

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title:	Findings of the CCTV Task and Finish Group
Meeting/Date:	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Environment) – 4th April 2017 Cabinet – 20th April 2017
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Commercialisation and Shared Services
Report by:	CCTV Task and Finish Group
Wards affected:	All

Executive Summary:

The CCTV Task and Finish Group has reviewed an extensive amount of information and reflected on the use of the Council's CCTV network by the Council itself as well as the Council's partners Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The Group has examined how important and valuable CCTV footage gathered by the Council is to our partners and how they use that footage.

The Group discussed the existing network coverage and the limitations of it as well as potential coverage expansion and network improvements. In discussing the existing network the Group visited the CCTV control room at Eastfield House.

The Group has reached a number of conclusions which are listed in section 5 of this report and made the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to review this report and endorse the Group's findings and the recommendations for Cabinet.

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1) recognise the high value of the Council's CCTV service to Huntingdonshire's residents, businesses and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- 2) recognise the need to review all options to reduce the operational costs of the CCTV service.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report is intended to inform Members of the findings and final recommendations of the CCTV Task and Finish Group.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The establishment of the CCTV Task and Finish Group was originally requested by the Executive Leader at the Panel meeting on 4th October 2016 to examine the utilisation of CCTV in the District's market towns by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- 2.2 A scoping document was drafted by Officers and presented to the Panel, for discussion and comment, at the meeting on 10th January 2017. At the same meeting the membership of the Group was agreed and is as follows: Councillors T D Alban, Mrs A Donaldson, D A Giles, P Kadewere and Mrs J Tavener. In addition, Cllr D Brown, the Executive Councillor for Commercialisation and Shared Services worked with the Group and was in attendance for the first meeting.
- 2.3 The scoping document stated the following aims for the Task and Finish Group:
- Establish what measurable impact and perceived value the CCTV cameras represent, and
 - To determine the type, frequency and purpose of information gathered by CCTV cameras and utilised by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- 2.4 The Group met on two occasions with the first meeting taking place on 8th February 2017 and the second on 16th March 2017. At the first meeting Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime was in attendance to answer Members questions and explain their views on the CCTV network and what value they placed on it. At the second meeting Cambridgeshire Constabulary was in attendance for the same reason.
- 2.5 At the second meeting the Group came to some conclusions and suggested recommendations for Cabinet.

3. FIRST MEETING DISCUSSION POINTS

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime (HBAC) was present to discuss their work and answer Member's questions. The Group was informed that HBAC is based at Eastfield House in the CCTV control room. They have 150 members across Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots who pay an annual subscription.
- 3.2 Members were informed that HBAC is hugely reliant on CCTV, particularly as there are less Police Officers patrolling the town centres. The Group were informed that in terms of crime, CCTV can prove that an individual was in a particular place at a particular time. HBAC also acts like a conduit between businesses and the Police when it comes to obtaining CCTV footage for criminal prosecutions.
- 3.3 The Group were informed that there is a 90 second window between when the crime is committed to any action taken. Although the importance of the radio is important, the current procedure is that the CCTV control centre is the first port of call so that as much evidence as possible is recorded.

- 3.4 Members discussed the perception that CCTV is a crime deterrent however recognised that there is a lack of evidence to support the perception. In addition Members discussed the other perception that in addition to detecting crime the coverage of CCTV makes the public feel safe and aides the Council's community safety and well-being objectives.
- 3.5 The Group were informed by HBAC that CCTV doesn't only detect crime but also provides an element of business and community safety and well-being.
- 3.6 When discussing the provision of CCTV in the villages, Members were informed that the current network is reliant on the BT Fibre Network and cost of installation, operation and maintenance is high. However the Group recognised that through the commercialisation programme the Council will investigate the use of wireless technology therefore removing the reliance of the network on the BT Fibre Network.
- 3.7 The Council are reviewing all options to increase CCTV coverage including moving to a wireless network and using more mobile CCTV cameras. The use of mobile CCTV cameras would be useful to cover special events or target problem areas.

4. SECOND MEETING DISCUSSION POINTS

- 4.1 Cambridgeshire Constabulary was present to answer the Group's questions on how they used CCTV footage. It was mentioned that CCTV is an incredible help to the Police and that it is always an important element of an investigation. A particular area where CCTV has been a benefit has been the night time economy.
- 4.2 The Group were informed that, in terms of rural crime, the benefit was harder to quantify however in some cases without CCTV footage the Police wouldn't be able to identify the culprits. Members were informed that CCTV in the right locations would bring a benefit and provide lines of enquiry which otherwise wouldn't be available. In addition, the Group were informed that the Council continues to work with the Police in order to make best use of new and emerging CCTV technology.
- 4.3 When asked about the cost implications for the Police, Members were informed that there are very few costs to the Police as there is an expectation that the information would be provided for them as part of the information sharing arrangements of the Community Safety Partnership. There is however the Police Officer time in reviewing CCTV evidence. The Group asked the Police whether this information sharing was a reciprocal arrangement, and it was confirmed that information can be shared between the Police and Council within the agreement
- 4.4 Whilst discussing how the quality of CCTV footage could be improved it was explained that the current cameras scan a much larger area however the downside is that the detail is not as good. The controller can zoom in and focus on a particular person or incident to enhance the detail however in the example of large scale affray it is important to have the wider picture to capture everything element of the incident. In addition lighting has an impact on the quality of footage especially at night.
- 4.5 Members were informed that when comparing the costs of the two options, more CCTV cameras and a higher Police presence it would depend on the CCTV option taken. However it was accepted that in certain situations CCTV

would be the best option because of the ability to review evidence at a later date whereas with a Police presence the community would be reliant on a Police Officer patrolling the area at a particular time.

- 4.6 Whilst discussing the review of CCTV footage, Members were informed that the Police use volunteers to view the footage. Volunteers are fully vetted, enhance the service and are used as well as, not instead of, paid staff. However it was recognised that the problem with volunteers is that the organisation using them are relying on the volunteers' free time. Members found the use of volunteers intriguing and have requested that the Police provide more details to explain how volunteers are used.
- 4.7 Members were informed that Cambridgeshire Constabulary is facing increased pressure regarding their investigation procedures as a result of an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. In regards to CCTV, the Police advised that whilst the Police do not record when CCTV in an electronic and reportable format, is considered and used. Particularly, they do question the availability and accessible of CCTV during the course of each investigation.
- 4.8 The Group were informed that in a random sample of 100 incidents, and taking incidents of domestic assault out of the equation, 80 incidents involved the consideration or use of CCTV evidence. There is an upward trend of CCTV use within Huntingdonshire by the Police and that prosecutions using CCTV are increasing.
- 4.9 Members were informed that that the Police find CCTV an invaluable source but in terms of crime detection and prevention its impact can't be quantifiably measured. However there is anecdotal evidence which can give an indication of value.

5. CONCLUSIONS OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 5.1 The Group valued the evidence HBAC presented to them and values the crucial contribution HBAC makes to the community.
- 5.2 It was recognised that there is a need for better engagement with residents and communicating the importance of CCTV to them.
- 5.3 Members request that the Council communicates with stakeholders and residents that the change of CCTV technology will mean an improved service.
- 5.4 There was an acknowledgement that CCTV shouldn't be seen in isolation (e.g. CCTV plays a key part in the success of Pubwatch and Shopwatch, and the overall health and vitality of our town centres).
- 5.5 The Group recognised that CCTV also plays a part in the Council's own enforcement activities.
- 5.6 There is a role for the Council's to further consider mobile CCTV cameras for special events and to target problem areas (possibly on a short term basis). The Group believe that CCTV cameras shouldn't just be seen as those which are in a fixed position.
- 5.7 CCTV also plays a part in community safety and well-being and not just crime detection and prevention.

- 5.8 The Group found use of volunteers to review CCTV footage by Cambridgeshire Constabulary interesting and have requested that the Police provides more details.
- 5.9 The Police place a high value on CCTV and that the value isn't quantifiable however there is anecdotal evidence to support the value of CCTV.
- 5.10 Members felt it is important to note the random sample of 100 incidents which showed that CCTV footage is considered and/or used in 80% of them. In addition the Group believe it is important to note that the Police informed them that the use of CCTV by the Police is increasing.

6. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.1 Members recognised the importance of CCTV in attracting new businesses to Huntingdonshire. The Executive Councillor for Commercialisation and Shared Services explained that big businesses have a matrix which they use when deciding to locate to a town and that CCTV scores highly on that matrix. He added that some businesses would not be locating in the towns without CCTV.
- 6.2 The Panel agreed with a Member when they suggested that the first recommendation should include the word 'high' so that the recommendation reads "recognise the high value of the Council's CCTV service to Huntingdonshire's residents, businesses and Cambridgeshire Constabulary".

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND / OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 CCTV contributes to the strategic priority of Enabling Communities and the strategic objective of '*create, protect and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment*'. Underneath this strategic objective the Council has a key action to continue to manage and enhance the joint CCTV service with Cambridge City Council.
- 7.2 The Council are committed to the commercialisation of CCTV to maximise efficiency and cost-effectiveness and thereby also win new client business. The Cabinet received and agreed a report on this topic at its meeting on 17th November 2016.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Group invited its partners, Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, to attend a meeting with them to discuss their thoughts on CCTV and how they use CCTV to achieve their aims.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 9.1 The Group recognised that the Council's CCTV service is valued by Huntingdonshire's residents, businesses and the Police and any option that could improve the service should be investigated.
- 9.2 It became clear during the second meeting that whilst the Police use CCTV footage in their investigations, the process is so ingrained that there isn't a reportable evidence base to prove the use of CCTV footage by the Police.

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