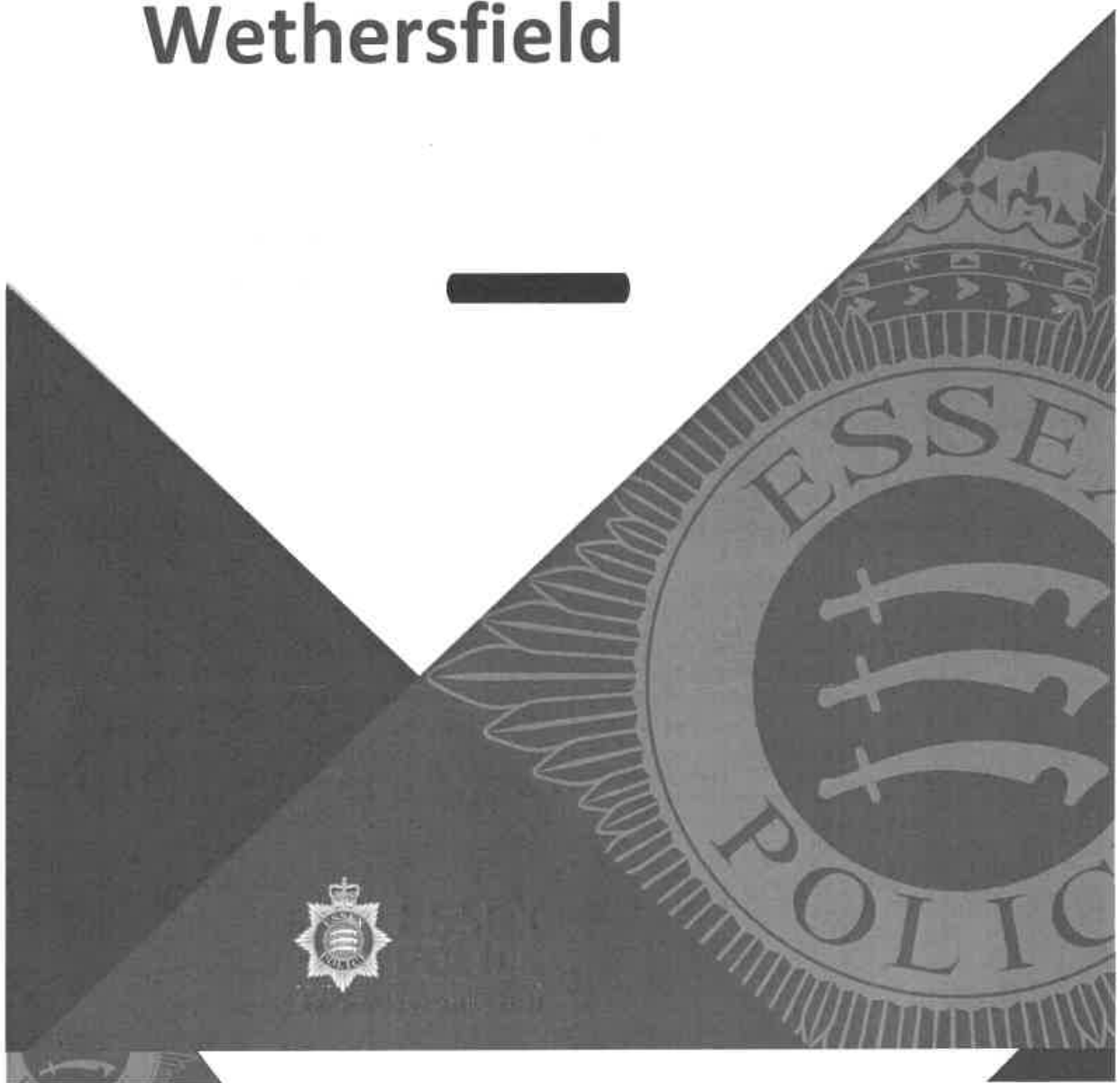


# New Proposed

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# Prisons-

# Wethersfield



## Introduction

This document sets out the Essex Police initial response to public consultation for the proposal of two new prisons in Wethersfield, Braintree. Essex Police wish to consult further with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in relation to the proposed developments.

This is an initial response to a high-level document released and is reflected in the high-level response. Essex Police would seek further, more detailed engagement on the overall proposal and specifically the areas highlighted below.

## The Road Network

### Road Safety

The safety of all road users during the construction and post construction phases are significantly important. Nationally rural roads have the highest level of loss of life through road traffic collisions. The Wethersfield site is in a rural part of Essex fed by B-Roads. Existing collision data on the B1053 highlights a high number of collisions involving injury over the past 5 years.

The network of roads is not suitable to cope with the increased level of traffic during the construction or post-opening phase of the project without improvements.

In support of the Highway Authority, Essex County Council, consideration should be given to the development plan supporting measures to mitigate risk on the road network, and where possible designing out collision hot spots in support of the Essex Police and Road Safety Partnership's desire to see zero road death and serious injury casualties by 2040 on Essex Roads.

Consideration should be given to how vital road traffic restrictions will be enforced during the construction phase on areas such as reduced speed limits or weight limit & prohibition of work(s) traffic. During the proposed construction phases several strategic infrastructure projects will be underway across the force area placing pressures upon Roads Policing resources.

There is a risk of increase demand on Essex Police Roads Policing Units because of a potential increase in road traffic collisions and traffic offences. Essex Police would wish to seek contribution to policing uplift to support demand.

### Road Crime

The local road network would be the primary means for visiting the site. Consideration should be given for measures to detect and disrupt criminality during the construction phase with the inclusion of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) on selected rural roads. Post construction the road network should also be included for consideration on measures to mitigate risk of criminal activity. Essex Police would seek to be engaged in this process.

The Strategic Design Principles for the Emergency Services in Essex highlight the following two key areas for Essex Police which are significant to the road network.



- To be engaged with master-planning for any transport related developments, collaboratively working with the relevant authorities to ensure that new developments are planned and designed to improve safety on the various networks. This will include preventing KSI (those Killed or Seriously Injured) Road Traffic Collisions where possible.
- To include infrastructure considerations to ensure and develop an efficient policing response in the future. This may include such matters as Vehicle Charging points.

### **The Potential for increase in crime in local community**

The proposed plan seeks to place a Category B and C prison into a semi-rural area in the North of the county of Essex. This development will attract a higher number of people to the general area, including staff, visitors, deliveries, and prisoners who are released on remand, probation or having finished their sentence in full. This influx of activity will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of calls for police service in response to reports of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Whilst it is not possible to place a metric on the number or type of crimes or behaviour at this point, the sheer scale of the development would suggest the need for a considered policing response to avoid critical impact on the policing response in the wider North Essex area, including the city of Chelmsford and towns including Colchester and Braintree.

The Strategic Design Principles for the Emergency Services in Essex highlight the following three key areas for Essex Police which are significant to the prevention of crime and community engagement.

- That the prevention of crime and Disorder is supported through well-designed places that includes the provision of a sense of community and safety.
- Encouragement of proactive Police service-related communication to new residents and communities that promote public confidence and cohesion.
- Ensuring that all work, education, and public spaces are sufficiently well designed to promote safe, secure communities and environments.

### **The potential for an increase in the number of crimes in Essex prisons that require investigation**

HMP Chelmsford situated in the centre of Chelmsford City centre presents a range of challenges for Essex Police. Serious assaults, intimidation, internal corruption, and drug supply involving staff are commonly reported. These investigations fall outside of HM Prison Service jurisdiction and consequently rest with Essex Police to investigate.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the new design of prisons and the Wethersfield location will seek to tackle and mitigate some of this offending behaviour, the introduction of two new large scale prison establishments will lead to new demand on the capacity of the force. *Taking the evidence from HMP Chelmsford, the creation of two further prisons with a combined establishment of 3,400 inmates will increase demand for policing services such as emergency response, investigation, forensic investigation, scene management, search, and risk management. Essex Police will undertake criminal investigations and carry out activity on behalf of HM Coroner in respect of deaths reported at prison premises.*



Essex Police would seek to introduce the Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCs) to maximise the opportunity to consult with developers and limit the risks detailed in this response.

*At an appropriate time and forum, Essex Police would seek to make representations to the MOJ regarding the impact of this increased demand and discuss options for funding support to address the increased demand, along with providing input on the design and opportunities to have a policing footprint at the site.*

#### **Major incident response planning**

In consultation with HM Prison Service, developers and key stakeholders, emergency plans should be developed prior to the opening of a new prison establishment.

*Emergency plans currently in place for HMP Chelmsford include an Industrial Action plan, a Firearms Plan (relating to a firearms incident or firearm found) and Emergency Plans (covering all other emergencies apart from industrial action or firearms).*

*Essex Police would seek to consult with developers at an early stage to ensure proper consideration and development of infrastructure to support such emergency plans for the Wethersfield site.*

#### **Prison Facilities**

##### **Investigative**

The development of two new prison establishments is likely to attract an additional Organised Crime Group (OCG) related activity such as staff infiltration, throw overs (the process of introducing controlled drugs and mobile phones into prison), serious violence amongst gangs and organised crime groups and the progression of organised crime activity within the confines of the prison.

*The additional prison capacity resulting from this development will require more investment from the Eastern Region Specialist Operations Unit (ERSOU) to support the Prison Intelligence Unit and local policing resources in the form of Prison Liaison Officers (PLO's) to respond to crime investigations.*

*Essex Police would seek a contribution to achieve this policing uplift.*

Essex Police would seek to increase ANPR capability and capacity to cover the prisons. Whilst this may be part of the build specification, Essex Police would seek to be engaged in this process.

##### **Interview facilities**

To reduce the need to produce prisoners from the prison estate then sufficient, secure and adequate interviewing suites with compatible technology with the existing Essex Police interviewing solution would streamline the process for interviewing offenders for other investigations whether that be a suspect or witness.

Facilities would also need to be considered for debrief of offenders under the SOCPA legislation and to have due cognisance of the growth of video enable justice and virtual court room hearings. Essex Police would seek to be engaged in the design of the interview facilities to ensure a truly partnership approach which meets the needs of all users of the various strands of the Justice System.





## HM Coroner Investigations

Essex Police will have a requirement to manage potential additional demand as the lead investigators for any death on the prison estate on behalf of HM Coroner. Any investigation on the prison estate will be protracted due to the security and access limitations on investigators. ***Again with this increased demand in mind Essex Police would seek to engage with the MOJ to consider ways to offset this additional demand.***

## Conclusion

Essex Police would welcome an invitation to any stakeholder meetings that are planned with a view to attending with other partners.

Please send any communication to

[essex.police.uk](http://essex.police.uk)

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