

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 14 November 2007

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF CCTV – OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Issue for Decision

To consider the Best Value Review of CCTV - Options Appraisal.

Decision Made

1. That the CCTV service should continue to be provided by the Council be agreed.
2. That the service is delivered, subject to the issues regarding current location and suitability being satisfactorily addressed first, as set out in Option 1 of the Report of the Director of Change and Support Services, which is as follows:

The central control function remains in the current location, with an upgrade of the existing equipment in the control centre (including a move to digital recording), redevelopment of the control room and a revised camera replacement programme.

The upgrade to the control room is estimated at £602,403, the current capital budget for CCTV is £750,000 and it is recommended that the remainder of the budget is used for capital investment to immediately upgrade 36 cameras which will help reduce the ongoing revenue costs. Thereafter an ongoing replacement programme will need to be established. This will run in conjunction with a review of all camera locations and condition and appropriate upgrade action will be scheduled pending the results of these review findings.

Pending the outcome of ongoing discussions, the capacity to carry out alarm monitoring services and the use of the system for traffic enforcement using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology should be incorporated. This will enable the system to generate income in the future.

3. That provision be made in the capital programme for an additional £50,000 per annum to cover camera replacement.
4. That an Implementation Plan is prepared which should also address the issues raised concerning liaison with other partners re funding, planning gain and the need to be able to monitor the usage of individual cameras and Recommendation 3 of the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration by Cabinet as soon as possible.
5. That the Police be requested to contribute to the funding of the service.

Reasons for decision

At Cabinet on 17 May 2007 it was agreed that a Best Value review of CCTV would be undertaken during 2007/08. A scoping report was also discussed at the meeting with an options report to be presented to Cabinet at the second stage of the review process.

The options paper contained the work to-date on the review and a range of alternatives for Cabinet to consider. As part of a comprehensive review many different aspects of the service have been assessed and the detailed results can be found in the report and the accompanying annex.

The CCTV service has been found to be very effective as part of the overall approach to community safety in the borough and therefore it is proposed that the service should continue to be provided. Against a backdrop of reducing crime the number of arrests through CCTV have increased in recent years, one in four arrests in the borough have involved CCTV and 30 per cent of these have led to a criminal conviction. In addition CCTV adds value to both the day-time and night-time economy, is viewed by residents as offering value for money and satisfaction with the service is high. However, there is more that the Council and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership could do to publicise the results from CCTV.

In terms of the CCTV service the equipment is in need of upgrading and establishing a replacement programme is essential. Some of this will be possible within the existing Capital budget but ongoing capital investment of around £50,000 per annum will be provided thereby reducing revenue expenditure in the future. The balance and effectiveness of the fixed and mobile cameras works well and this will continue to be monitored and kept under review. The Council does not use dummy cameras.

Proposals to relocate the CCTV control room should be reconsidered and it has been recommended that the service remains in the current location albeit with a refurbishment programme and an upgrade to the technology, this can be delivered within the current capital provision for CCTV.

The staffing of the control room has historically been provided by the private sector, the review had concluded that this would continue until the current contract expires in March 2008. However, recent developments have meant that the service will need to be re-tendered now which may well increase the revenue cost as this will be a new supplier.

The intelligence led approach and the strength of the partnership working was clearly evident in the review, however, there is potential for even greater partnership working in the future with neighbouring boroughs and Kent County Council. Any expansion to the service would require a robust business case but there would be the potential to diversify if the CCTV room remained in the current location.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

A wide range of options have been considered in the Report of the Director of Change and Support Services and assumptions challenged internally and externally.

Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Investigation into Anti-Social Behaviour (2001-02)
CCTV Annual Report (MBC)
Best Value Review of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Scoping Report
CCTV Best Value Review – Mix and Match Options and Costs Report

These documents are available at the Council offices.

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Scrutiny Manager by: 23 November 2007.