

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & 14 February 2017 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	Yes
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Provision of a Public Realm CCTV Service

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing & Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Housing & Community Services
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The Committee endorses the decommissioning of CCTV cameras to 30 to ensure compliance with the regulatory Code of Practice.
2. That the Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Head of Housing & Community Services to carry out consultation as outlined in Paragraph 4.1 of the report and to provide a further report to the Committee within 6 months recommending the hours of live monitoring.
3. That the Committee directs the Head of Housing & Community Services to explore and implement alternative technologies that improve data transfer and reduce revenue costs.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – CCTV is one of the interventions used by the council and our partners to prevent crime and disorder and ensure public safety. Static CCTV cameras are mainly sited in the town centre and vicinity

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Committee: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	14 February 2017

Provision of a Public Realm CCTV Service

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. In line with government guidance a review of the existing static CCTV cameras has been completed to ensure compliance with the regulatory framework for publicly owned CCTV. As a result of the review a number of cameras are being decommissioned.
 - 1.2 The reduction in the total number of cameras enables a rationalisation of how the images from the remaining cameras are monitored. The report sets out how further reconfiguration of the service can contribute both to tackling crime and disorder and achieving the aims of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
 - 1.3 The report also outlines the short and medium term plan for securing the future delivery of the monitoring service
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A report was provided to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee in November 2016 that set out the broad range of options open to the Council in reviewing its public realm CCTV service. It was agreed that a further report would be provided to the Committee providing the options for the future of the service. Specifically:
 - Reduce the CCTV service – considering reduced camera numbers and reduced hours of monitoring of the static CCTV cameras
 - Explore other funding or commercial opportunities
 - Better use of new technology
- 2.2. Compliance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice
The Home Office produced Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013 requires that local authorities regularly review their use of overt CCTV to ensure it has a "legitimate aim; is necessary to meet a pressing need; is proportionate; is effective, and compliant with any relevant legal obligations."
- 2.3. In identifying which static cameras should be decommissioned because they do not meet the tests of the Code of Practice the following criteria were employed to inform the process:
 - Number of incidents picked up by the camera
 - Number of incidents of crime and disorder in the vicinity of the camera
 - Whether or not the camera is in a car park and/or protects council property
- 2.4. A review of static cameras in November 2016 evidenced that there are currently 82 static cameras. Data on the number of instances of crime and disorder captured by each camera was considered for the 3 month period of June – August 2016. 52 of the 82 existing static cameras picked up fewer

15 instances of crime and disorder over this period, or less than 5 instances on average per month, or were not deemed to be as key in ensuring public safety in the town centre and surrounding area due to their proximity to other static cameras. Whilst the Code of Practice does not provide guidance on the levels of incidents expected to be achieved from each camera this figure was considered to be a reasonably low threshold that could be used as a benchmark.

- 2.5. Officers also looked at figures on crime and disorder in the area of each camera. This information was used to evaluate each camera against the tests in the Code of Practice. This requires a level of judgement; officers liaised with the local police to ensure a 'reality check' to the assessments and consequent conclusions by Maidstone's officers as to which cameras meet and which do not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice.
- 2.6. It is officers' view that retention of all 52 cameras which have picked up 15 or fewer incidents in the evaluation period is disproportionate to the value yielded from preventing or reducing crime and disorder. Therefore, in order to comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013, these cameras will be de-commissioned, leaving just 30.
- 2.7. Reduction Options
The CCTV budget for the current financial year is forecast to be overspent at year end by £40,000 (£370k versus a budget of £330,000). De-commissioning the 52 cameras alone will only reduce the total spend by around £52K. The council could reduce costs even more by reducing the hours the cameras are live-monitored by an operator.
- 2.8. The majority of the current static CCTV cameras are in the town centre and vicinity. Similarly, those cameras identified as capturing the most incidents of crime and disorder are also located in the town centre and vicinity, Gabriel's Hill being the most active with 485 instances recorded in the same 3 month period in 2016.
- 2.9. The retention of key town centre cameras and other key areas concurs with the views of main stakeholders, both Police and voluntary organisations, who value the partnership approach that the CCTV coverage and co-ordination between agencies this supports, particularly in keeping people who come to Maidstone as safe as possible. It also means that the operator who monitors the cameras live in the control centre will have fewer cameras to monitor, so will be able to provide a high quality service monitoring the key cameras which are most crucial to identifying and investigating crime and disorder.
- 2.10. The review carried out by Maidstone Borough Council has identified that little intelligence is gathered from the majority of cameras during quiet periods. This calls into question the value of monitoring cameras on a 24 hour, 7 days a week basis, although the Police view is that cameras should be monitored between 11:00 and 06:00 during the weekend busy time and between 11:00 and 02:00 at other times. The largest area of spend related to CCTV is the cost associated with the monitoring of cameras and in order to provide the CCTV service cost effectively and achieve the required

savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy it is proposed to implement changes to the current service monitoring arrangements.

- 2.11. It is proposed to further explore with a view to decreasing live-monitoring of the remaining static cameras from a 24/7 basis, instead concentrating resources around the periods of most activity associated with the night-time economy. During other periods the cameras would be left in their position and set to record. This will enable incidents to be recorded and downloaded if required as evidence at a later date.

2.12. Existing Contract Negotiations

In line with the recommendation agreed in November 2016, officers have commenced negotiations with Medway CCTV Control Centre to extend the current partnership agreement for 12 months and to achieve a reduction in costs for 2017/18. This arrangement will provide a 12 month period in which to understand the effect of reducing the service and to enable a tendering exercise to be completed for delivery of the monitoring service from 2018/19.

2.13. Risks and mitigations

There is an inherent risk that by reducing the number of CCTV cameras and hours of monitoring that it would become harder to prevent and/or detect crime or disorder. However, it should be noted that in the vast majority of cases as the intelligence being gathered by the static cameras which are to be removed is minimal and at times which the remaining 30 cameras would not be monitored is also minimal; this suggests that the risk of adverse impact for the detection of crime and disorder is low.

- 2.14. In addition a small number of authorities outside of Kent have reduced or turned off their public realm CCTV function. From the limited information made available from these areas there was no evidence to suggest there had been a significant impact on crime and disorder levels.

- 2.15. The greatest impact is likely to be on the Maidsafe radio network operated by One Maidstone. Currently the network between shops and One Maidstone staff is co-ordinated via the Medway CCTV Control Centre. This role has developed through custom and practice rather than being part of the Partnership Agreement. No contractual arrangement or financial contribution exists to perform this function.

- 2.16. If the monitoring service is removed during the daytime there will no longer be the resource within the Medway CCTV Control Centre to provide the co-ordinating role. Discussions have commenced with One Maidstone to help explore alternative arrangements for the Maidsafe network to continue functioning in an effective way.

- 2.17. The risks highlighted through the public and business consultation were largely perceived, rather than actual risks. However, as there is limited data about the effects of reducing or removing totally public realm CCTV. It is therefore proposed that the recommended changes made to CCTV are piloted and the impact of these changes is monitored for a period of 12 months and the service reviewed after that period.

2.18. Mobile Cameras

Mobile cameras provided through the Council's Community Safety Unit were not considered as part of the review, in line with the decision by CHE Committee in November 2016. The current pool of mobile cameras will continue to provide a rapid deployment capability to supplement the retained static cameras.

2.19. Being co-ordinated through the CSU, the mobile camera pool will offer the capacity to deploy a CCTV capability across the whole borough on an intelligence led basis that will be more effective than the current static cameras. The use of mobile cameras in this way will help mitigate against any loss that might result as an unforeseen consequence of removing the current static cameras.

2.20. New technology

Continual improvements in technology provide an opportunity to explore different ways of carrying data from the camera to the monitoring station that could yield not only better quality but also provide a cost saving over current rental and maintenance fees. Officers will continue to work with the provider of the monitoring service to ensure that all aspects of new technology are explored and where these provide a benefit to the service that improvements and savings are implemented.

2.21. The current provider has identified that upgrading the current matrix and recording system would allow for the existing analogue fibre circuits to be upgraded to a digital fibre circuit, which would require a one-off investment of around £20K but would save in the region of £10K p.a. This information will help inform the cost reduction of the existing contract extension or where this cannot be achieved will form part of the tendering exercise for 2018/19.

2.22. Alternative funding

As identified in the initial report to Committee in November 2016, neither Kent Police nor the Police and Crime Commissioner can provide funding in addition to that which is already indirectly provided towards the revenue costs of CCTV.

2.23. The Economic Development Team in conjunction with One Maidstone has been exploring the potential for a Business Improvement District for the Town Centre. If accepted by a majority of businesses the BID would be able to raise a levy that could, in part, contribute towards a public realm CCTV service. However, the vote to enable the BID to be set up is some time away and its outcome cannot be guaranteed and as such has a limited impact on the current funding arrangements.

2.24. Therefore, there are no immediate options to bring in additional funding to help pay for the CCTV service.

2.25. Financial implications

The target budget for the CCTV service reduces by £50,000 pa over the next three financial years, and so for the financial year commencing 2019/20, the budget will be just £180,000, so based on the current actual costs of £370,000, a reduction of £190,000 is required.

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Option	Camera numbers	24 hour, 7 days per week surveillance (168 hours per week)	50% reduction in surveillance to 84 hours per week.
A	82 Static cameras	£370,000	—
B	30 Static cameras	£318,000	£222,000

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Option A – this option retains the existing number of cameras and level of monitoring but is not recommended as it not only exceeds the current budget but also means the Council will not comply with the Code of Practice.
- 3.2. Option B -
1. Reduce the number of cameras to 30 and retain 24/7 live monitoring.
 2. Reduce the number of cameras to 30 with 50% reduction in the hours of live monitoring to 84 hours per week.
- 3.3. Pursue savings through moving across to improved forms of data delivery and consolidating existing contracts – Potential cost reduction of £10K; this is a sensible additional option to explore further whatever the model of CCTV delivery the council adopts.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. Option 3.2 B(2) [reduce to 30 cameras, and liaise with Kent Police concerning the reduction of live monitoring] and 3.4 (improving technology) are recommended in order to achieve both compliance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013 and the savings proposed by the medium term financial strategy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1. A public and business consultation was carried out in order to produce the report for CHE Committee in November 2016. Since that time and to enable further refinement of the proposed way forward it is proposed to have further discussions with Kent Police and other key stakeholders to refine the hours of live monitoring.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1. In the event that the Committee agrees the recommendation there will need to be a period of negotiation with Medway CCTV Control Centre to enable the reduction in cameras and operating hours to be achieved in a

timely fashion to ensure that compliance with the Code of Practice and savings can be realised.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities		
Risk Management	Included within the report	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial		[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
Staffing		[Head of Service]
Legal		[Legal Team]
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	To be completed	Community Partnerships & Resilience Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development		
Community Safety	Contained within the report	Head of Housing & Community Services
Human Rights Act		
Procurement		
Asset Management		

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Review of CCTV – Findings and Options report considered by CHE Committee 15 November 2016

- Surveillance Camera Commissioner Report for 2015 to 2016
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surveillance-camera-commissioners-annual-report-for-2015-to-2016-published>