

News

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New Merseyside Police Operational Command Centre tops out

Morgan Sindall has marked a major milestone in the completion of Merseyside Police's new £48 million Operational Command Centre (OCC) with a topping out ceremony.

The traditional ceremony, which marks the completion of the main structure of the building, saw Merseyside's Police Commissioner, Jane Kennedy, and Chief Constable Andy Cooke, lay the last concrete into the top level of the main structure.

Work can now begin on the final phase of the police centre on the Estuary Business Park in Speke. The new Serious and Organised Crime Centre will enable all the teams that make up Merseyside Police's Matrix and Serious and Organised (MSOC) unit to be brought together under one roof.

Construction on the three-storey building began just over a year ago, on March 22, 2016, with the new building set to be handed over by the end of the year and expected to open its doors in January 2018.

The new centre will house more than 1,200 officers and support staff from across all the departments which make up the Matrix portfolio. There will also be a separate, single-storey building which will provide administration and support services and further smaller buildings including dog kennels, a fuel station and a gatehouse on Leeward Drive which will control access to the 11.4 acre site. The site will also provide car parking and land for dog exercise and training.

Jane said: "How time flies – just a year ago we were at the site of the new Operational Command Centre (OCC) to get work underway. Now we are returning to witness this major milestone in the development of the new site.

"It is an important event for the team of designers, architects and builders who have been working so hard on this project since planning permission was granted by city councillors on the 3rd November 2015. We are all delighted to see it progressing on time and this ceremony marks the next step towards this new bespoke facility becoming operational next year.

"The new OCC demonstrates our commitment to fighting serious and organised crime. All the teams that are dedicated to this important work will be located together in this new fit-for-purpose centre which will make them even more effective and efficient as they continue the fight against the criminal gangs which bring fear to our communities.

"The new centre will also save costs by enabling the Force to release a number of small, leased buildings which are scattered across Merseyside and are no longer up to standard. This will reduce Merseyside Police's annual running costs, ensuring even more money can be redirected towards frontline policing."

The centre is an integral part of the Commissioner's 10-year strategy to transform and modernise Merseyside Police's station and facilities, while working to reduce the annual running costs of the police's buildings by £2.5 million.

It will be part funded by capital specifically set aside for the Force's buildings and part borrowed from approved sources, in accordance with the Prudential Code for capital finance. This money is

completely separate from, and cannot be diverted to, the funding used to pay for Merseyside Police's officers and staff.

Chief Constable Andy Cooke said: "It is fantastic to see the progress that has been made in the 12 months since my predecessor Sir Jon Murphy joined the Police Commissioner and the Mayor in getting the project underway.

"The Operational Command Centre will be modern, efficient and fit for the purposes of policing, both now and into the future. Tackling serious and organised crime is a priority for Merseyside Police and this new facility will mean that dedicated officers and staff work closely together, focussing on the most serious crimes affecting our communities."

The buildings have been designed to meet the latest standards in energy efficiency, including LED lights throughout and solar panels on the roof to make sure it is as cheap as possible to run. It was assessed by city council planners as "well designed to be interesting architecturally and to preserve and enhance its ecological value in a landscaped setting".

It's predicted that 2,500 people will have worked on the site by the time the project is completed, including more than 20 apprentices and a number of students on work placements.

Barry Roberts, Morgan Sindall area director, said: "We're delighted to be marking this key milestone in the construction of the Operational Command Centre. Once complete, the centre will deliver huge efficiencies and we're pleased to be using our project team's expertise to deliver this future-fit, sustainable centre which will enable our force to carry out its duties in a purpose-built environment.

"This is a project which is already having a positive impact on the Merseyside community - the site is a hub of learning, with over 20 apprentices and graduates from local universities and colleges employed on site, and our project team is primarily drawn from the surrounding region.

"We're committed to delivering the best possible project for Merseyside Police and we're looking forward to handing over an outstanding building."

For more information about this news release please contact Ruth Cobban at Influential on 0151 239 5000 or email cobban@thisisinfluential.com