

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

OCTOBER 2018

CCTV Short Sharp Review

1. Background Information

- 1.1 On the 19th December, 2016 Officers attended the Overview and Scrutiny Board to provide an update in respect of CCTV. A number of concerns were raised by Members in respect of the allocation of CCTV cameras and determining the allocation (particularly timescales and decision makers) and the Board was unanimous in its view that the matter needed further investigation to ensure that the service met the needs of residents, was fit for purpose and provided value for money.
- 1.2 With the agreement of the Board, a Short Sharp Review Group, chaired by Councillor S. Colella and including Councillors M. Thompson and S. Webb was set up to consider the issue in more detail. This Group met on seven occasions from March 2017 to September 2018 to examine CCTV provision in Bromsgrove District in more detail.

2 Summary of Findings

- 2.1 Since the outset of the Group's investigations, the matter has evolved with funding made available from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and a detailed report (see Appendix 1) undertaken by an external consultant.
- 2.2 This report summarises the Group's discussions with the CCTV and Telecare Services Manager and the Head of Community Services. Members should make reference to the report attached at Appendix 1 when considering the following three recommendations.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1. That the Council's £40k capital funding be used to match-fund a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for CCTV funding in order to replace the current CCTV transmission infrastructure to a digital network and to purchase and resource the introduction of re-deployable cameras.**
- 2. The current camera locations be reviewed in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioners guidance and using data from the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that they still meet their purpose with cameras to be removed as appropriate; and**
- 3. That Officers' have a rolling programme target to replace the existing cameras over a 3 year period, by replacing approximately 20 cameras per year, subject to a capital bid.**

3 CCTV Cameras in Bromsgrove

- 3.1 The CCTV and Telecare Services Manager was interviewed by the Group in June 2017 when the historical context for the introduction of the CCTV system in Bromsgrove District was provided. CCTV was part of the Government clamp down on anti-social behaviour and to reduce the fear of crime. A number of bids were made by the Council under a Central Government initiative. The first bid was for thirty-five cameras which were located in Bromsgrove Town Centre and Rubery, and further bids followed for local villages in 2002, with cameras being placed in Alvechurch, Barnt Green and Hagley. The Council was not successful in its third bid. Councillor Colella understood that the Parish Council had also contributed towards the cost of cameras in Hagley. A number of cameras in the Aston Fields area had been funded by British Rail and the Council had match funded a camera by the Ladybird public house. Following the Station extension cameras had been funded by Centro. Later cameras included the ones in Wythall, Alvechurch train station and at Hagley recreation ground.
- 3.2 During the course of Members' inquiries, the CCTV and Telecare Manager confirmed that over a ten year period there had been no new surveillance cameras installed. The life span of the system was ten years but it was already significantly older. There were however other local authorities throughout the country using systems that were much older.
- 3.3 No significant funding had been made available since the initial schemes and any funds from the PCC had to be bid for through specific projects. Government schemes by which cameras had been funded in the past were no longer available.

4 Monitoring CCTV Cameras

- 4.1 In conversations with the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager, it was established that the shared service CCTV Team had been based in Redditch for approximately eight years. Camera recordings were digital which allowed more screens to be observed at one time. Information was retained for thirty-one days then over recorded. All staff had a license to carry out their work and were regularly tested through a classroom exercise, followed by a practical and written examination in order to understand their responsibilities.
- 4.2 In June 2017 it was reported to Members that there were twenty-two CCTV and Lifeline operators in the Monitoring Centre. In addition there were Lifeline installers and administrative officers giving a total of around thirty staff. All worked on a rota basis and were part-time, allowing availability to cover for sickness and holidays. The CCTV & Telecare Services Manager explained that following an independent cross-party review, which had taken place in 2015, display screen assessments had been carried out for everyone, with recommendations being made in respect of screens and chairs within the working environment. There were no industry guidelines, but following discussions the number of screens had been reduced and

adjustments made to the images shown. There were fifty four at any one time, with one hundred and fifty cameras overall. The Centre was manned twenty-four hours a day.

- 4.3 The CCTV & Telecare Services Manager reported that the Police did not visit as often as they had done so in previous years but a reduction in the night time economy may have impacted on this as there was not the same volume of incidents as there used to be. The data available in respect of the number of convictions which had been supported by evidence from CCTV was limited, often due to the difficulty in tracking CCTV usage at the Police side of the process, although it was noted that there had been times when this was available in the past.

5 Location of Cameras

- 5.1 From the outset of the investigation, Members were keen to understand how the decision was made to locate cameras in particular locations. It had been difficult to trace original records of when the cameras were initially fitted.
- 5.2 Members considered the existing process, and reassurance was provided by the Head of Community Services and the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager that following the independent cross-party review work, an “application” form had been created which gave details of who would be consulted. This included local communities and other partners, with the final recommendation being made following collation of the information by the Community Safety, Safer Bromsgrove partnership.
- 5.3 Data protection issues and guidance from the Surveillance Commissioner had to be taken into account when considering the location of cameras and impact assessments carried out for those that would be affected by a camera in their vicinity. The aim was to capture as much information as possible in order to assess the area where the CCTV camera might be located. Final decisions were made by the Safer Bromsgrove Partnership. There were no set timescales for this process to be completed.
- 5.4 The Head of Community Services highlighted issues in Birmingham, in the past, around placing CCTV cameras which could intrude on people’s privacy, leading to the introduction of new legislation. Care was therefore needed when considering CCTV location and a Home Office protocol had to be adhered to. Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils were one of the first to be accredited through the Surveillance Camera Office Code of Practice.
- 5.5 It was confirmed by the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager that it was not practical to move existing cameras to other sites due to the costs involved. The cost of the BT Transmission was the most significant factor and this varied from site to site, depending upon for example, the other utilities in the area and access to electricity. The types of cameras used were not portable; however, with a new IP and wireless system this would become more feasible.

- 5.6 In October 2017 Members considered in more detail the role of re-deployable cameras and the signage alerting the public to the presence of CCTV. It was noted that the Environmental Services Team, through the Place Teams, used cameras to deter and identify perpetrators of fly tipping and were responsible for enforcement of this type. The use of residents own personal CCTV cameras was also queried. It was understood that if an incident was reported through the 101 phone line and an incident number allocated then this could be used by the Police as part of any future investigation.
- 5.7 Members agreed that looking to the future it could be more appropriate to invest in re-deployable cameras rather than static cameras, particularly in the outlying areas of the District. It was felt that whilst static cameras could be appropriate in the town centres, re-deployable cameras would be more effective in other areas. The potential to make re-deployable camera footage available to the Police and partners was also raised, however such work would need to be carefully considered, ensuring that it was cost effective and within the scope of the Council CCTV Code of Practice. It was noted that if a substantial amount of static cameras were to be removed then the reasoning behind these decisions would need to be communicated to those affected and a strong business case put forward.

6 Funding for CCTV Cameras

- 6.1 From the outset of the Group's work, it was confirmed by the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager that funding of approximately £65k per Community Safety Partnership from the PCC could be applied for on an annual grant basis over 3 years. The CCTV service was provided across Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest, with a contract to maintain Wyre Forest District Council's service which generated £40k in income.
- 6.2 The Monitoring Centre covered CCTV, Lifeline and the Out of Hours service and generated expenditure split 50/50 and the income from Lifeline was split 60/40 between Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- 6.3 In October 2017 the Group were advised that the West Mercia PCC had carried out a review of CCTV across the division and was making funding available. This had created a bidding opportunity for up to £65k per year for three years across the three areas covered. Initially, this opportunity was being approached with caution as it had to be procured through West Mercia's framework which was yet to be established and could be used for capital purchase only, with match funding.
- 6.4 In December 2017 it was clarified that a £1m fund would be made available to the West Mercia area and that the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) could apply for a maximum allocation of £65k for three years. The PCC's framework for procurement was not as rigid as initially anticipated with the possibility of rolling the funds together, which would increase the value and allow for the opportunity to consider digital or wireless systems, which would save a substantial amount with BT. Members were advised that the intention

was to future proof the system and pool funds from each of the three Councils. If the funds could be brought forward into one sum, which for The CSP would be around £195k, this would go some way towards doing that. Details of the monies from the PCC were still to be finalised and match funding was also required. It was suggested that the current capital pot of £40k set aside for the upgrading of CCTV in Bromsgrove be used as match funding.

7 CCTV Review

- 7.1 In October 2017, Members discussed the estimated cost of an external consultant to review the CCTV needs of the District and questioned whether this was a worthwhile activity. Whilst the CCTV and Telecare Services Manager had the expertise to operate the current system she did not have the technical knowledge to do such a review. Undertaking the review would also be very time consuming and not something which could be undertaken lightly.
- 7.2 Following further discussion in December 2017, it was clear that there were many variables and it was a challenge for officers to keep updated with the rapid pace of advances in technology. It was also noted that each Ward had its own individual needs and that in some Wards what was currently in place may no longer be the best option, particularly in respect of fixed cameras. Members felt that a review of the current scheme would provide the opportunity to consider the best system to meet the needs of the Council, together with possible locations to ensure that cameras were placed appropriately.

8 CCTV Review Findings

- 8.1 In May 2018, the external consultant presented his initial findings to Members'. The interim report considered what could be done to upgrade the system and potentially save money. It was confirmed that the biggest expenditure was on BT Fibre Costs but the Council was in its last year of a three year contract with BT.
- 8.2 The capital works required for the provision of a new wireless network for Bromsgrove town centre, Rubery, Barnt Green and Hagley were referred to and if the recommendation to procure wireless technology was carried forward there would be savings to be made on the ongoing BT Fibre Costs.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the analysis which would be undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership was needed to assist in determining the location of cameras. It was suggested that there needed to be a strategy in place for re-deployable cameras and it was highlighted that it would be important to talk to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to discuss the potential use of lampposts for positioning re-deployable cameras as these cameras would provide the flexibility to meet local concerns.

8.4 In August 2018, the Group met for the final time and considered the draft of the consultant's report (see Appendix 1). During the meeting the following costings were discussed:

- The estimated costs for the digital infrastructure upgrade to include Bromsgrove Town Centre, Rubery, Hagley and Barnt Green were £134,250 however savings from BT after the upgrade were estimated to be around £38k per year (giving a payback period of around 3.5 years).
- The costs for the replacement of digital cameras were variable depending on the specification, make and model required, however it is likely that a camera estimated at £2k would meet the operational requirements of the scheme.
- The estimated maintenance costs once all cameras were digital was likely to be halved to around £12K, bringing a potential saving of £13K to the current BDC maintenance cost.

8.5 The group also considered the draft of the consultant's report (see Appendix 1). The findings in the report were agreed by Members and in light of the report's content and Members' investigations, the following three recommendations are being put forward.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1. That the Council's £40k capital funding be used to match-fund a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for CCTV funding in order to replace the current CCTV transmission infrastructure to a digital network and to purchase and resource the introduction of re-deployable cameras.**
- 2. That the current camera locations be reviewed in accordance with the Camera Surveillance Commissioners guidance and using data from the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that they still meet their purpose with cameras to be removed as appropriate; and**
- 3. That Officers have a rolling programme target to replace the existing cameras over a 3 year period, by replacing approximately 20 cameras per year, subject to a capital bid**

9. Background Papers

- Review of Public-Space CCTV Systems for Bromsgrove District Council, CDC Technical Services, August 2018 (**see Appendix 1**)
- CCTV Update Briefing Paper, Overview and Scrutiny Board, Bromsgrove District Council, 19 December 2016, <http://svmodern.gov:9072/documents/s31606/CCTV%20O%20S%2019.12.16.pdf>

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