

# **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **CABINET**

**13 JANUARY 2010**

### **REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **1. CLOSE CIRCUIT CONTROL CENTRE & MULTI AGENCY COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT**

##### 1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To agree the location of the CCTV control room and the location of the new multi-agency Community Safety Unit (CSU).

##### 1.2 Recommendation of Assistant Director of Customer Services and Partnerships

1.2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:-

- i. Instructs officers to proceed with option 2 for CCTV as set out in the report below;
- ii. Invest £50,000 of the proposed saving in five additional mobile cameras to increase the effectiveness of the service in addressing anti-social behaviour hotspots within the borough; and
- iii. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the location of the new CSU, subject to consultation with staff and key partners.

##### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 Following the Best Value Review of CCTV in 2007 a recommendation was made that the CCTV control room remain at the Town Hall, subject to completing works to address health and safety issues. In March 2009, the council reviewed this decision and decided that the control room should be moved to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor Maidstone House and located with a new multi-agency Community Safety Unit (CSU).

1.3.2 Due to the current external financial landscape and the council's ambitious capital programme the Leader and Cabinet asked officers to review the council's capital programme in order to identify potential savings. Part of this process has included revisiting the decision to relocate the CCTV control room.

#### 1.4 Considerations

1.4.1 Mindful of the council's stated objective in its Corporate Improvement Plan to "make more cost-effective use of the CCTV system" and current external economic conditions and pressures on the council's budgets, the suitability of the existing location in the Town Hall was reviewed, paying particular attention to initial health and safety concerns and to the implications for the new multi-agency Community Safety Unit (CSU). Changes to the working environment and a new survey on air handling have enabled the proposal for the CCTV control room to remain at the Town Hall to be made.

1.4.2 The previous proposal (option 1), to relocate the CCTV control room in Maidstone House, was allocated a capital budget of £620k. The alternative option (option 2), of retaining the CCTV control room at the Town Hall, upgrade elements of the technology and improve the working environment requires capital funding of £222k. The saving to the capital programme will be £398k, excluding the creation of the new CSU.

1.4.3 Alongside the proposal listed as "option 2", to retain CCTV at the Town Hall, it is proposed that an investment of £50k is made in five additional mobile cameras. Whilst the level of crime and anti social behaviour is reducing within the borough, the additional cameras would significantly increase the capacity of the service to deploy mobile units to crime and ASB "hot spots", to increase public confidence, act as a deterrent and support the identification and prosecution of offenders.

1.4.4 The proposal to retain the CCTV control room at the Town Hall and invest in five new mobile cameras will result in a saving of £348k to the capital programme, excluding the cost of the new CSU.

#### 1.5 Health and Safety – The Town Hall Control Room

1.5.1 One of the key issues in considering relocating CCTV from the Town Hall was health and safety, however, since the Best Value review in 2007 a number of steps have been taken to address these issues which have reduced the risk score accordingly. Improvements already implemented include a new fire alarm system, improved egress through better signage and replacement

of the matrix and cabling. This work has been completed at a cost of £72,000. As part of the council's ongoing commitment to the health and safety of staff a new evacuation chair is currently being installed along with fire suppressant technology in the equipment racks. A survey was undertaken in December 2009 to identify the works required to improve the air handling within the environment, which has confirmed that the works are achievable.

- 1.5.2 Included as an appendix to this report is the Risk Assessment carried out by the council's Health and Safety Officer in November 2008 and more recently in December 2009. These demonstrate that the risk score has fallen from 40 to 30. This would categorise the risk as "low" and bring the facility in line with other accepted corporate risk assessments.
- 1.5.3 Additional use of Mobile CCTV
- 1.5.4 There are currently 116 fixed cameras deployed in Maidstone; the majority of which are in the town centre. A frequent concern that has been raised is about the flexibility and responsiveness of the CCTV coverage. It is the intention to increase this flexibility by purchasing five Stryker 'Polecat' mobile cameras that can be readily deployed in hot-spot areas where there is a concern about levels of anti social behaviour (ASB) (there are currently two 'Polecat' cameras available for deployment by Community Safety Unit staff and they have been found to be highly effective in gathering evidence and also acting as a deterrent for ASB affected locations).
- 1.5.5 In advance of deploying the new cameras an audit of existing cameras (fixed and mobile) will be undertaken and matched against reported incidents of ASB to ensure that the additional cameras are deployed in the areas of greatest need and achieve the maximum benefit in reducing crime and ASB.
- 1.5.6 Multi-agency Community Safety Unit (CSU)
- 1.5.7 The new CSU is still to be located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor in Maidstone House. The capital cost of creating the multi-agency is £73k. Mid Kent Police have committed £65k as their contribution to the creation of the unit, with £20k of the total required for ICT. The net capital cost to the council is £28k.
- 1.5.8 A number of options have been considered with regards to the size and positioning of the new unit. The new unit will accommodate sixteen fixed desks and have full access to the council's existing facilities.

- 1.5.9 Although it has previously been reported that locating the CCTV control room with the proposed CSU would provide additional operational benefits, these points have been reviewed and, after further discussion with partners, it is not now considered to be the case. CCTV is only one aspect, the new CSU will have a much broader and more strategic role. The current location of the control room in the Town Hall allows easier access to the control room by town centre police. This may be seeking to view tapes of incidents or taking part in operational activity controlled from the control room. This central location is considered to be most convenient, providing 24 hour access for a range of partners, including the police. Daily briefings are currently held in the control room.
- 1.5.10 In keeping with the ethos of partnership working, a multi-agency CSU should seek not to duplicate the work of partners but to add collective value. A useful definition of the scope of the CSU is provided by the National Community Safety Network "preventing, reducing or containing the social, environmental and intimidatory factors which affect people's right to live without fear of crime and which impact upon their quality of life. It includes preventative measures that contribute to crime reduction and tackle anti-social behaviour".
- 1.5.11 It is anticipated that the new CSU will be operational by the end of February 2010 and as part of the process the Cabinet member and the Maidstone CDRP will receive a more detailed report that sets out the confirmed membership, philosophy, terms of reference, service plan and key objectives.
- 1.5.12 Through initial discussion the council has received expressions of interest from KCC Community Wardens, programmes running for Youth Intervention & Support, Family Intervention and Parenting Intervention and a confirmed commitment from Mid Kent Police. Negotiations are continuing with other partners.
- 1.6 Impact on Corporate Objectives
- 1.6.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires public bodies to work together in reducing crime and disorder through partnerships. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in Maidstone is the 'Safer Maidstone Partnership' and involves a number of agencies. The new Community Safety Unit will extend this multi-agency partnership working still further.
- 1.6.2 Violent crime, burglary and vehicle crime are reducing. Maidstone has an extensive CCTV network that covers the town centre and some other areas of the borough. Option 2 above includes

additional funding for mobile CCTV cameras to improve the targeting of 'hot spots'.

1.7 Risk Management

1.7.1 Copies of the latest two risk assessments of the CCTV control room are attached. As part of the project to manage this programme a full risk register will be compiled.

1.8 Other Implications

1.8.1

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	
3.	Legal	X
4.	Social Inclusion	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	X
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	X
9.	Asset Management	

1.8.2 Financial – The cost of CCTV option 2 as set out in the report is £222k, with a further cost of £50k should investment be made in mobile cameras. The new Community Safety Unit will be created at a cost of £73k, providing a total cost of £345k.

1.8.3 A contribution of £65k has been committed by Mid Kent Police to the creation of the Community Safety Unit, from which £20k will be required to meet the cost of the Police system network requirements, providing a net contribution from the Police of £45k and net cost for the project of £300k. After allowing for costs in the project to date, this will provide a net saving of £278k against the capital budget.

1.8.4 Whilst there is no increase in the ongoing revenue cost for the revised proposal (option 2), the original proposal (option 1) would have an additional annual revenue cost of £16k. The increased footprint of the new Community Safety Unit whilst utilising existing

accommodation will increase the internal recharge by £30k, which will be met through existing budgets.

- 1.8.5 Legal implications – The council is required under the Crime and Reduction Act 1998 to work together in partnership to reduce crime and disorder.
- 1.8.6 Procurement – The procurement of all works and equipment will be made in line with the council’s financial standing orders.
- 1.8.7 Asset Management – Works to the Town Hall will require Listed Building Consent. Re-planning of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Maidstone House will release the office space currently occupied by the Community Safety team.
- 1.9 Background Documents
  - 1.9.1 Report from the Best Value Review undertaken in November 2007 and report to Cabinet Member in February 2009 seeking approval for the earlier scheme.

**NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED**

Is this a Key Decision?    Yes                No           

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?    Yes                No           

Reason for Urgency

Progress on implementing the improvement to the CCTV control room has been delayed whilst the scheme is reviewed. The nature of the works are key to improving Health and Safety and increasing the effectiveness of the Community Safety Unit is addressing issues of crime and disorder.