Welcome to our exhibition

This exhibition provides details on the possible future redevelopment of the Police Headquarters site in Martlesham for housing.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Suffolk is considering the potential sale of the site for residential development, in order to help reduce costs and provide better value for money to tax payers without impacting on police services or jobs.

At this exhibition you can find information on why the site might be sold, how it could possibly be redeveloped, and where the police could consider moving to.

Have your say

The PCC would like to share initial plans with the neighbours, the local community, key stakeholders and the council before any decisions are made.

Today, you can meet the project team, view plans and provide us with your comments, which will be considered before an outline planning application is submitted.

Who is behind the plans?

The potential for selling the site is being explored by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, Tim Passmore, who has an obligation to maximise the best use of public resources; alongside the Chief Constable and Suffolk Constabulary.

The PCC for Suffolk is responsible for ensuring the policing needs of our county are met as effectively as possible, putting Suffolk's interests first and act as the crucial link between the police force and the public.
Background

As part of a full review of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s estate to see where money can be saved, the PCC is exploring the possibility of selling the Police Headquarters site in the future.

If the site is sold, the money raised would be re-invested into police services and used to relocate to more fit-for-purpose premises in the Ipswich area.

In order to understand whether it is financially viable to sell the site and relocate, outline planning permission for residential development on the site first needs to be gained (from Suffolk Coastal District Council). Then, subject to a valuation of the site, it could then be sold to a house builder or developer.

The PCC has appointed a team of specialist consultants to look at how residential development could potentially be accommodated on the site, and to apply for outline planning permission. Initial, illustrative plans have been drawn up to show how new homes could fit on the site. These plans can be seen here today.

A new HQ for Suffolk Police?

A new headquarters for Suffolk Constabulary – whether a new building or shared with other public services – would be in the Ipswich area. Where we relocate to greatly depends upon the value gained from the sale of the site, should planning permission indeed be received and the site is sold on.

The Constabulary is part of the One Public Estate programme that sees all public sector partners particularly from the Ipswich, Central and Suffolk Coastal area regularly meeting to discuss opportunities for development and sharing facilities. This forum has already resulted in examples of the police, fire, ambulance, health and local councils sharing premises and we would fully explore what opportunities might be possible for the police HQ facilities.

It should be remembered at this stage that the possibility of selling the site is still being explored and decision has not yet been made.
Providing new homes

The redevelopment of this brown field site for housing would not only save the police force money. It could also help Suffolk to meet its housing needs by providing a range of homes in a short time frame.

It is thought that around 250 homes – including both market and affordable housing – could fit on this site, at a density of 39 dwellings per hectare (dph). The development could include a range of homes from smaller 1 and 2 bed apartments, to 2 to 3 bed starter homes, and larger 4 bed family homes. The suggested mix of homes has been designed with variety of housing needs in mind, providing a good proportion of smaller homes for those wishing to get onto the property ladder or to downsize.

Why here?

Martlesham Heath lies within the ‘Eastern Ipswich Plan Area’ (EIPA), which is defined as a Major Centre in Suffolk Coastal District Council’s Settlement Hierarchy. The Core Strategy identified that approximately 29% of the district’s housing requirement (c.2,300 by 2027) will be in the EIPA.

It is considered that Major Centres provide the greatest opportunity to deliver sustainable development, due to the range of (and accessibility to) local services and facilities including retail, employment, education, recreation and leisure, community and public transport.
Possible layout

At this stage, the PCC is applying for outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the site only. This is simply to establish the principle of building homes on the site and not to agree detailed plans for the layout of the site and designs of the homes (this would be done at a much later stage).

However, we appreciate that it is useful when considering the possible redevelopment of the site to be able to see how houses could be laid out, how it could be accessed and what the green spaces could be like. Therefore, we have carried out some site survey work to help us draw up a possible layout, which, should outline planning permission be granted and the site be sold, would be refined and given more detail by the house builder or developer who would take on the site. With this in mind, the plan below is for illustrative purposes only.

We invite your feedback on this illustrative plan before it is finalised and submitted, as part of the outline planning application, to Suffolk Coastal District Council.

- Central area of public open space for informal leisure use and play
- Sandlings Walk footpath connecting the development to Martlesham Heath and Martlesham Village
- Good sized gardens
- Hedgerows and trees retained wherever possible
- New homes distanced from boundaries of existing properties along the southern boundary of the site by a substantial green buffer
- Access off Portal Avenue
- A range of homes
Access & traffic

The site would be accessed as it currently is, off Portal Avenue.

As part of our planning application, we will be required to show that the access into and out of the site is safe and that the development does not have any adverse impacts on adjoining roads or junctions. Suffolk County Council Highways will be consulted on this to ensure their design and safety standards are met.

We are conducting a full Traffic Assessment to look at estimated vehicle movements likely to result from the development of the site, should it be sold and redeveloped for residential use. This Assessment will be completed before we submit our planning application.

The site has the advantage of being situated close to the bus route that runs through Kesgrave and Martlesham, and is within walking distance of local services. Therefore, 'sustainable travel' would be naturally encouraged.

Environment

Wildlife

A Phase 1 Ecology Report has been prepared, which identified habitat that might be suitable for protected species such as bat, dormouse, great crested newts and reptiles on the site. Accordingly, individual species-specific surveys and reports have been carried out to consider whether these species are in fact present, and if so what mitigation might be necessary to ensure that suitable alternative habitat can be provided on site (or if it can't, that species can be safely translocated to habitat away from the site). The findings of these surveys and reports will be submitted with the planning application.

Drainage

The site lies in a low probability flood risk area (Flood Zone 1), and is shown to be at low risk from flooding from other sources including pluvial, infrastructure, groundwater and other water bodies. Surface water will be collected and attenuated on-site and discharged using infiltration techniques. Further opportunities will be investigated to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) into the development where possible.
Your questions

Why aren't you sure whether to move or not?
The feasibility and technical work that has been carried out in relation to the site, as part of a thorough review of all buildings within the PCC's estate, suggests that the sale of the site could potentially be a viable way to reduce costs for the police force and enable relocation to more fit-for-purpose premises, and so an outline planning application is likely to be submitted to Suffolk Coastal District Council.

However this is subject to further technical work and public consultation; and the planning application will be determined by SCDC through the normal planning process. The PCC must be certain the sale of the site will provide best value for tax payers, and the value of the site will only become apparent should outline planning permission be granted.

How much money could the police save/make from this?
At this stage, the value of the site is not known – by submitting an outline planning application for residential development, this will help us to understand how much money could be made from the sale of the site. If the site were to be sold, we would need to relocate to more fit-for-purpose premises elsewhere which would of course cost money. New or shared facilities (see below) would reduce running costs compared to the running costs of the current Martlesham HQ. However, more detailed work needs to be undertaken to fully quantify and review all the options and no decision is set in stone.

Will a new HQ be built?
We're not certain at this stage. It could be an option however, consolidating premises on an existing site or sharing buildings with other public sector partners might be more realistic. The Police Investigation Unit remains a separate entity and outside of the development site boundary.

Are any jobs at risk?
No. We do not intend to have any impact on current jobs by selling the site/relocating to other premises. The potential move is not associated with staff numbers.

If the sale and redevelopment of the site goes ahead, when might the Martlesham HQ close and staff be required to work elsewhere?
We anticipate this would be some years away. However, it should be remembered at this stage that the possibility of selling the site is still being explored and a decision has not yet been made.
Your questions

What about the capacity of local services and infrastructure?

Suffolk Coastal District Council would collect a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) financial contribution from the development (should it go ahead) to raise funds for local public services such as transport, flood defences, health and social care, education, libraries and leisure facilities.

As part of the planning process, we will engage with local schools and the doctor’s surgery; and the County Council as the local authority responsible for health and education will be formally consulted.

How will the privacy of residents living next to the site be protected?

Protecting the amenity of those living adjacent to the site is very important to us. The site is already well screened by hedgerows and trees, which would be retained wherever possible or replaced according to planning consent conditions. The new homes would be distanced from the boundaries of existing properties along the southern boundary of the site by a substantial green buffer, good-sized gardens and appropriate boundary treatments, such as quality fencing and landscaping; and positioned to avoid any over-looking.

We want to engage with nearby residents to listen to their views and consider comments before a final outline planning application is drawn up – please talk to us today or provide your feedback on a comment form.

How can you guarantee that the house builder who might buy the site will follow the approved plans?

The outline planning application will include ‘parameter plans’ for the site which set out guidelines for any detailed designs that could be drawn up by a house builder or developer should they buy the site. These typically cover factors such as density, building heights, access, character areas, drainage zones, landscape buffers and car parking. It would then be down to the house builder to design plans that adhere to these, and to SCDC to determine any future detailed (reserved matters) planning applications that are submitted. They would consult with local residents and stakeholders in the normal way.

Will there be an increase in traffic on Portal Avenue/the A1214?

The site already experiences traffic related to the police headquarters and the Police Investigation Centre. However, we are conducting a full Traffic Assessment to look at estimated vehicle movements likely to result from the redevelopment of the site. This Assessment will be completed before we submit our planning application. It may be that the number of traffic movements is similar but the times of day these occur is different. Martlesham HQ is currently operating on a 24 hour basis, with traffic movements accordingly.
What happens next?

NOW
Further technical work (site surveys), period of pre-application public consultation (organised by the PCC)

SUMMER 2018
Consider feedback from community and stakeholders, develop plans further

LATE 2018
Submit outline planning application to establish the principle of building houses on the site

TBC
House builder/developer would draw up detailed plans to be determined by SCDC before any building could start

APPROX 2019
If approved, after a full financial evaluation the PCC would need to decide if it is viable to sell the site to a house builder/developer

APPROX EARLY 2019
SCDC to determine application (to include a further period of public consultation)

Construction of around 250 homes could take up to five years to build.

Your feedback
Illustrative plans are on display here today and members of the project team are available to discuss the outline proposals and answer questions you may have.

Please fill in a comment form to record your feedback, which will be considered by the team as the proposals are developed further, before an outline planning application is submitted. You are also welcome to send us your feedback via the PCC website, by email or post:

www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk
planning.consultation@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Police Headquarters, Portal Avenue, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich, IP5 3QS

Please send us your comments by 20th July 2018.

A Statement of Community Consultation detailing the comments received and how we have considered them will be submitted with the outline planning application.

Thank you for coming today.