Study) - 2
   Reviews: 1) 20/05/2005 2) 31/08/2005

5. Dorset PFI - 1
   Review: 17/10/2005

6. Warwickshire Police HQ - 2
   Reviews: 1) 01/11/2005 (on site) 2) 20/12/2005

7. Cambourne Projects
   Cambridgeshire - 3
   Reviews: 1) 18/11/2005 (on site)
   2) 19/01/2007 3) 19/06/2007 (with West View HQ)

8. Cardiff Bay Police Station
   Wales - 1
   Review: 29/11/2005 (on site)

9. Hatfield Police Station
   (Case Study) - 1
   Review: 30/11/2005 (on site)

10. Bournemouth Custody Suite
    Dorset - 1
     Review: 17/01/2006 (on site)

11. Bodmin Police Hub
    (Case Study) - 3
    Reviews: 1) 07/06/2006 (on site)
    2) 02/08/2006 3) 07/09/2006

12. Southampton Operational Command Unit
    - 2
    Reviews: 1) 27/09/2006 (on site)
    2) 20/11/2007

13. Bury Divisional HQ - 1
    Review: 27/11/2006 (on site)

14. Bracknell Police Station - 1
    Review: 14/03/2007 (on site)

15. Devonport Police Station - 3
    Reviews: 1) 12/04/2007 (on site) 2) 02/05/2007
    3) 29/09/2008 (on site)

16. North Tyneside Area HQ - 1
    Review: 10/08/2007 (on site)

17. Durrant Hill Basic Command Unit
    (Case Study) - 2
    Reviews: 1) 21/08/2007 2) 10/10/2007 (on site)

18. Northampton Criminal Justice Centre - 2
    Reviews: 1) 10/06/2008 (on site)
    2) 06/10/2008

19. Two Counties (Norfolk and Suffolk) PFI - 4
    Reviews: 1) 14/07/2008 (preliminary)
    2) 11/12/2008 3) 15/01/2009 4) 28/05/2010

20. Scientific Support Unit
    Wakefield Yorkshire - 2
    Reviews: 1) 01/08/2008 (on site)
    2) 11/09/2008

21. Greater Manchester HQ - 2
    Reviews: 1) 17/09/2008 (on site)
    2) 14/07/2009

22. Market Drayton Police Station - 1
    Review: 26/11/2008

23. Hindlip Hall Justice Park & Gatehouse - 1
    Review (for each): 26/11/2008

24. Wirral Area Command Centre
    - 1
    Review: 16/04/2009

25. Gloucestershire PFI - 5
    4) 18/12/2009 5) 17/06/2010

    Reviews: 1) 09/07/2008 2) 05/09/2008

27. Newcastle Area Command HQ - 2
    Reviews: 1) 09/12/2009 (on site) 2) 29/10/2010

28. Hull Divisional HQ - 2
    Reviews: 1) 08/02/2010 (on site) 2) 28/04/2010

29. Harrogate Police Station - 2
    Reviews: 1) 22/03/2010 (on site) 2) 22/04/2010

30. Cleveland Police HQ - 2
    Reviews: 1) 08/11/2010 2) 18/03/2011

31. West Yorkshire PFI - 3
    Reviews: 1) 12/11/2010 2) 07/03/2011 3) 30/06/2011

32. Avon and Somerset PFI - 3
    Reviews: 1) 27-28/01/2011 2) 10/06/2011
    3) 01/08/2011

33. Durham Police HQ - 1
    Review: 30/09/2011

34. Gloucester Custody - 2
    Reviews: 1) 02/04/2012 2) 30/05/2012

35. Exeter HQ - 2
    Reviews: 1) 14-15/12/2009 (on site) 2) 11/01/2011
    3) 20/11/2012

36. Barrow in Furness Police Station - 1
    Review: 26/02/13 (on site)