

COMT

27TH JUNE 2011

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL BEING)

12TH JULY 2011

**UPDATE ON CCTV
(Report by the Head of Operations)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To set out the progress made on making savings in CCTV, the budget for CCTV for 2011/12, progress on negotiations with partners and options for the future operation of the CCTV service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council set out the draft budget in November 2010 the requirement to make £129k savings in the CCTV service for 2011/12 then to 'mothball' the service from April 2012 with a saving of £300k.
- 2.2 Concern was raised by partner agencies, Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime (HBAC) and some council members about the proposal to mothball CCTV. It was not clear from the budget paper exactly what was envisaged by mothballing but the budget showed a zero figure to run CCTV from 2012 which would mean that the entire service would have to be shut down.
- 2.3 Members from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels have requested further information about possible ways to maintain a CCTV service.
- 2.4 This report sets out possible options for the CCTV service.

3. KEY BENEFITS OF CCTV SERVICE

- 3.1 The CCTV service in Huntingdonshire is involved in a wide range of incidents amounting to 2297 incidents during 2010. A breakdown of these incidents is in Annex A.
- 3.2 The functions and benefits of the Huntingdonshire CCTV service are –
- Reducing crime and fear of crime and promoting community safety.
 - Detection and apprehension of offenders of crime and anti-social behaviour, in particular crimes specific to town centres, night time economy and car parks.
 - Partnership working with shops and pubs through Shopwatch, Pub Watch, Shop Safe radio link, Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime.

- Partnership working with police – evidence reviews, police airwaves radio link, images linked into police HQ, Automatic Number plate recognition.
- Finding missing persons.
- Staffing the out-of- hours emergency help line for the council.
- Responding to calls on help points, for example in the disabled car park in Huntingdon.

3.3 A recent National CCTV User Group survey found

- 90% of respondents support the use of public area CCTV by local authorities.
- 82% believe CCTV saves money by reducing police and court time.
- 71% believe that CCTV in public areas makes them feel safer and reduces crime.
- 63% believed that crime and disorder would increase if CCTV was removed in their area.

4. BUDGET SAVINGS ACHIEVED

4.1 The council reduced the budget for CCTV by £129k in 2011/12. In order to achieve these savings a number of changes have been made to the service which include -

- The mobile CCTV was discontinued and the equipment and vehicle either recovered or sold. This has saved the running costs of the vehicle. The CCTV van supervisor post was deleted and the job holder transferred into the Street Ranger service, to replace staff leaving through the voluntary redundancy scheme.
- The CCTV Team Leader was given voluntary redundancy which gave some saving to the service – although this post was funded by the management unit and covered other duties as well as CCTV.
- One CCTV Operator post was deleted – this was a vacant post so there were no redundancy costs.
- The CCTV control room is no longer guaranteed to be open 24/7. Sickness and leave used to be fully covered through use of casual staff and / or overtime or time off in lieu. Casuals are rarely used now. However the busiest periods are always covered (Friday and Saturday nights) and cameras are still on record when operators are not available.
- The number of CCTV fixed line cameras has been reduced by twenty five. This has achieved significant savings in line rental for the fibre optic cable and in maintenance and replacement

costs. The cameras which were decommissioned were those which were least used in incidents or where there was some duplication of coverage.

- A collaborative tender with three other district councils for the CCTV maintenance contract was undertaken with the new contract commenced in April at a significant cost saving to the authority.
- CCTV control room employees are no longer supplied with uniforms.

5. BUDGET 2011/12

5.1 The key budget expenditure items for 2011/12 are

- Staff costs (2 FTE Supervisors and 6.8FTE Operators) £216k
- Transmission line rental (84 fibre optic line cameras) £95k
- System Maintenance (control room equipment and 93 cameras) £45k

5.2 The total budget for CCTV for the year is £368k but the internal recharges increase this by £132k to a total of £500k.

6. 'MOTHBALLING' THE CCTV SERVICE

6.1 The CCTV service cannot be temporarily closed or 'mothballed' at nil cost and then re-opened at a later date.

6.2 The system would still have to be maintained which would cost around £40k a year, line rental charges are £95k and there would be redundancy costs if the staff team were to be deleted.

6.3 There would be significant set up costs if the council then later decide they want to reinstate the service, for example, if crime and antisocial behaviour suddenly increase once the cameras were removed.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERS

7.1 Police

7.1.1 Cambridgeshire Constabulary have been formally asked to make a financial contribution to the running costs of CCTV based on the usage that they make of the service which is –

- Police officers make frequent requests to view evidence from the CCTV system. They made 798 visits to review evidence in 2010.
- Copies of evidence are burnt onto DVDs or hard drive free of charge.

- Police have almost exclusive use of four fixed line CCTV cameras for their Automatic Number Plate Recognition system which helps them to target known offenders through vehicle registration plates.
- Police on occasions base themselves in the control room for prolonged periods to monitor the CCTV cameras for directed surveillance operations using the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Acts (RIPA) provisions.
- The police use the council's CCTV evidence to release to third parties, such as the BBC for Crime watch.

7.1.2 The Police have considered their priorities, and following discussions at a senior level, have indicated that they would be unable to contribute anything to the running costs of CCTV. Although it would not be in the spirit of partnership working the Council could invoice the Police for every evidence review, copying of evidence onto DVD and any special operations where they require targeted surveillance. However the council do have a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to work in partnership with the police and other agencies to reduce crime and to consider the implications on crime and disorder in any decision making.

8. TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

- 8.1 Discussions are taking place with town and parish councils in an attempt to negotiate and secure financial contributions towards the CCTV service to help in keeping the service running. Any contributions will reduce the revenue cost to the Council of running the CCTV service.
- 8.2 Other local authorities such as Fenland already receive financial contributions from their local town councils toward their CCTV service.

9. MONITORING CAMERAS FOR EXTERNAL COMPANIES

- 9.1 There is a potential for monitoring cameras for third parties and receiving income from this. However in order to comply with national CCTV guidelines all of the operators would need to be Security Industries Authority licensed. There would be a cost involved in doing this of around £3k.
- 9.2 Now the control room is not guaranteed to be open 24/7 it is less easy to sell the services for monitoring cameras or alarms to third parties.
- 9.3 In order to win private sector contracts to there would need to be time spent in bidding for contracts. With the deletion of the CCTV team leader post this capacity is now somewhat limited.

10. FURTHER SAVINGS / INVEST TO SAVE

- 10.1 The current transmission line rental for the 84 fibre optic cables to the CCTV cameras across the district is around £95k per annum – this equates to roughly £1.1k per fixed line camera. There are currently two wireless cameras with line of sight to the control room. There are no line rental charges for these cameras. A further six cameras at satellite sites run on a broadband system and are viewed on a laptop. One camera is monitored via an external website for the Environment Agency.
- 10.2 The fixed line cameras could be converted to wireless transmission where the running costs are much lower. However the infrastructure set up costs are high for a large geographical area such as Huntingdonshire and it would require significant capital investment to reduce transmission costs.
- 10.3 An approximate cost to install a complete wireless infrastructure for Huntingdonshire would be around £400 - £500k which would then save the transmission line rental of £95k per annum and would allow further cameras to be added with much lower running costs. If there is some certainty to the future of CCTV then this could be considered as an 'invest to save' project.

11. JOINING WITH OTHER CCTV SYSTEMS

- 11.1 Consideration has been given to the possibility of merging CCTV systems with other councils.
- 11.2 Technically it is possible but there are barriers and costs involved. Merging two systems will involve significant capital investment in the infrastructure to enable the two control rooms to be merged into one. Staffing costs and running costs would be less with one merged control room but there would be TUPE and redundancy issues to deal with. The other issue is that in busy periods one or other of the partners cameras may take less priority and if the partner was larger city area it would probably mean this Council's cameras receiving less attention.
- 11.3 Discussions have and are still taking place with some other neighbouring authorities. However so far a model has not been found that projects sufficient savings for Huntingdonshire to make a merger a viable proposition.

12. USE OF VOLUNTEERS

- 12.1 It has been suggested that consideration should be given to the use of volunteers as operators in the CCTV control room.
- 12.2 The CCTV system in East Cambridgeshire is staffed by volunteers for a few hours on a Friday and Saturday evening watching a small number of cameras on one screen. It is not a comparable role to the

complex job carried out by the CCTV Operators employed in the CCTV system in Huntingdonshire.

- 12.3 Volunteers need training and supervising and would have to be counter terrorism checked by the police before they were allowed to work on their own and use the police airwaves radio. It takes around 6 months to get a full time operator up to a level where they can take full command of the control room single shifted. A volunteer working a few hours a week would take much longer to get up to speed unless they had previous experience in CCTV.
- 12.4 There is also the challenge to the council of unfair dismissal if the CCTV staff were made redundant and then replaced with volunteers.

13. OUTSOURCING

- 13.1 Consideration can be given to outsourcing CCTV which could provide a less expensive way to run the CCTV service with just an annual charge by contractor. Some discussions have taken place with two companies about this option.
- 13.2 The council would need to agree to a contract over a minimum of five years to make it a worthwhile for the private sector to bid for. It is an option that can be pursued if some certainty was given to future funding and if the council is committed to outsourcing services.
- 13.3 It would mean the loss of some control and would be subject to TUPE, but potentially the service could be run more cheaply by the private sector. This largely due to lower running costs of a private sector company but also because they can make investment in the infrastructure to reduce the running costs, for example by installing a wireless network to reduce the transmission line rental costs.


14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The outcome of discussions with Town and Parish Councils and other local authority partners will be key as this may provide some useful revenue, or cost savings to enable the continuation of the CCTV service at a reduced cost.
- 14.2 A decision on the future of the CCTV service is required by the Autumn of this year to enable the preparation of MTP bids and budgets for the next financial year.

15. RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report pending a final report on the costed options being considered by Cabinet in September.

Contact Officer: Eric Kendall, Head of Operations

 01480 388635

Background Papers: Home Office Research Study 292 Feb 2005
Assessing the Impact of CCTV by Martin Gill and
Angela Spriggs
CCTV User Group National CCTV Survey

ANNEX A

Huntingdonshire CCTV Incidents recorded in 2010

INCIDENT CATEGORY	ANNUAL TOTALS
Affray	100
Alarm Activation	58
Anti Social Behaviour	159
Arson (Fire Malicious)	3
Assault	149
Breach of Bail Conditions/Dispersal Order	6
Burglary	21
Concern for Person	187
Criminal Damage (General)	47
Criminal Damage (Vehicle)	16
Domestic Incident	31
Drink Driving	39
Drug Offences	37
Drunk & Disorderly	29
Drunk & Incapable	15
Emergency Incident (Ambulance)	2
Emergency Incident (Fire)	12
Fraud, Credit Card/Cheque/Banknote	10
General Observation	450
Hoax Calls	32
Indecency	8
Miscellaneous	13
Missing Persons (Adult)	152
Missing Persons (Child)	119
Offensive Weapon	23
Police Incident	22
Public Order	124
Road Traffic Incident	53
Road Traffic Offences	42
Robbery	28
Shoplifting	118
Special Operation	2
Suspicious Activity	82
Suspicious Package	1
Theft	41
Threats to Kill	1
Wanted Person	65
TOTAL	<u>2297</u>
	2297

Note – the General Observation category covers incidents where it involves more than one category such as someone who is drunk and also causing criminal damage. This prevents double counting incidents. Another example would be where the police request the control room watch someone until they arrest them but CCTV are not told why the person has been arrested.