

**EXECUTIVE**

**23 November 2022**

**Feasibility of additional CCTV in Park Wood**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Executive	23 November 2022

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	EXECUTIVE
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Martyn Jeynes, Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

Following concerns raised by the Ward Member for Park Wood, a request was made for a report to be provided that outlines the current challenges in deploying mobile surveillance cameras (CCTV). This report outlines the current status of our two CCTV Systems and their use. It highlights the need to only use CCTV surveillance in accordance with the Surveillance Code of Practice and the need to undertake a more extensive review of the current Mobile CCTV provision, to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice and to ensure deployments are efficient and effective in deterring or obtaining viable evidence of crimes.

**Purpose of Report**

Decision

**This report makes the following recommendations to the Executive:**

1. That the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services undertakes a more extensive review of the Mobile CCTV infrastructure in order to provide a decision report to the Executive by March 2023

## Feasibility of additional CCTV in Park Wood

### 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> <li>• We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3 Safe, Clean and Green</li> </ul>	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendation will support the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives.</p>	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section under section 5 of the report	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.</li> </ul>	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]

<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Legal</b>	Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and ensure we comply with the updated Surveillance Camera Code of Practice pursuant to Section 31(3) of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.	Helen Ward, Lawyer (Contentious), Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team – either Anna, Georgia or Lauren to review and approve.
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	[Public Health Officer]
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The recommendations will ensure an appropriate service is established to support out duty to reduce crime and disorder.	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Procurement</b>	Not applicable	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following concerns being raised by residents to the Ward Member for Parkwood, a request was made to the Community Protection Team determine whether a mobile surveillance camera (CCTV) could be deployed in the area of concern to provide reassurance to residents and hopefully obtain evidence of unwanted, but sporadic behaviour at one road in particular.
- 2.2 Whilst the Community Protection Team do hold a small number of mobile cameras their deployment has become more challenging due to a number of changes in both the resourcing of their deployment and requirements in relation to their deployment. This report will clarify the position in regard to the team's current Mobile CCTV capability and, to an extent, its effectiveness in deterring criminals and catching those responsible.

### **Maidstone's CCTV Provision**

- 2.3 The Public Realm CCTV available to MBC (Maidstone Borough Council) falls into two categories:
- Static
  - Mobile

#### Static System

- 2.4 Between 2017 and 2020, following a review into the then CCTV provision, MBC undertook an exercise to rationalise our CCTV System. The purpose of the rationalisation was to provide a cost-effective system which complied with the governance around the use of CCTV. The assessments undertaken as part of this process showed that the Static CCTV outside of the Town Centre yielded very limited evidence in relation to recorded crimes. It was also unclear to what extent the CCTV acted as a deterrent.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice, the CHE Committee agreed to reduce the number of static cameras. The opportunity was taken to upgrade the system to better quality cameras which utilise a wireless (WIFI) network and to move the main infrastructure out of the Town Hall and into Maidstone House as a recording only system. This enabled revenue costs to be reduced from c£370k to c£120k per annum.
- 2.6 In 2020, One Maidstone proposed a partnership arrangement whereby the system is monitored by One Maidstone at no additional cost to the local authority. A control centre has been created within The Mall, utilising their existing security team to monitor CCTV across the Town Centre. The Town Centre network consists of 35 cameras, which includes the 5 cameras added to Brenchley Gardens this year.

## Mobile CCTV

- 2.7 The Community Safety Unit (CSU), made up of the Community Protection Team and Kent Police Officers, has access to 22 Mobile CCTV Cameras which were deployed in ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) "hotspots". Deployment of cameras was undertaken on a request basis whereby an assessment was made, utilising evidence of ASB or criminality, to ensure the deployment was in accordance with the criteria set out by the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.
- 2.8 The number of mobile cameras will increase to 24 when we receive two additional cameras, purchased through Safer Streets 4 funding. These are to be deployed in to "blind spots" identified from evolving local intelligence, where the Town Centre system cannot be deployed currently. Mobile CCTV cameras are accessed by CSU officers via a cable or a localised (encrypted) WI-FI signal. These cameras are deployed onto purpose made columns or on lamp posts which have a specific connector is attached.
- 2.9 Historically, Mobile CCTV cameras have been deployed by specialist Kent Police officers embedded within the Community Safety Unit. In late 2019, the officers undertaking this role found alternative employment. Attempts were made to replace them, but without a great deal of success, owing to the specialist nature and qualifications necessary. This was eventually put on hold as a result of the pandemic. During the pandemic the deployment and maintenance of the Mobile Cameras was deemed a low priority against other service needs. Work has begun, post pandemic, to restore the system and to develop a suitable deployment plan in order to ensure the cameras are deployed in accordance with the relevant Code of Practice and in a safe/cost effective way.
- 2.10 Unfortunately, much of the knowledge around the Mobile System was lost when the staff left the team in 2019. In addition, regulations have been amended and in particular the use of KCC lampposts as a method of deployment has altered considerably. This makes the previous rapid deployment of mobile CCTV cameras now very challenging. The CSU have been able to determine the following information:

## Camera Stock

- 12 are currently operating without any issues and are deployed.
- 7 are not responding, but are believed to have minor faults
- 3 are beyond repair owing to their age and the cost of the repair
- There are a further 9 Mobile CCTV cameras within the borough which are owned by Parish Councils and Housing Providers. These are not maintained by MBC, but the CSU can access some of them to obtain footage as required.
- 8 of the cameras (Stryker) are now approximately 10 years old and provide relatively low-quality images in comparison to modern HD cameras
- Most of the cameras have limited capability at night due to their low light functions being of poor quality

## Deployment

- Converting lampposts, connecting a power socket into which the camera is attached, costs c£175 per lamp post.
- Lamp posts, with the exception of Coastal Grade lamp posts, need to be load tested before any object is attached to them. This costs c£125 per column and can take more than 28 days for an engineer to undertake the assessment.
- Deployment of CCTV to KCC owned columns requires a specialist qualification, further precluding our ability to use existing staff to undertake this role as we currently do not have anyone with this qualification
- It is possible to outsource the deployment to a specialist company, at an additional cost

## Demand/Success

- Mobile CCTV is regarded in many circles as being integral in combatting crime. CCTV footage of crimes is possibly the best source of evidence; however, this relies on the footage capturing the offences and it being of a sufficient quality to be of evidential value
- Since 2019 the CSU has downloaded just over 100 pieces of footage from Mobile CCTV cameras and only on one occasion did the CCTV catch an offence being committed and was of a sufficient quality to be used as evidence in support of a prosecution
- Mobile CCTV deployment may deter activity in a hot spot, but this can be difficult to measure, save for reductions in reported crimes or service requests
- Requests to move or deploy mobile CCTV has significantly reduced since 2019
- Maidstone is one of the only few local authorities in Kent to maintain a stock of mobile CCTV cameras. Most have deemed it not a cost-effective use of their resources

2.11 Further work is needed to undertake a full review of the Mobile CCTV system and to identify suitable options for cost effective deployment and maintenance of the existing mobile CCTV cameras. This has not been possible previously owing to resourcing levels in the team. However, following a successful recruitment exercise the team reached full capacity in early November and a review can be undertaken over the winter, as we normally experience during this time a drop in the type of service demand that requires deployment of resources.

## **Concerns raised around Park Wood**

- 2.12 The incident that prompted the request to the Committee would need to be assessed in the same way as all other deployments against the criteria set out in the CCTV Code of Practice. CCTV may provide one solution, but other measures are also being deployed or explored to tackle this issue.
- 2.13 The rationalisation of the Static CCTV system saw the necessary infrastructure removed from the areas outside of the Town Centre. Essentially this was the rental of cables that connected the CCTV to the CCTV Control Centre in the Town Hall. The Control Centre equipment has been removed and we no longer pay the rental charges for the wired cables out to these locations. It is not possible to connect a new system to the existing WIFI system as this system requires line of sight between individual cameras and repeater masts on strategic buildings across the Town Centre.
- 2.14 Deployment of Mobile CCTV in the area would provide reassurance to the residents in the area and may deter the unwanted behaviour. It may also capture evidence of the behaviour of concern, but this is unlikely. However, this could equally be captured by home CCTV systems or mobile phones if residents felt able to do so.
- 2.15 The Community Protection Team are continuing to monitor the situation and work with partners, including Golding Homes, to look for further opportunities to support the individuals and protect the local residents.

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## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Executive do nothing – This is not recommended. The current provision requires further assessment as, in its current condition, the mobile CCTV system has reduced efficiency and deployment capabilities. A review will enable the Executive to make a more informed decision on the future of the provision.
- 3.2 The Executive ask that work is undertaken to increase the Static CCTV system. This is not recommended as it is unlikely that increasing the CCTV, beyond those in the Static System currently, would comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and would require significant financial investment to reinstate wired connections and the associated rental costs.
- 3.3 The Executive ask the CSU to instal CCTV to monitor the address/area of concern, however, whilst there are suspected issues with ASB, there is, currently, a lack of evidence to justify deployment. It is therefore advised that the CSU continue to work with the housing provider and local residents and explore opportunities to support the individuals and protect the local residents. This may include the option of deploying CCTV at a later date, should it be feasible to do so.
- 3.4 The Executive ask the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services to undertake a further review of the Mobile CCTV infrastructure and provide an options report in March 2023. The reasons for this recommended option are outlined below.

#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 As per 2.11 and 3.3 above, the Executive to ask the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services to undertake a further review of the Mobile CCTV infrastructure and to provide an option report to the Executive no later than March 2023.

##### **Purpose of the review**

- 4.2 As outlined in Section 2.7 to 2.11 above the Mobile CCTV system requires a significant investment of resources to fully understand the feasibility of whether it remains a viable option to continue to provide a Mobile CCTV offer in Maidstone. There are a number of areas requiring further investigation including but not limited to:
- A health check/audit of cameras currently deployed to determine their functionality and maintenance needs beyond that outlined in 2.10. This will mean visiting and removing cameras and running diagnostics to ensure they remain deployable.
  - Cost analysis of alternative CCTV cameras to replace those considered beyond repair or of poor-quality owing to their age
  - A rationalisation of deployment locations and the number of CCTV Cameras to ensure cameras are deployed in accordance with the Surveillance Code of Conduct and are maintainable within the CSU's resources, which have changed since the dedicated officers left the service
- 4.3 The Community Protection Team is currently undertaking a recruitment exercise and has appointed a new officer to their vacant role. This officer is due to join the team in November and will be the new lead officer embedded in the Maidstone Task Force, currently working in Marden.
- 4.4 Whilst we would hope to bring the report sooner, the realistic completion date for this review will be February 2023, with the findings being brought to the executive in March 2023. Whilst this does signify a 5-month delay, the team are currently deployed in both the Maidstone and Town Centre Task Forces, and the delivery of Safer Streets 4, alongside their statutory roles for Nuisance, ASB, Public Health and Animal Welfare. The team need the new officer to start and be relatively up to speed with local matters before the necessary time can be invested into undertaking this review with colleagues from the wider CSU. This also takes into consideration the intensified delivery of Safer Streets 4 initiatives in the lead up to the football World Cup and Christmas 2022, which will be resource intensive.
- 4.5 The CSU is a multi-agency service and consultation with the Police is also required to assess their commitment to continue to invest resources into the maintenance and deployment of the CCTV. In the past this has been dependent on the investment and motivation of the individuals involved, rather than the post itself, as the arrangement is unique to Maidstone and not replicated elsewhere in Kent. Work is needed to develop a sustainable arrangement.
- 4.6 A full review will also enable the Executive to make a more informed decision on the future of the provision, whether that is to invest, rationalise or withdraw the service in the future.



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## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The current use and deployment of CCTV may not be in compliance with the Surveillance Code of Practice and action will be taken, as part of the recommended review, to ensure all current deployments conform with the Code of Practice. Failure to take this action will put the Local Authority at risk of challenge from the Surveillance Commission.
- 5.2 More detailed risks related to the proposed options for this matter will be detailed in the report provided to the executive by March 2023.

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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 This report is provided as a result of a request made at the August 2022 Communities, Housing and Environment Policy & Advisory Committee. Members indicated their desire for a report to be brought to the Executive to provide an update on the challenges the CSU currently face in deploying CCTV.
- 6.2 We are also aware of a potential motion to Council to give Ward Members some level of control over the deployment of CCTV. Ward Members are able to make requests for deployments through the current CSU process, and they can be consulted on deployments in their wards. The adopted process enables Member's requests to be considered at an operational level applying the tests set out in the Surveillance Code of Practice. This enables an objective decision to be made about deployment, which is proportionate and reasonable – thereby reducing the risk of legal challenge against the Council for non-compliance with the Code and/or rendering the evidence gathered as inadmissible to support a prosecution.

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 The Head of Housing and Regulatory Services will undertake a review as outlined in section 4 in accordance with the agreed timescale.

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

None

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Amended Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (accessible version) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/update-to-surveillance-camera-code/amended-surveillance-camera-code-of-practice-accessible-version>