

Decision Notice

DN 16/2021 Date XX/XX/XXXX

Video Recorded Interview Suite refurbishment

The Commissioner has decided to approve capital funding of £175,657 and annual revenue funding of £13,396 to refurbish and upgrade the video recorded interview suites in Knaresborough and Scarborough.

Background

Video recorded interviews (VRI) are provided for in law under Section 27 and 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 for those complainants or witnesses deemed vulnerable or who are under 18, suffer from a mental disorder or have a physical disability and have been granted special measures by the court. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 further enhances this to enable VRI to be used for complainants and witnesses of sexual offences, modern slavery and domestic abuse.

North Yorkshire Police currently have four VRI suites in Northallerton, York, Scarborough and Knaresborough. An internal review found, in late 2019, that the layout, state of repair and technology within these suites is no longer adequate to provide an appropriate environment or achieve best evidence, which may consequently impact the justice process.

The VRI suites in Northallerton and York are subject to different upgrade projects and are not included in this Decision Notice which pertains to the improvement of the suites in Scarborough and Knaresborough.

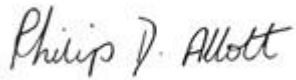
By way of summary, the key issues relating to these two properties are:

- inadequate/no disabled access
- extraneous noise negatively impacting the sound quality of interview recording
- inappropriate and/or inadequate lighting
- the condition and lack of appropriate furniture, soft furnishings, and refreshments
- lack of space to provide waiting areas, breakout office etc
- general poor status of repair and upkeep
- inadequate technology and IT infrastructure

These two suites will be refurbished to meet requirements and provide a better environment for victims and witnesses to improve the delivery of justice in our area. This improvement will be funded from the underspend against police budgets in 2020/21.

Decision Record

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Philip Allott
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire

Statutory Officer Advice

Legal, Management and Equality Implications

The Commissioner's Interim Assistant Chief Executive and Deputy Monitoring Officer, on behalf of the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, having read this report and having considered such information as has been provided at the time of being asked to express this view, is satisfied that this report does not ask the Commissioner to make a decision which would (or would be likely to) give rise to a contravention of the law.

Financial and Commercial

The Commissioner's Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer has advised that there is funding available to support this investment from the Capital Earmarked Reserve that the PFCC holds.