
Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7 September 2010

Subject: CCTV Review

Report of: Councillor David McVicar, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles

Summary: The report proposes that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider recommendations with regard to changes to the operation of the CCTV service provided across Central Bedfordshire by the Council.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Jeanette Keyte, Head of Community Safety

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

CCTV supports the Council priority to create safer communities with regard to detecting crime, disorder and anti social behaviour and by supporting prosecution of offences through the provision of evidence. Through this work CCTV also contributes to protecting young people and vulnerable adults.

CCTV is a component identified in the Community Safety Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which supports the Council priority to manage growth effectively.

Financial:

Financial implications are set out in Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F. There are potential savings in options detailed in appendix B and E and cost implications in options detailed in appendix A and D. The savings identified in appendix B, £95,000 forms part of the targeted efficiency saving proposals under consideration as part of the Councils medium term financial plan.

Legal:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on the Council: without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. The provision of CCTV, whilst a discretionary service makes a significant contribution to reducing crime and disorder in its area.

Risk Management:

CCTV provides a key service in relation to reducing crime and disorder and promoting public confidence and reducing the fear of crime, all of which are high priorities for our communities. The service also provides significant support for key stakeholders, including Bedfordshire Police, reducing and detecting crime and disorder. Significant changes to the service provision or removal will have reputational risks for the Council both with communities and partners.

Reduction or removal of the service will contribute to increases in criminal activity and reductions in detections in crime including environmental offences such as littering, for which the Council has a statutory responsibility to address. This bears a financial risk with reductions in income through fixed penalty offences and the additional financial burdens to the Council, its partners, businesses and communities of increases in crime.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Staff within the CCTV Team are aware of the review process and key areas being considered. Changes to the CCTV Service impacting on staff will be managed in line with Council HR policies and procedures.

Equalities/Human Rights:

An equalities impact assessment of any changes to the service will be undertaken to consider impact on particular client groups' e.g. young people or areas of high crime – which are often areas with higher levels of deprivation and need.

CCTV services are bound by the duties of Data Protection, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and European Human Rights Acts to protect individuals from inappropriate surveillance.

Community Safety:

As set out under legal implications and risk implications, significant changes to the CCTV Service will impact on the Councils, and partners, ability to deter, detect and reduce crime and disorder, anti social behaviour and environmental crime. This in turn impacts on public confidence and fear of crime.

CCTV is used as a component of community safety considerations in new developments in Central Bedfordshire. Reducing the capacity of, or removing the service, will impact on decisions regarding new developments and community safety considerations.

In addition, the impact on local communities of a reduction in, or removal of CCTV will be compounded by the funding cuts outlined by the Coalition Government and in particular those at the Home Office which will result in reductions in front line policing in Bedfordshire.

Sustainability:

None at this time

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the report and recommend that the Executive agree:-**
 - (a) that the revenue savings of £95,000 (Appendix E) are implemented to achieve a full year saving in 2011/12;**
 - (b) to the integration of cameras operating via the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership into the Dunstable CCTV control room and the whole CCTV service operated as one from Dunstable;**
 - (c) that the Council seeks a financial contribution from Bedfordshire Police and those Town Councils where cameras are located;**
 - (d) that further research is undertaken to consider longer term options for CCTV.**

Background

1. Prior to Local Government Review both South and Mid Bedfordshire District Councils operated CCTV Systems. South Beds operated an in-house system located at the Council offices in Dunstable. The service provides monitoring 24 hours a day 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year. It consists of 89 cameras covering the town centre areas of Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard and the village of Caddington. 26 of these cameras are owned by local businesses, with agreements in place to cover the monitoring costs. Camera locations are set out in Appendix J.
2. Monitoring provision at Dunstable is provided by a team of 7.5 FTE CCTV Operators and a CCTV Manager, who also undertakes monitoring to cover for sickness absence or annual leave if needed.
3. Legacy Mid Beds system was provided via the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership (HCCTVP) via a control room at Stevenage Borough Council, providing the same level of cover for 16 cameras. 8 of these are owned by Town Councils and 8 by the Council. The areas covered are Biggleswade, Sandy and Shefford. Ampthill Town Council own 5 cameras and have their own monitoring agreement with the HCCTVP.

4. Monitoring costs for the cameras owned by the Biggleswade, Sandy and Shefford Town Councils are included in the Councils contract with the HCCTVP. The Council re-charges these costs to the Town Councils at the end of each financial year.
5. In addition to the fixed public space surveillance cameras the Council also owns a number of redeployable cameras. These cameras can be located across Central Bedfordshire, subject to a feasibility study, deployed on an appropriate street lighting column. These cameras are deployed on an intelligence led basis and are used to support both external partners and internal services e.g. police and housing services.
6. The Council does own some covert camera equipment, which is used in some investigations. The use of this type of equipment is robustly regulated through the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) and the Councils RIPA procedures.
7. The Council also has a number of premises which have stand-alone CCTV systems for monitoring, which have been installed for crime prevention and personal safety issues. In legacy authorities the installation and maintenance of these systems did not fall into the remit of either the in-house service at Dunstable or the service provided by NHCCTVP. Work is now underway to identify what systems the Council has responsibility for with a view to co-ordinating the management of these systems and identify the budgetary implications to maintain and continue use of these systems.

The Review

8. The review of the CCTV Service in Central Bedfordshire was undertaken to identify how best to bring together the management of all Council owned cameras, rather than the current position where the majority of cameras are managed through the Council CCTV Control room at Dunstable and 8 Council owned cameras through Stevenage Borough Council. In addition, a key consideration for the review was the potential to achieve efficiency savings and add value for money. The options identified for the review were:
 1. CCTV service currently operating from Dunstable is completely out-sourced to the HCCTV Partnership and all services provided through Stevenage Borough Council
 2. CCTV service operating via HCCTV Partnership is integrated into the Dunstable control room and the whole service for Central Bedfordshire becomes in-house
 3. CCTV service is out-sourced to an alternative service provider e.g. Luton Borough Council
 4. CCTV provision in Central Bedfordshire is reduced or completely removed - the coverage i.e. number of cameras rationalised to reduce operating costs. (There are no national standards as to the number or locations of cameras).

5. Status Quo is maintained – Dunstable and Stevenage continue to provide the service and any procedural changes completed as necessary. As part of this option the following would be considered:
 - a. Potential revenue savings identified via review of existing shift patterns operated at Dunstable
 - b. Revenue savings from outsourcing monitoring provision only
9. In looking at each option the review also considered;
 - the potential to achieve efficiency savings using the principle of economies of scale by joining with other local authorities and partners to procure for services including maintenance and monitoring.
 - Opportunities for further income generation
10. In view of the need to identify efficiency savings and add value for money, the remit for this review did not include adding any cameras to the existing systems. Adding cameras, or relocating existing cameras, would need a comprehensive review of existing locations and coverage and detailed analysis of incident data. The indicative capital cost of adding a new static camera to the system is £22K per camera with indicative additional revenue costs per annum per camera of £2K.

Consultation

11. Whilst CCTV is a Council service, there are a number of key stakeholders who benefit from the service, and in terms of the HCCTVP, Town Councils who make a financial contribution to providing CCTV in parts of Central Bedfordshire.
12. As such consultation took place with Town Councils and key stakeholders to obtain their views on the options being considered as part of the review in the form of consultation meetings and written requests for feedback. A list of consultees and the feedback obtained is set out in Appendix G.
13. Overall the consultation indicated that there are a range of views about CCTV, however a consistent theme was that it was generally felt to be beneficial in respect of public reassurance and addressing crime and anti social behaviour.
14. It is important to note that the public are also a key stakeholder in CCTV, and this was acknowledged in discussions with regard to who would be consulted as part of the review. However, to undertake a meaningful consultation with the wider public would not have been possible within the timescales and resources available for the review.

Review Outcomes

15. A breakdown of the costs and any potential savings achieved for each of the options considered in the review are set out in Appendices A, B, C, D, E & F. These costs are **indicative** costs based upon initial quotation requests from existing service providers for CCTV for the Council.
16. The caveat to the figures for each option are:
 - CCTV infrastructure is very technical and the indicative quotations will be subject to feasibility studies which may identify additional or hidden costs
 - These indicative quotations have been obtained from existing service providers. Any work to be undertaken would follow Council procurement procedures with regard to tendering processes and as such existing service providers may not be successful in a tendering process
 - Agreeing contracts for outsourcing may identify additional or hidden costs, particularly where TUPE arrangements are involved.
17. Subject to the caveats identified, the review has identified that, in terms of indicative costs, **option 2**, to integrate all Council owned cameras in to the Dunstable control room and **option 5a**, to review existing shift patterns and make operational changes to the service, provide the most cost effective option for the Council
18. There are implications in implementing these options, namely that the Town Councils that own and fund cameras monitored from the Stevenage control room do so as part of the Councils contract with the HCCTVP. The CCTV Team at Dunstable administers this arrangement including annual re-charging. On termination of the Councils' contract with HCCTVP, the Town Councils will need to make their own arrangements for monitoring of their cameras. An option would be for them to negotiate arrangements for cameras to be monitored from Dunstable, through the Council. The issues and implications are detailed in appendix B. The changes in shift patterns and operational arrangements remove any resilience in the service and there will be greater reliance on recording as opposed to proactive monitoring. The issues and implications are detailed in appendix E.
19. Having considered both the financial detail and the issues and implications for each of the options set out for the CCTV review it is recommended that the Council:
 - agree that the revenue savings of £95,000 (Appendix E) are implemented to achieve a full year saving in 2011/12
 - agree to the integration of cameras operating via the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership into the Dunstable CCTV control room and the whole CCTV service operated as one from Dunstable

- that the Council seeks a financial contribution from Bedfordshire Police and those Town Councils where CCTV cameras are located
- that further research is undertaken to consider longer term options for CCTV

Alternative Options and Considerations

20. During the review process other opportunities have come to the fore with regard to the medium to longer term opportunities for CCTV in Central Bedfordshire. These opportunities are linked to the development of the Guided Bus Way. This network will link the town centres of Houghton Regis, Dunstable, and Luton, with the major housing areas, and the main line rail stations in Luton and Luton airport.
21. The CCTV requirement is still to be finally scoped but initial indications are for approximately 20 cameras. CCTV monitoring will be required from 0700 - 2300 hrs. The project plan has set aside a £100,000 capital spend. There maybe an additional requirement to monitor the whole route but this would need costing in conjunction with any perceived cost saving i.e. could this option save on staff needed for daily inspections. Each station/bus stop will have “help points” and real time information displays and it is envisaged that a CCTV control room will service calls from these “help points”.
22. Working closely with Luton Borough Council and major CCTV providers on this type of project provides the opportunity for the local authorities to consider joining existing CCTV services into a single service with the opportunity to provide a range of income generation opportunities through provision of a range of services, some of which are already provided across Directorates within the Council.
23. These options also include the opportunity to look at private sector businesses working with the local authorities to provide private sector investment in services such as CCTV over the longer term whilst offsetting the cost to the local authorities by offering the local authority the opportunity to generate income through the service provided. Our current CCTV maintenance provider Quadrant Security Group has identified further opportunities of this nature for consideration. These are set out in Appendix I.

Conclusion

24. It is often the case that the effectiveness of CCTV is measured against statistics such as local crime rates or detection rates. CCTV is also seen by many as a panacea to either deter or solve all crime, and when statistics do not support this, its value for money and effectiveness is challenged. CCTV provision is frequently seen as a support for the police and leads to challenges as to why local authorities often bear the costs of this service, particularly when local policing capacity and response is under scrutiny.

25. In considering such challenges it is important to consider what may happen if CCTV provision is reduced or removed. Some areas have reduced or removed cameras only to see an increase in crime and disorder resulting in the re-introduction of CCTV provision. CCTV also has a wider role that it can play in local authorities by offering services that generate income, and support the work of other services/teams.
26. Turning CCTV systems off is not a simple matter, and once decommissioned it can be costly to re-instate, as such it is imperative that any decision to make service reductions in CCTV is considered both in terms of immediate savings, and, in the medium to longer term, the impact on and costs to the communities in Central Bedfordshire. A perspective articulated by the Director of the UK CCTV User Group, Peter Fry, who commented recently; "In this age of budget austerity, we cannot afford to waste money chasing imaginary savings. While it makes sense to look for savings where they can reasonably be found, CCTV should only be cut back after careful examination of the potential impact on local communities and businesses and in consultation with the local police."

Appendices:

Appendix A	Option 1 - Financial Detail and recommendation
Appendix B	Option 2 - Financial Detail and recommendation
Appendix C	Option 3 - Financial Detail and recommendation
Appendix D	Option 4 - Financial Detail and recommendation
Appendix E	Option 5a - Financial Detail and recommendation
Appendix F	Option 5b - Financial Detail and recommendation
Appendix G	Consultation Feedback
Appendix H	Comments from Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 September 2010.
Appendix I	Additional CCTV options for consideration
Appendix J	List of Camera locations

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

None

Location of papers: (Insert location where papers are held)

N/A