

A UNITED EMERGENCY SERVICE

SHARED SERVICES AND
ESTATES OPTIONS FOR
THE METROPOLITAN
POLICE SERVICE



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INTRODUCTION

We need to challenge the way we think about the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) estates. If much of our police property is "quite literally unfit for purpose in the 21st century"¹ then we need to think boldly and creatively about how the new estates will be fit for purpose, not just now, but in the future. This document does this by looking at whether the MPS should be sharing locations with other emergency services – the London Fire Brigade, hospitals and the London Ambulance Service – to facilitate joined up working to create a more synchronised, vigorous service.

This report will first look at what shared estates projects between emergency services are being developed around the UK. The national examples investigated in this document suggest that London is trailing behind several other UK forces in terms of the shared estates agenda. As a major global city where robust resilience is paramount, London needs to start leading on this front. This document will look at what co-locations are being developed in London and investigate the feasibility and benefits of implementing shared estates models in London.

BACKGROUND

The responsibility of the Metropolitan Police Service's estates now falls under the remit of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime announced his intention to look more creatively into how to manage the Metropolitan Police Service's estates. His aim – to reduce costs but increase public access to the police.

In response, as Chairman of London Fire and Emergency Service (LFEPA) and as a member of the Police and Crime Committee, I suggested that concerns about MOPAC's plans were based around retaining public-facing community access buildings that are operational 24/7. I therefore suggested that MOPAC look at the broader provision of 24/7 public access buildings in London and challenge bureaucratic barriers that are in the way of collaborative work. I believe there should be more co-ordination between all emergency services with 24/7 real estates² and it is these suggestions that I have investigated in this document.



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1. Kit Malthouse, THE MPA/MPS Estates STRATEGY, 2010-2014, <http://www.policeauthority.org/Metropolitan/downloads/committees/finres/101021-07-appendix01.pdf>

2. Page 33 and 34, Transcript, 5 July 2012, Police and Crime Committee

CAVEATS

When reading this document several caveats and limitations should be borne in mind.

INFORMATION ON OTHER FORCES' CO-LOCATION PROJECTS

One key caveat is that the information on other forces' shared location agendas is almost solely based on formal and informal interviews and information sent from other forces' police estates departments and Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). This document is therefore an overview of the issue rather than an in-depth report.

Hence, for example, we have not sought interviews with anyone openly opposed to the projects described. We have not visited the sites or carried out surveys with staff based at these shared sites. Therefore, we have not been able to confirm some of the anecdotal information that was provided by interviewees.

We have also focused on obtaining information provided by the police services rather than from the Fire Services.

LONDON INFORMATION

The recommendations for, and overview of, the position in London is based on a larger variety of interviewees from the planning and resilience teams at the GLA, academics, hospitals, LFEPA, the MPS estates department and SNTs. However, the number and length of interviews were still limited and essentially only provided an overview.

The recommendations in this document are not insistent or set in stone. I intend for the recommendations and thoughts discussed in this document to be carefully scrutinised and further investigated by the GLA and emergency services.

CASE STUDIES ACROSS THE UK

FIRE STATIONS AND SNT BASES

Essex Police and Fire Services ~ Hampshire Police and Fire Services

Several police forces across the country are using fire stations as the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) patrol bases³ for their safer neighbourhood officers. Hampshire⁴ and Essex police forces are two forces examined below.⁵

Benefits

Both forces took this action to reduce costs⁶ for the police, allow the SNT's to continue to be based in the town, encourage the two services to work more closely together and in order to maintain a visible police presence. The Fire Brigade also gains by reducing their operating costs, gaining additional income and it also ensures the future use of their premises.

Challenges

The main challenge for Hampshire Police in carrying out this project revolved around legal issues and leases⁷ as well as getting funding to set up the accommodation - with only £10,000 to start up each co-location project for each office. Often, Essex Police said there were challenges around space, including fitting in their substantial locker space, which would then require additional infrastructure re-planning of the building.

Community concerns were also a potential barrier. Parish councils in Essex were initially concerned about safety and confidentiality issues and the FBU criticised the move saying "It will be known as the police station... Retained firefighters are not trained in police skills. People have turned up drunk at the joint sites, and the firefighters have had to deal with it.⁸" However, there are brightly coloured phones outside the building so if no police officer is in the station an external intercoms will put a visitor through to the force's control room.

Greater integration

Hampshire Chief Officer John Bonney said, "It provides us with the opportunity to support our local communities in a more integrated way". However, the integration of work appears to be as yet not fully developed. While police staff are fully vetted, the Fire Service doesn't require this level of vetting and this is a chief obstacle. An officer admitted they had a different work culture to the Fire Brigade and that all their information is securely locked away, with separate systems in place⁹ and no data sharing.

However, one of a number of forces that we examined provided reasons to be optimistic. It had been co-located in a fire station for a number of years and initial tensions between the two services are "being ironed out". They share communal space and what began as a situation where the two services had separate fridges is now "seeing shoots of integration" in sharing information about the community they serve.

Lessons

Both forces are hoping to repeat this model elsewhere. Hampshire Police are hoping to collaborate with local authorities, in-house council properties, emergency services, libraries, and the private sector in all those areas where stations are at risk of closure¹⁰. One key

lesson one force learned from developing this project was that you needed to have a willingness to create a co-location on both sides and needed a sense of speed and an ability to take risks. To get the project off the ground and avoid being mired in bureaucracy they started with a cheap three month pilot, established a Board and got off the ground from there. One police force admitted that they have been less able to do this with the council and local authorities.

FIRE STATIONS AND FRONT COUNTER POLICE STATIONS

West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

While London is developing an SNT base in Holloway fire station, there do not appear to be any concrete plans to develop co-locations in public-facing police buildings. However, this can be done and is being developed by West Mercia Police and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service who have acquired a site where they intend to share a station with a public access counter.

Catalyst

This work was largely initiated thanks to Capital & Asset Pathfinder scheme (CAPs)¹¹ with Worcestershire as one of the first pioneer pathfinder areas. The Estates Service Manager said “...had it not been for Pathfinders, this work may have taken much longer to be developed. Both the police and Fire Brigades were considering their need to replace old stations . . . but it was thanks to the CAPs forum that the estates departments in each force actually spoke to each other and realised they had similar intentions. . . ¹²”

Stakeholders

The project was neither initiated at a political nor at a senior officer level but as a place-based project led by both organisations’ estates departments¹³. It was only when a final costed scheme on the preferred site was completed, and terms agreed to purchase the land, that an approval from each of the two authorities was sought to take the project forward.

In this case, the local Fire Union was consulted on the project and was involved in giving recommendations and so has demonstrably supported the co-location with the police.

Benefits

West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service both held property with substantial backlog maintenance issues, and which was not fit for future operational purpose. Having identified that both services had an intention to replace their stations, the first option was to place both services on the same site. This identified obvious duplication in terms of meeting rooms, kitchens etc. and it was established that a 25%¹⁴ reduction in floor area could be achieved through operating out of a shared building¹⁵.

Although this scheme was driven by estates management rather than by operational need, significant savings will be made for both services. Police are funding this particular project¹⁶ – with the Fire Service paying a service charge for the area they occupy - but they are looking to repeat a similar project where the Fire Service will own the building and levy a service charge to the police.

Another important advantage, stated by the estates manager, was that the two forces often

“attend the same or related incidents¹⁷” and so sharing a location allows for better co-ordination. Furthermore, because it is a front counter with a joint reception area it also offers the Fire Brigade a more public interface, opening them up to residents.

Challenges

Worcestershire’s CAP’s status did not remove all obstacles. The process has taken five years and this was in part due to a delay caused by the fact that the first site chosen proved to be inadequate. There were issues around land acquisition with third parties, S106 planning agreements, and funding for the scheme. Governance issues were stalled until an approved scheme was available; this however made it easier to resolve obstacles when a potential end product was on the table. For example, who would own the building was not resolved until late in the development process.

A key challenge for both this project and another West Mercia Police co-location with the ambulance service revolved around the issue of security and access to sensitive parts of the building.

Possible lessons the police have learnt from this project include the fact that they should have engaged with their partner(s) at an earlier stage, and identified earlier on likely problems with third parties and planning conditions¹⁸.

Future

West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are planning to repeat this model for future schemes of a similar size and to explore partnership working on a number of smaller rural stations (both refurbishment and new build), in the 2012/13 Financial Year. They are also looking to work with local authorities to look at co-location in libraries and other locations.

In April 2012 the West Midlands Ambulance Service moved into a police station in Herefordshire when the ambulance station closed. This is a pilot but the plan is for this co-location to be rolled out at other suitable locations.

FIRE AND POLICE SERVICES SHARING COMMAND & CONTROL CENTRES

Merseyside - shared command centre ~ Wiltshire - shared communications

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and Merseyside Police’s command centre

Merseyside Police Authority has agreed to share a new £6.6m command and control call centre with the county’s fire and rescue service¹⁹. It will encompass some of the existing buildings as well as a new building²⁰.

Benefits

As well as savings²¹ made from selling the police premises and reducing their annual property costs²², this model offers operational benefits. It allows Gold and Silver Commands in both services to work together more closely so that they can coordinate responses more effectively during large-scale incidents such as the disorder in August 2011.

Future

Merseyside Police are currently sharing a number of amenities but there appear to be no plans to share the actual staff dealing with calls. This is partly due to the fact that the Fire Service are not vetted, as well as because different skills, questions, priorities and knowledge are required in each emergency service's call centres. However, the site will also offer space for other agencies through refurbishment of part of the building. The ambulance service is considering being involved in this project. While this is not a front counter building, the police plan to do similar projects with front counter stations as well.

Risks

If the systems go down the police will use one of their former sites as a back-up site. However, one risk is that the police's needs may change but, because they do not own the building, this model means there is a lack of flexibility in terms of what the police can do.

Other challenges relate to the different cultures and expectations of the Fire Brigade and police. For example, the Fire Service heavily subsidises their canteen for their staff, while the police do not. However, as they will now be sharing the canteen this risks becoming problematic.

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue and Wiltshire Police

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) wanted to upgrade its control room but faced the challenge of a reduced budget. As a result, a joint agreement was reached with Wiltshire Police to combine their mobile communications network by sharing a technology²³ system.

Benefits

This ensured both organisations could “counter budget cuts, share services and better support over 600,000 citizens throughout Wiltshire” which helped them to “improve the service we offer...from a strategic level – providing senior officers within both organisations with access to a complete view of incidents that involve fire and police²⁴.” Wiltshire Police is also able to make significant budget reductions by cutting the number of command and control interface (CCI) ports it requires from Airwave (a secure mobile communications network).

OPTIONS FOR LONDON

GETTING STARTED- THE LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

Establishing joint forums

West Mercia Police's decision to share a station with the Fire Brigade was largely initiated thanks to Capital & Asset Pathfinder scheme (CAPs)²⁵ which brought both forces' estates departments together²⁶. The GLA is not involved in the CAPS scheme and needs to verify if there are already enough opportunities for such joined-up working. The limited amount of shared services around estates would suggest not. However, the GLA Deputy Mayor for Housing is looking to create a 'Single Property Unit' between all the GLA functional bodies²⁷. The establishment of such a unit should be seen as a priority. Several individuals from LFEPA said that the "key" to effective co-location between services was the establishment of a Single Property Unit. It would, however, need a very clear set of time-based objectives. It also would require "some real power to make things happen".

A variety of ways of working together need to be explored. Lancashire Police has had a Service Level Agreement for the last three years with the Fire and Rescue Services. The Fire Service in Lancashire is a client of Lancashire Police, resulting in the police providing the Fire Brigade with asset management such as legal advice²⁸. Any 'Single Property Unit' should aim to manage efficiencies and share skills between the organisations in similar fashion. It should also look to establish co-locations wherever possible due to the subsequent improved service Londoners would receive through a more joined up service.

Recommendation 1:

The establishment of a 'Single Property Unit', with sufficient powers to achieve its objectives, should be seen as a priority. It should aim to manage efficiencies and share skills between the organisations. It should also look to establish co-locations between emergency services wherever possible.

The Olympics

In London, the 2012 Olympics created the conditions for all the London agencies from policing to public transport to create a joined-up approach to working and a Common Situation Awareness²⁹. This work, based in the London Operation Centre in a TfL building, should be reviewed post-Olympics, with the aim of carrying on best practice and developing a sustainable joint approach for the future.

Recommendation 2:

The Common Situation Awareness work should be reviewed after the Olympics with the aim of developing a sustainable joint approach for the future.

Speed

It became clear, while discussing shared estates work with other police forces across the country, that speed was of the essence. One police force cited a "sense of speed³⁰" and

willingness to take risks as integral to getting the co-location projects off the ground. They recommended developing co-location projects as cheap pilots to avoid potential bureaucracy and obstacles.

The shared police/fire station project in West Mercia was led by both organisations' estates departments, rather than by senior officers or politicians, and they only sought approval for the project when most of the large decisions had been completed. While this may have been done to speed-up the process, the project nonetheless took five years to develop. The officer from the police estates department said they "should have engaged with their partners at an earlier stage, and identified likely problems with third parties". (See recommendation 5). However, one decision that did help motivate the project was that governance issues were stalled until an approved scheme was available, which made it easier to resolve obstacles with a potential end product on the table.

Recommendation 3:

Developing co-locations between emergency services needs to be carried out boldly and "with a sense of speed", with approved schemes established early on in each project.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPING CO-LOCATIONS – THE LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

Costs

None of the examples explored in this document managed to avoid extra initial costs. Obtaining initial funding towards additional building infrastructure – often related to space issues - was found to be a challenge, in spite of the obvious potential savings for both forces. Hampshire Police cited the fact that they only had £10,000 per SNT base; and several forces also mentioned challenges regarding legal issues, leases and land acquisition. However, in all the cases above, the savings were significant enough to make the short-term costs in a challenging economic climate worthwhile. The emergency services must work together to identify what savings can be made and what initial costs would be required for co-location projects.

Contracts and plans

London Fire Brigade Assistant Commissioner Andy Hickmott felt the main challenge would be the different priorities of each emergency service and the "different places" each service was in, in terms of contracts and estates plans. These plans need to be reviewed in all emergency services by a single body such as the new Single Property Unit so that possible co-location can be managed accordingly (see recommendation 6).

Culture

Jane Bond, Director of Property Services for the MPS, said the main challenge would come around security and confidentiality because the Fire Brigade and A&E staff are not vetted in the same way as police³⁴. However, the national examples described demonstrate that these obstacles can be overcome.

Andy Hickmott said that the LAS and LFB at Barnet fire station work totally separately in separate offices, working less closely than “hoped”. This was described as a “local cultural issue” rather than managerial. Mr Hickmott believed that the problem was that too much was envisaged separately to start with in the planning phase. Therefore, this is something to take into account when building any future co-locations.

Cultural issues between the police and other services may also stand as an obstacle to co-locations and the subsequent potential for shared services. There may also be large differences in working practices – from shift patterns to benefits that will need to be assessed before co-location takes place (see recommendation 6).

This cultural tension between different emergency services was referred to by a number of forces; but there was reassuring evidence that these tensions³⁵ are gradually ironed out and that shared services began to develop after a number of years.

Recommendation 4:

When planning a co-location between emergency services, the model’s site structure should actively encourage, where possible, shared services and engagement between the two.

Stakeholders

Community concerns in some cases were initially also a potential barrier, as were the concerns of the local Fire Union. However, one force said their local Fire Union supported the co-location with the police as they had been consulted and had been actively involved in the project. LFEPA should discuss any possible plans with the FBU.

It is important to keep in mind that each emergency service has different arrangements and they would need to work together and be willing to make changes in order to work together. For example the Health Committee was told that paramedics are not currently able to travel on fire engines and this would be a clear obstacle to shared working.

Recommendation 5:

Estates departments in each service need to engage with all stakeholders and partners at an early stage, so that they can identify likely problems and resolve them effectively.

CO-LOCATION OPTIONS – THE BENEFITS

Shared Services in place

LFEPA has already taken steps in the GLA shared services agenda³⁶, including leasing space at fire stations for the London Ambulance Service (LAS) ambulances to use. The LAS is currently leasing accommodation at Barnet, Acton and Millwall fire stations. LFEPA are also joint tenants with the LAS in a building in Heathrow.

LFEPA has said that they “are working with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to identify potential sharing opportunities and a lease has been signed for the housing of a MPS Safer Neighbourhood Team at Holloway fire station.”

Analysis by the London Assembly Health Committee revealed that 41 per cent of ambulance stations were within a kilometre of a fire station³⁷. A broader review should be carried out, looking at distances and site space options between hospitals, LAS stations, fire stations, police stations and SNT bases.

Recommendation 6:

Each emergency service’s estates contracts, plans and staff shifts need to be reviewed by the Single Property Unit so that possible co-location can be managed accordingly. A review should be carried out, looking at distances and site space options between hospitals, LAS stations, fire stations, police stations and SNT bases.

Sharing police stations with LFEPA

LFEPA is in the process of modifying its stations³⁸. Meanwhile the LAS and MPS are both looking to rationalise their properties and potentially lose properties. These alternate plans mean that the Police and Fire Service may be able to coordinate and support each others property plans. These alternate plans may suggest that the police should be largely looking to consider co-location options based in LFEPA-owned buildings while potentially selling parts of their own estates which are no longer fit for purpose.

Both LFEPA³⁹ and the MPS⁴⁰ have very old buildings within their estates which have backlog maintenance issues and which are not fit for future operational purpose as policing and fire models evolve. Any new stations built separately from each other will inevitably lead to duplication in terms of meeting rooms etc. It is therefore in the interest of the tax payer that such duplication is avoided and that necessary investment is made where needed to modernise the LFB and MPS estates.

Many fire stations are over a century old. These were often built with the intention of housing fire fighters. This is no longer necessary and hence there are now clear opportunities for other emergency services, such as the police and ambulance services, to move their offices into these unused spaces.

West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service said that alongside saving significant funds by sharing a new station, the two forces often attended the same incidents and so residents received a more co-ordinated, effective service. Furthermore, the front counter opened up the Fire Brigade to residents in a way that had not occurred before, improving their relations with the public.

More joint initiatives is a clear outcome of sharing locations with other services and this has been proven to create better results for the public. A joint initiative⁴¹ between fire and police officers in Mersydale to combat pyrotechnic crime brought assaults against fire fighters down to an all time low and reduced firework related crime by 89 per cent.

SNT bases in fire stations

The new MPS' Corporate Real Estates Project aims to reduce property costs by £39.2 million by 2014/15⁴² - a reduction of 40% in terms of area - and SNT bases will be reviewed as part of this.

In 2005, when SNTs were first established, the GLA spent huge amounts of public funds increasing the property portfolio by almost a third⁴³ even though the majority of SNT bases⁴⁴ do not have front counter provision. However, Jane Bond, MPS Director of Property Services, said that the "MPS are looking to increase the [public facing] use of a number of SNT bases". But concern has been aired in the past about the costs of these bases; for example in Camden where police have paid exceedingly high rents to landlords and utility companies for eight properties across Camden to house their SNTs⁴⁵.

The MPS admits that some "SNT bases ...do not provide necessary flexibility for the MPS's longer term plans". The MPS are looking to work more closely with other agencies, as demonstrated by their multi-agency shared hubs (MASH) work, and are "working with Councils to see what opportunities exist to co-locate services and teams". A number of pilots have been trailed and there are many examples of co-location with local authorities. In Harrow, local teams are based in the council offices; in Ealing three SNT bases are located in a leisure centre.

There is a strong argument for re-locating some SNT bases in fire stations and other local authority buildings where possible and this should be looked into on a case by case basis. Pilots need to be examined - weaknesses determined and understood⁴⁶ - and then expanded across London (see recommendation 10).

Essex and Hampshire both cited significant benefits to residents in doing so. Co-locating SNT bases and fire stations ensured that the police base remained in the local town – a concern that has been aired in London – allowing the police to maintain a strong visible police presence in the area. It also ensured police worked more closely with the Fire Service and local authorities, providing a more co-ordinated and effective service. Any initial distrust and segregation between Essex's fire and police forces was broken down allowing them to start to "share information about the community they serve". The Fire Brigade also gained by reducing their operating costs, gaining additional income and protecting the future use of their premises.

Sharing a command centre

While police and ambulance call and command centres are generally very busy, the Fire Service's centres tend to be more empty. This could mean that there may be space in the new London Fire Brigade single control centre in Morden. Meanwhile the MPS has recently built three centralised call centres based at Hendon, Bow and Lambeth.

The Health Committee report stated that "it is not apparent to the Committee that there are any coherent plans to develop shared facilities on any meaningful scale." This referred to the LFB and LAS, but equally related to the MPS. All three should look into the option of sharing a command centre, along the Merseyside model plans.

However, LFEPA has already tried to initiate shared services in this arena when it established its new command and control centre. The Merton centre was the London element of the failed £430m Fire Control project of the previous Government – with the building remaining empty for years, costing the tax-payer £1.452 million each year, until LFEPA decided to re-locate their command centre there. LFEPA made significant attempts to share this building with partners from both within London and from other national Fire and Rescue Services but received limited interest in these proposals. This would therefore appear to be a missed opportunity.

The operational benefits of sharing a call and command centre are significant. It allows Gold and Silver Commands in both services to work together more closely and coordinate responses more effectively. Hamish Cameron, the London Resilience Manager at the GLA, said that the joined up working facilitated by the Olympics had been beneficial and said that shared estates would facilitate closer work- allowing for a better understanding of each others capabilities and a more joined up approach to incidents, as well as engendering trust between the services.

During the riots there were criticisms that the fire and police services were not always working in well co-ordinated unison in London⁴⁷. Moreover Lady Justice Hallett's 7/7 recommendations⁴⁸ called for improvements in communication between emergency services in a crisis. Therefore, there is a strong argument that, of all the forces in the UK, London should be looking to improve co-ordination at this level. At the very least they should be looking for shared service options, as developed in Wiltshire.

Recommendation 7:

London should improve co-ordination between emergency services following the riots and the July Inquest. LFEPA, the LAS, and MOPAC should look into the option of sharing a command centre, and shared service options such as joint communication technology.

Sharing resources

Beyond shared sites, the emergency services should look to make efficiency savings by sharing back-office functions and resources (see recommendation 8).

The Health Committee explored the option of fuel. They found that the LAS bought fuel at a cheaper price than the MPS; this was assisted by the LAS system of buying fuel nationally as part of the NHS. "The MPS spent £13.6 million... It may be possible for services to negotiate a cheaper price if they can buy fuel jointly, in greater bulk, but there are no joint arrangements in place between these agencies. For instance, the MPS has established a network of bulk fuel sites across London, with one company contracted to supply the sites."⁴⁹

Shared working

Co-locating emergency services will almost certainly act as a catalyst towards more joined-up working patterns as pointed out in the LAS Report by the Health Committee: developing shared facilities "may also have the benefit of enabling the ... organisations to adopt a 'co-responding' policy for some 999 calls. This would allow the LFB to dispatch a response

to life-threatening medical emergencies in instances where a fire crew can reach the scene quicker than an ambulance crew⁵⁰.” In Berlin they follow this model on a large-scale as their firefighters possess medical training to at least the level of an emergency medical technician, and so can work in ambulances as well. Currently however, there are no plans from the NHS to train fire crews.

The Metropolitan Police Service also contacts the LAS for support 100,000 times a year, “but only rarely is this to respond to a life-threatening incident.” The Health Committee report suggests that “By working more closely together, the police and the LAS could direct people to more appropriate sources of support⁵¹.”

I noted at a PCC meeting in July 2012⁵² that another emergency services’ estates may be closer to a victim requiring the police. For example, “if someone wants to escape . . . imminent violence, . . . it may well be that the local fire station is closer than the local police station. We would not want people to feel they have to go past that public building to get to a different one.” This could be solved by having police bases or stations in fire stations. However, if no police are present one day then this could be a challenge for untrained firefighters. These challenges need to be looked into and options such as shared training in certain basic public facing functions should be considered in co-locations.

Shared estates models across the UK have on the whole only achieved co-location rather than genuine sharing of tasks and information. However, the example in Essex suggested shared information can occur organically over a period of time, while Wiltshire police and Fire Services decision to share communication technology is also a step towards more integrated work.

I spoke to one officer who had experience of working, for a certain period, in a shared office with different emergency services personnel. He said that working in the same office meant that he learnt more - through one informal conversation by the tea point- about how to effectively work together in any given situation, than he had ever done as a result of any formal information pack they receive.

At the moment both fire fighters and police officers are separated within their forces by a huge a number of specialisms in terms of skill sets and use of facilities. Whilst respecting this, the current configuration of resources needs to be looked into to verify if efficiencies can be made, and more co-location work should act as a catalyst and aide in this work.

Recommendation 8:

The Single Property Unit should look to make efficiency savings by sharing back-office functions and resources and verify if there can be a more efficient configuration of resources.

River police and fire boat service

Tony Arbour AM has suggested that there are inefficiencies in keeping small separate units to manage emergency incidents on the river. He has suggested that the fire boat service⁵³ and the Marine Policing Unit within the MPS merge⁵⁴, or that the work carried out by the fire boat

service be “ provided by other services on the river such as the RNLI and the River Police?⁵⁵”

The previous Mayor stated in 2003 that the “two river boat services were so significantly different in both their statutory and functional requirements that amalgamation was neither desirable nor efficient”. However, it would be worth reviewing this and seeing what options there are for joint working.

Recommendation 9:

LFEPA and MOPAC should review the functions and costs of the Marine Policing Unit and fire boat service to establish whether greater efficiencies can be made.

Accident and Emergency Units

I noted that the point of conversion for emergency services was often in Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments. “The logical place to report an assault is often where the person turns up injured at an A&E department⁵⁶”.

Professor Jonathan Shepherd - who has looked into shared data options between A&E and the police⁵⁷ - was sceptical about the option of locating police outposts in hospital A&Es. “The NHS is not an outpost of the criminal justice system, and patients, whatever their past records or attitudes towards the police, should not be deterred from seeking the treatment they need. In my own hospital, there is a security staff base in A&E, visited from time to time by police officers, but I’d be against opening a police station there as well. ⁵⁸” A London SNT sergeant also aired concerns at the idea of relocating an entire base or station to an A&E department.

However, the MPS did in fact, until very recently, have a safer neighbourhood base at Guys Hospital, and still has, in addition, more informal arrangements in place at Homerton and other London hospitals. Interestingly, Guys Hospital said they valued the police presence in the hospital and would welcome another police base if space allowed. They also disagreed with Professor Shepherd and did not believe that it put people off attending the premises. However, the MPS says that “The cost of installing the security to enable the data the Police need access to has prohibited further expansion in these areas. Through investment in IT to provide more mobile data access, we hope to be able to overcome these challenges and put in place more flexibility.”

The challenges and benefits involved in having an SNT base in Guys Hospital should be examined with a view to possibly creating further plans to locate SNT bases in hospitals where their presence may be beneficial for both the hospital, residents and local police.

Recommendation 10:

Some “SNT bases ...do not provide necessary flexibility for the MPS’s longer term plans”. These should be re-located where possible in fire stations, hospitals and other local authority buildings.

CONCLUSION

All the police forces that we spoke to, who have engaged with co-location projects with other emergency services, found valuable operational benefits, alongside significant savings.

While not all these examples involved 24/7 public access, they all involved benefits to the public and often increased the visibility of one or both services co-locating together. A pattern emerged revealing that the model of shared estates helped retain SNT bases in their local ward, modernised the estates, protected or improved police visibility and gave the Fire Brigade an increased public interface.

Fault lines in the communication between emergency services were discussed following the 7/7 bombing Inquest last year and the disorder in August 2011. London must not be caught out again. Therefore, the fact that sharing estates has been shown to facilitate closer working between emergency services - and that it has been demonstrated that this has led to increased sharing of information and improved emergency co-ordination - underscores the importance of looking into the model of co-location as a priority.

A Single Property Unit with the necessary powers to achieve its objective is key to this vision. From now on, the estates plans of London's emergency services should be seen not as individual projects, but should automatically all be co-ordinated - with the help of the new 'Single Property Unit' - and, ideally, integrated into each others' plans to ensure London has the first-class, effective, efficient emergency service it requires.

CITATION

1. Kit Malthouse, THE MPA/MPS Estates STRATEGY, 2010-2014, <http://www.policeauthority.org/Metropolitan/downloads/committees/finres/101021-07-appendix01.pdf>
2. Page 33 and 34, Transcript, 5 July 2012, Police and Crime Committee
3. NPT bases are those without Front Counter access for the public
4. Hampshire is one of six 'intensive' Pathfinders selected by DCLG looking to better use the land and buildings that the public sector own to improve services and generate savings. Areas demonstrated a possible reduction in floor space of between 10 and 29%.
5. Stockbridge Fire Station has recently become the property base for Hampshire Constabulary's Stockbridge Safer Neighbourhoods officers. Stockbridge was one of 18 police stations earmarked for closure because they were not fit for modern policing or not cost efficient. In Essex, Brightlingsea, Tiptree, West Mersea & Wivenhoe NPTs - all areas where the population is at least 6000- have moved into the local Essex County Fire & Rescue (ECFRS) fire station
6. Essex Police have already saved £2.5m a year by rationalizing the Front Counter provision across the county. Other savings include the capital sum of £410,000 from selling Wivenhoe police station to the Council, who retained the building for community use, alongside significant reduced annual running costs. It costs them on average around £20,000 per year to run an average small building; but only £1,500 a year renting space in a fire station. This is significant cost when the budgeted costs of a police is £46,000 a year.
7. The Fire Service are charging the police 40% of the market rate on the property they use which has been split 50:50 between them. Essex Police's costs are based on each square meter pro rata of the running costs.
8. http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/brightlingsea_fire_union_hits_out_over_shared_station_1_1383352
9. the implementation of which introduced additional short term costs
10. Email, Bill Pinnell, Project Inspector, Estates Development Programme, Hampshire Constabulary, 19/07/12
11. CAPs - major partnership project that takes an innovative approach to property management and ownership, based on the principles of resource sharing and maximising community benefit. It has been promoted by DCLG and delivered locally through the Worcestershire Partnership.
12. Email, 23/07/12 - Andy Husband, Strategy & Asset Manager, Estates Services, West Mercia Police
13. "Delivery of partnership schemes require vision and drive, either from Chief Officers, or, as an Estates led project, which was the case on this scheme." <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/CAP%20Case%20Study%20Bromsgrove%20Police%20-%20Fire.pdf>
14. This has reduced capital investment by 15% (circa £1m), and will reduce revenue running costs by 20% (circa 70k per annum).
15. A press release says that "Work will commence on site in June 2012 and complete in August 2013". However, the estates department said this now due to start in the autumn "probably October".
16. A simple landlord / tenant arrangement has been agreed, but it is hoped in the future to develop shared asset ownership.
17. Email, 23/07/12 - Andy Husband, Strategy & Asset Manager, Estates Services, West Mercia Police
18. Ibid
19. Planning permission is yet to be granted but the project should commence in the next six months and be built by the end of next year
20. The centre will include a joint call handling and dispatch centre for both services to respond to calls. It will be based on the current site of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's headquarters, with funding from central gov't grant of £1.1m, police authority funds and Fire Service's own capital raised by sale of some land at the site.

21. This model offers the police service a cheaper option since the fire and rescue service already own the land. The Fire Brigade will continue to own the site and the police will buy a long lease off the Fire Brigade
22. The police currently have 3 calls centre and will be selling one centre and using another as a back up call centre in case problems occur at the new site.
23. The services chose APD's hosted CORTEX Software Integrated Communications Control System (SICCS) service. The service enables Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service to share the police force's telephony platform and gain access to Airwave's full range of TETRA features for the first time, at a fraction of the cost of buying a dedicated ICCS. The Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service control room simply connects to the existing joint fire/police CORTEX system, which is partitioned so each emergency service has its own dedicated system, tailored for its specific needs.
24. http://www.wireless-mag.com/Features/13225/Project_casebook__Command_and_control_rooms.aspx
25. CAPs - major partnership project that takes an innovative approach to property management and ownership, based on the principles of resource sharing and maximising community benefit. It has been promoted by DCLG and delivered locally through the Worcestershire Partnership.
26. The project also benefited from the use of the West Midlands Construction Framework, of which both authorities are key stakeholders. In terms of specific construction projects, the MOPAC are linked to the Investment Efficiency South East framework (since 2007) for projects in excess of £2m and utilise other frameworks as apt depending on the nature of the project in hand. The IESE framework is based on a design and build route, the contractor is therefore embedded in the design process as soon as a business case is approved
27. This could either be a small functional body scrutinising estates management or potentially could be a company with ownership of the GLA's physical assets.
28. Lancashire police already has a co-location with the Fire Service in Wesham, and this interoperability "has helped support this work".
29. Known as CRIP - Common Recognition Information Picture
30. In conversation with one police force's estates department.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. "The challenge the MPS have in sharing services relates to the security measures required to secure the information that police need access to." Jane Bond, email 26 July 2012
35. One Police force we spoke to cited separate fridges as an example of the challenges faced when the Fire Service and police initially shared communal space
36. In fact Members of LFEPA have previously voiced their concern that other bodies are not doing so to the same degree.
37. http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/HPS_Future%20of%20the%20LAS_final%20report_0.pdf
38. In a private finance initiative (PFI) project, nine fire stations are being rebuilt, including one on a new site. The total cost of this is £57 million.
39. See Resource Committee, F&P, and Finance Procurement and Property Panel documents – for example Page 2 of the F&P Committee, March 2011
40. See page 10 of the MPA/MPS Estates Strategy 2010-14
41. Merseyside's Firework Incident Research Safety Team (FIRST) - which has two full-time police officers embedded in a team of fire officers,
42. MOPAC, Territorial Policing Development Plan Update, London Assembly PCC, 3 July 2012 page 6

43. through both purpose built units and leases on existing buildings , MPA, Review of safer neighbourhoods, February 2011
44. MPS have “in excess of 200” – Jane Bond, July 2012
45. “The biggest cost is the West Hampstead base in West End Lane which houses just 11 officers and has cost taxpayers close to £1million – roughly £500,000 to start it up and the same on running bills since it opened last year.” <http://www.camdennewjournal.com/news/2011/mar/%E2%80%9Carrogant-wastage%E2%80%9D-says-ed-fordham-spiralling-costs-snt-police-bases-revealed>
46. For example, an SNT in Ealing was recently re-located out of a library.
47. For example, “The lack of police cover meant that the Fire Brigade could not tackle Reeves’ blazing furniture store without fear that its firefighters would be attacked by rioters.” InsideCroydon article -“Croydon was on fire and we had to just sit in a car park”
48. For example Point 129 in the Coroner’s Inquests into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005
49. http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/HPS_Future%20of%20the%20LAS_final%20report_0.pdf
50. Ibid
51. Ibid
52. Page 34, Transcript, 5 July 2012, Police and Crime Committee
53. Fireboats were mobilised operationally on 505 occasions in the period 1 October 2002 to September the following year, of these 43 were to “ property fires on the river or adjacent to the river . 46 were to secondary fires not involving property“ for example, refuse, grass, etc.
54. For example, MQT question 0044/2003 or 0739/2003
55. MQT 0346/2003
56. Page 34, Transcript, 5 July 2012, Police and Crime Committee
57. Cardiff University study of the impact of police use of accident & emergency data to identify and target crime hot-spots in the city. It concluded that the scheme reduced hospital admissions for violence by 42%, compared to a rise in such admissions in 14 comparison cities.
58. Email from Professor Shepherd, 16 July 2012



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