

Maidstone Borough Council

Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 9 October 2012

Update from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership bodies on the Implementation of the CCTV Monitoring Service at the Medway Control Centre.

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a statutory role to act as the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee in line with Maidstone's protocols for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Overview and Scrutiny. The protocols are based on clearly defined principles which include 'a focus on supporting the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour and reducing fear of crime and reducing fear of crime and anti social-behaviour in the Borough of Maidstone'.
- 1.2 Maidstone Borough Council took the decision in November 2011 to award the contract for the CCTV monitoring service to Medway Council Control Centre.
- 1.3 This decision was called in and considered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee resolved that the decision should stand but recommended that 'both the Cabinet and officers ensure that stakeholders are fully engaged throughout all stages of the transfer of the CCTV service and its continued ongoing operation.' It is on this basis that the Committee resolved that a review of the implementation of the CCTV monitoring service at the Medway Control Centre should be included in its work programme for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.
- 1.4 Meetings with CCTV stakeholders have taken place. Satisfaction surveys were conducted in March and June 2012. The minutes of the meetings and results of the surveys are attached at **Appendix A.**

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to interview:
 - Chief Inspector Jon Bumpus, District Commander for Maidstone;
 - Vikram Sahdev, Head of Business Development; and
 - John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services

To provide an update on the implementation of the CCTV monitoring service at the Medway Control Centre and the partnership arrangements. The Committee should seek to establish the successes of the new partnership arrangement and identify any issues, seeking to make quality recommendations as appropriate.

2.2 Areas of questioning could include but are not limited to:

- The negative press and public opinion that dominated the Council's decision to award the contract for CCTV monitoring to Medway;
- Strategies and methods of communication that have been put in place by Kent Police, the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) and Maidstone Borough Council to counteract the negativity surrounding the decision and address 'fear reduction' for the public and businesses in Maidstone;
- What part does CCTV play building positive public perception of Kent Police and the work of the SMP;
- Do current crime statistics substantiate claims that CCTV monitoring could be less effective when conducted from a remote control centre?
- Have stakeholder meetings helped maintain a level of local knowledge that has benefited the implementation of the monitoring service at Medway?
- What impact will the new Code of Practice and appointment of the surveillance camera commissioner have, if any, on current partnership arrangements and the service being delivered?

3. CCTV

3.1 CCTV and its impact on crime is a topic that is widely reported on and discussed in the press. A recent article in the Australian publication the Herald Sun on 28 September 2012 entitled 'CCTV: Do we need more? No, we should heed the example of Britain which spent billions on camera and still has highest crime rates' (**Appendix B**) examines its effectiveness and bases its argument on various studies including a British Home Office Review.

3.2 The general purpose of CCTV is commonly defined as a measure 'to prevent and reduce crime' because it achieves one or more of the following:

A: Deterrence

B: Prosecution

C: Fear reduction

D: Monitoring and intervention

- 3.3 The Medway news on Friday 2 November 2011 and in relation to the rioting across the UK, reported positively on Medway's CCTV Control Centre (**Appendix C**). The article describes the service as 'a state-of-the-art security operation'. The article also describes the part the Control Centre lays in the 'Lifeline' scheme, monitoring '3,250 alarms' and 'supporting around 4,000 vulnerable older people in their homes and in sheltered schemes'.
- 3.4 On 13 September 2012 the Government announced the creation of a Code of Practice for CCTV and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) along with the appointment of its first surveillance camera commissioner (**Appendix D**). The Home Office press release states that the code of practice has been designed to encourage greater transparency in the use of CCTV and ANPR and, as well as ensuring these systems are being used proportionately, it will provide coherent guidance for police forces and local authorities to increase image quality and boost the chances of catching criminals."

4. The CCTV Monitoring Service

- 4.1 On 9 November 2011 Cabinet took a decision on the future provision of the CCTV Monitoring Service. The decision made was that the contract for the CCTV monitoring service be awarded to Medway Council Control Centre.
- 4.2 The record of decision provided the following background to the decision taken: "In December 2010 the Cabinet Member considered a proposal to enter into a local authority partnership to deliver the CCTV monitoring service." The decision at that time was to investigate the proposal further and to report back following consideration of stakeholder views.
- 4.3 Consultation with stakeholders was conducted, which included an opportunity for representatives to discuss the requirements of the CCTV service. In March 2011 the Cabinet Member for Community Services determined the previous offer did not meet the test for a local authority partnership, and in the interest of providing an environment of fair competition and to encourage innovation decided to tender for the service.
- 4.4 The tender approach would also provide a transparent, open and fair process in order to achieve best value for money. The report in March 2010 set out the procurement process together with the criteria and reasons for the chosen approach."
- 4.5 The decision was called-in utilising the scrutiny call-in function and a meeting was held on 30 November 2011. The following recommendations were made:

- (a) The committee agreed that the decision should stand without referral back to the Cabinet. The Committee recommended both the Cabinet and officers ensure that stakeholders are fully engaged throughout all stages of the transfer of the CCTV service and its continued ongoing operation; and
 - (b) CCTV should remain on the agenda for the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A written update should be provided for the Committee to consider at the beginning of the second quarter of 2012.
- 4.6 The CCTV user group (www.cctvusergroup.com) in its 2012 Management and Innovation Awards recognised Vikram Sahdev and Corinna Woolett for the Medway, Swale and Maidstone CCTV Partnership.

5. Safer Maidstone Partnership

- 5.1 The Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) produce a rolling five year document which highlights how the Safer Maidstone Partnership plans to tackle Community Safety issues that matter to the local community.
- 5.2 The draft Community Safety Partnership Plan 2012-2017 is under consultation until 5 October 2012 and provides the following background to the SMP and its current position and outlook.
- 5.3 "In 2010, the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA) undertook a peer review of the SMP, the crime and disorder reduction partnership for the Maidstone borough. As a result of the review and its recommendations and to ensure compliance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which directs that we must have community safety embedded into our planning, our policy and our operational day-to-day activity, the SMP structure was revised to ensure that there is a more robust intelligence-led business process.
- 5.4 The SMP brings together people from local government, the NHS, the police, the fire service, probation, local businesses, housing providers and voluntary and community organisations to work as a team to tackle issues such as crime, education, health, housing, unemployment and the environment in Maidstone Borough.
- 5.5 SMP membership is made up of the public sector agencies (Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police, Kent Police Authority, NHS, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, KDAAT, Kent Probation Service and Maidstone Prison) and also incorporates members from other key partners including Maidstone Mediation, The Kenward Trust, Golding Homes and Town Centre Management. The SMP is chaired by Martin Adams, Area Manager for the Kent Fire and Rescue Service."

6. Kent Police

- 6.1 Chief Inspector Jon Bumpus is the District Commander for Maidstone. He is one of four district commanders in the West Division, part of a structure which replaced the previous six Basic Command Units (BSU). The Operational Policing Model came into effect at the end of 2011 and is based on the following:
- Neighbourhood Policy and alignment with Districts and Medway;
 - A broader role of frontline office duties to ensure ownership of local crime and ASB issues;
 - Savings from economies of scale of reducing from six BCUs to three Divisions;
 - Reinvestment in Neighbourhood Resources – Constable increase from 381 to 677 with extended availability; and
 - Retention and building of partnership arrangements.

7. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 7.1 The remit of Safer Maidstone Partnership has relevance to many of the Council's Priorities but relates specifically to the priority a place that has strong, healthy and safe communities which covers the majority of the delivery group's work and the MBC objective to make people feel safe where they live relates to the key priorities of the group.
- 7.2 There are no risks involved in considering the priorities and progress of the Safer Maidstone Partnership.