

For Consideration	
Public/Non Public*	Public
Report to:	Police and Crime Panel
Date of Meeting:	19 September 2022
Report of:	Commissioner Henry (PCC)
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Agenda Item:	9

NOTTINGHAM CUSTODY SUITE – BENEFIT REALISATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of benefits realised from the 2021-22 Nottingham Custody suite development, including details of outstanding issues and challenges that the force is working to address. The paper has been informed by an end of project report published in November 2021, a draft internal audit report on Custody Arrangements¹ published July 2022 and early findings from a detailed Post Implementation Review (PIR) document² which is due to outline benefits realised and lessons learnt from the custody suites development.
- 1.2 The Police and Crime Panel is invited to scrutinise the contents of this report and briefings and seek assurance on any specific areas of concern. The Panel is also invited to request further information where required and make relevant observations and recommendations within the scope of their role³.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2017 Nottinghamshire Police and OPCC determined that the Bridewell Custody Suite was no longer fit for purpose, and that, even with internal renovations, it would not meet with Home Office standards at that time. Police forces are likely to receive critical inspection reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) where custody standards are deemed to be sub-optimal.
- 2.2 In the same year a new site was selected to be home to Nottinghamshire's new 50 cell custody suite. In April of 2018, a business case was developed with a budget of £17.8m. This was approved by then Police and Crime Commissioner, Paddy Tipping, in consultation with the Chief Constable.

¹ Mazars LLP

² Strategic Capacity Planning for Custody Services, Nottinghamshire Police Corporate Development, October 2022

³ [Police and Crime Panels: A Guide to Scrutiny](#), Local Government Association, Updated 2016

- 2.3 The development of the new suite was informed by the Home Office standards framework, and College of Policing guidance. Research from other police force areas was also undertaken to ensure key considerations and lessons learned regarding the care, privacy and dignity of detainees was upheld, while opportunities for capturing critical forensic information were maximised. External stakeholders were also centrally involved in the development. This included the Deaf Community, Autistic Society, and Independent Custody Visitors.
- 2.4 Principles and legislative values informed by the Nelson Mandela Rules (Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners) and the Human Rights Act 1998 also played an important role in shaping the spatial environment of the new custody suite.
- 2.5 The suite became operational on the 29th of September 2021. The suite gained significant national interest, being seen as a flagship project by the College of Policing. It has been acknowledged that the design and build of the custody suite excels in its provision of detainee care for neurodiversity, juveniles and vulnerable adults. Several forces, such as Durham Constabulary, have subsequently visited Nottingham's custody suite as a site of best practice, to inform their future design plans and custody builds nationally. Additionally, the Nottinghamshire suite has been delivered not only within budget but it has also achieved an underspend of almost £800,000.

3. Benefit Realisation

- 3.1 Nottinghamshire Police's end of project report, which was published November 2021 considered feedback from staff, senior management, and external bodies, including visits from other forces. The Post Implementation Review (PIR) is due to commence shortly; it will compare the 12 months prior to and following the opening of the suite (29th September 2021). In the interim, the Force report that a number of benefits are already evident, as set out in the paragraphs below.
- 3.2 **Increased reliability and availability of electronic equipment**, including CCTV, intercoms and ventilation systems which have led to improvements in capacity, capability and safety.
- 3.3 **Improvements in room layout, function and environment** which have been recognised via feedback from staff and Independent Custody Visitors. The suite provides a new, clean, and modern environment which, evidence suggests, is impacting positively on the wellbeing of staff and detainees.
- 3.4 **Greater privacy and discretion**: The new suite includes discreet areas for arrivals, booking-in and interview which are sensitive to the needs of vulnerable

people. A more private structure to the custody desk enables simultaneous booking in alongside a separate booking in area for children, young people and very vulnerable detainees, as well as male, female and juvenile divided suites. The custody suite's discreet area is being assessed as part of a data collection study by University of Nottingham's School of Law regarding juvenile detention rights.

- 3.5 **Improved efficiency of prisoner handling:** The efficient design assists beat officers by making prisoner handling more efficient and enabling them to hand over and return to their beats much more rapidly than was previously the case.
- 3.6 **Improved safety:** Lines of sight have been significantly improved, which is both critical for the safety of custody officers and staff, and particularly essential for monitoring the wellbeing and safe detention of prisoners.
- 3.7 **Facilities to meet additional and enhanced needs.** Modernisations and adaptations within the new suite have enhanced the force's ability to support vulnerable people, such as those with autism, and provide swifter intervention and support. The facility also lends itself well to accommodating partner agencies, which means they are on site and on hand to support and advise staff and detainees. A new triage process has also been introduced for detainees which enables early identification of vulnerabilities, needs and risks and for steps to be taken to mitigate risk. This has resulted in improvements in levels of settlement from detainees, and decreased levels of violence, stress and anxiety in comparison to those experienced at the former Bridewell suite.
- 3.8 **Officer efficiencies:** Changes to the operating model we have also helped to reduce the number of Detention Officers employed at the facility, whilst maintaining overall performance, as detailed in the business case.
- 3.9 **Cost savings:** The cost of running the custody suite has significantly reduced in comparison to Bridewell, with energy efficiency being improved through the use of solar power roof installations and the modern fabric of the building. A full evaluation of reductions in running costs and financial efficiencies realised via the project will be reported as part of the final post implementation review paper.
- 3.10 The final report will also detail findings from comparative data relating to:
 - Cell capacity - review of footfall data and number of occasions suite gets close to capacity – including by wing type.
 - Service efficiency - review of data including waiting times, back from interview times and overall periods of detention. Where possible, cost benefits will be identified.
 - Staff wellbeing - a staff survey and sickness data

- User satisfaction – a service users survey (Officers, CID, Specialist Departments, including Partners (Liaison & Diversion, Health Care Plans, App Adult Scheme, Solicitors)
- Detainee Safety: site checks and inspections - internally and externally
- Details of any significant outstanding issues and challenges affecting the project.

4. Decisions

4.1 None - this is an information report.

5. Human Resources Implications

5.1 This report gives assurance of the significant improvements that have been delivered for the working environment for custody officers, staff and detainees.

6. Equality Implications

6.1 The Custody Suite is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2020, and it meets Home Office standards for ensuring care and support of detainees.

7. Risk Management

7.1 There are no significant risks within this report.

8. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

8.1 None

9. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

9.1 None

10. Details of outcome of consultation

10.1 The Chief Constable has been sent a copy of this report.

11. Appendices

11.1 None

12. Background Papers (relevant for Police and Crime Panel Only)

Nottinghamshire Police Estates Strategy

Internal Audit report: Custody Arrangements 22 - 23, Mazars LLP, July 2022

Strategic Capacity Planning for Custody Services, Nottinghamshire Police
Corporate Development, October 2022

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