

CCTV

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Summary: This report presents the findings of a working group, led by Cllr Clements with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Social Well-being, set up to review the provision of CCTV.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That a tender brief and specification is prepared and tenders invited for the upgrading and enhancing of the CCTV system as detailed in the report and that the Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the lead officer, be delegated to conclude the tender process within the available resources.
2. Dependent on a successful tender process, that the Council enters into a Service Level Agreement with Allerdale Borough Council for the purchase of a specified number of hours monitoring per annum.
3. That a partnership agreement is drawn up with the police setting out respective expectations.

Impact on delivering

the Corp Plan: The Corporate Plan states that this Council will work with the West Cumbria Crime and Disorder Strategy (Priority 3), which supports CCTV in reducing violent crime, and PI-L34 specifically states that the Council will work towards a 10% reduction in overall crime in Copeland.

Impact on delivering

statutory objectives: Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act requires Local Authorities to be aware of crime and disorder and do all they reasonably can to prevent them.

Financial & HR

Resources: £110,000 capital funding has been set aside in the 2006-07 budget for replacement and renewal of CCTV equipment.

The 2006/07 revenue base budget for CCTV is £62,000. Revenue funding of £70,843 has been carried over from the 2005-06 budget, making a total revenue budget of £132,843 for this year. Also, £4,600 has been awarded from the CDRP from their 2005-06 budget and applications will be

made to the CDRP on an annual basis for a similar amount towards monitoring costs.

Risks: As detailed in the report at section 3.

Key Decision Status:

- Financial: Yes
- Ward: No

Introduction

- 1.1 Initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Social Well-being, a working group was set up by the Portfolio Holder in 2005 to review the provision of CCTV in the Borough amid concerns at the effectiveness of the current operation, given changes to 'hotspots' in those areas covered over the past ten years and changes to monitoring arrangements.
- 1.2 The working group was led by Councillor Clements with Councillors Mrs Margaret Woodburn, Ray Cole and John Jackson.
- 1.3 In the course of their review, the following evidence was gathered and considered:
 - National Evaluation of CCTV: effective practice guide, Home Office
 - A visit to Allerdale Borough Council's monitoring operation and a joint meeting with Allerdale Borough Council's Portfolio Holder and Scrutiny Committee.
 - Police evaluation of CCTV for Allerdale Borough Council.
 - Discussion with Barrow Borough Council
 - Discussion with local police representatives in Whitehaven, Cleator Moor Egremont, and Millom, and with Inspector Joe Murray who leads for the police in West Cumbria for CCTV.
 - A professional site survey accompanied by the police.
 - The Community Safety Strategy.
 - Budget consultation for 2006-07.
- 1.4 The audit of crime carried out to inform the West Cumbria Community Safety Strategy 2005-08 showed a violent crime increase of 17% over two year period in Copeland and that anti-social behaviour accounts for 32% of overall crime. These trends influenced the working group's thinking.

FINDINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP

General

- 2.1 CCTV is only effective if a good working partnership is established setting out the obligations and commitments of those delivering and using the service according to best practice.
- 2.2 CCTV is one of many tools used in crime prevention, reduction and detection. It is nevertheless an important tool in combating the fear of crime and when effectively monitored can reduce crime by allowing police intervention before a situation escalates. It can also be an effective deterrent.
- 2.3 In contrast to occasional news headlines of 'big brother'; there would appear to be considerable community support for CCTV as illustrated by the budget consultation exercise of 2006-07 and some dissatisfaction with the existing provision.
- 2.4 The police locally continue to struggle to provide accurate statistics to support the effectiveness of CCTV owing to the information system used to record incidents. They were, however, universal in their support for CCTV and have provided some hand-written evaluation for Allerdale Borough Council in support of the effectiveness of its operation.

Weaknesses of the existing provision

- 2.6 Discussions with the police and the site survey have uncovered that there are:
 - faults on some cameras for which parts are obsolete
 - badly positioned cameras which do not take account of today's nightlife or hotspots.
 - wiring is badly corroded and the infrastructure requires a complete overhaul.
 - police monitoring is now ad hoc and nearly always reactive.
 - recording is currently resource intensive and subject to human error.
 - a subsequent lack of confidence in the system by the local community.

Proposals

- 2.7 The proposals continue to concentrate in the main on provision in the four main population centres of Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom. The aim is to update and enhance the current provision, offering some proactive monitoring without which the working group continues to believe there is little point in having a CCTV system (although the police and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have argued that even reactive use is better than nothing at all).
- 2.8 The strategy is two-fold: at the very least, existing cameras (one requires to be moved in Egremont) are updated and subject to some proactive monitoring (of which more later). If the tender process drives down the cost (as it is envisaged that it will), it is hoped that where there is evidence of need, as determined by the recent audit of crime across the Borough, that the provision is enhanced by the addition of approximately four more cameras.

It is envisaged that this would include two more cameras to cover the Duke Street/Tangier Street area of Whitehaven, a camera in Frizington, for which the police have lobbied hard, an additional camera in Millom to cover Rottington Row and possibly some static car park coverage.

It is worth noting that a professional site survey suggested five additional cameras for Whitehaven, two additional cameras for Millom in addition to Frizington.

- 2.9 It is envisaged that these two options will be put out to tender. At the moment the costs the working group have are from one company and are indicative only. The tender process, therefore, should drive the best competitive rate.
- 2.10 The initially high cost of replacement cameras and subsequent repair and updating, led the working group to believe that renting the cameras over a fixed-term period would be the most effective option. This would include upkeep and maintenance, and would allow any system the flexibility to keep pace with developments in technology. It is envisaged that the cameras be rented over either a 7-10 year period, depending on the most favourable terms.

- 2.11 Allerdale Borough Council, whose comprehensive CCTV system has been resourced to a large extent through Single Regeneration Budget funding, is shortly to move into a purpose-built monitoring station in Workington town centre which is linked by police radio – a sophisticated and expensive new radio system - to the police control room in Workington. This is the despatch and control centre for the whole of West Cumbria. As a result of a long-standing work relationship, they are on very good terms with the police control room.
- 2.12 This Council would be unable to support a full-time monitoring operation on cost grounds. The working group considers, however, that a number of hours a year should be bought, if a CCTV system is to be effective. Monitoring allows a proactive approach. It allows cameras to be manipulated to help capture necessary evidence. It allows notification of a possible situation early enough to allow intervention and avoid possible escalation. The hours bought would clearly not be publicised to allow maximum effect from any CCTV operation.
- 2.13 The working group considers that the most advantageous partnership with respect to monitoring is to buy monitoring time from Allerdale Borough Council. In addition to the advantages listed at 2.11 above, they have an understanding of the role of the local authority in a CCTV operation and there is very little additional infrastructure which would require to be installed. They also log each incident, helping to keep a record and thereby providing some form of evaluation.

Consideration has been given to possible alternatives, including a company operating from Whitehaven. Their monitoring operation is shortly to move to a central location in England. This, their lack of response to approaches made and the expense of installing the new police radio system makes this a very much less attractive option.

Risks

- 3.1 Under any new system the risk would remain that an incident might happen which is not caught by CCTV. This is inevitable, given that the cost of providing a 24/7 operation is prohibitive. CCTV will never be a 'catch all' solution. There will continue to be occasions when local communities will be disappointed.

The proposals seek to use CCTV to maximum effect, reducing incidents of crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour – by means of deterrent and early intervention - targeting available resources to best effect.

- 3.2 The police will continue to struggle to provide hard statistics in support of CCTV – however some evaluation should be included in any partnership agreement with the police and should be an element of service included in the service level agreement with Allerdale Borough Council for monitoring.

- 3.3 The risk of not upgrading the system is that Copeland will cease to have a CCTV operation for all the technical reasons listed at 2.6.

Funding

- 4.1 Provision has been made in the Council's Budget as detailed on the front cover of this report.
- 4.2 Funding of £4,600 per annum has been secured from the CDRP, however a bid to the police for some additional revenue funding has been unsuccessful on the grounds that it would 'set a precedent'. We are, however, aware that the police have paid for some 'additional' monitoring from Allerdale Borough Council on 'special' occasions and would expect a similar partnership approach for Copeland.
- 4.3 It is envisaged that approaches to the relevant Parish and Town Councils, Town Centre Groups and local businesses for local contributions will be made when confidence is restored in the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Without going through a tender process, the working group only has indicative costs from one company on which to base their proposals. It would be expected that competition through the tender process will drive costs down. It is for this reason that the working group is recommending that options are included in the tender process to allow an element of flexibility and that the Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the lead officer, determine the most advantageous 'mix' arising from the tender process within the available resources.

PHASE 2

- 6.1 At the outset, the working group took note of concern of by Parish and Town Councils with respect to anti-social behaviour across the Borough raised as part of consultation on the Overview and Scrutiny work plan. For this reason, the site survey was asked to look at mobile provision in some of the more rural parts of the Borough and in non town centre locations in Whitehaven, in addition to the areas already covered.

- 6.2 An estimate of the cost of mobile provision is extremely high – higher than permanent provision in most cases - and discussion with Barrow Borough Council suggested that mobile provision was logistically very difficult to manage and resource intensive. Their advice from their own experience was to stay well clear.
- 6.3 On the grounds of cost and the advice received, and after considering the latest crime statistics, the working group concluded that it would not be possible to include mobile provision at this stage, however would continue to consider whether there were alternative more cost-effective options to be considered. The working group will continue to monitor and research possibilities.

Consultation: Police, Allerdale Borough Council, Budget Working Party
Chief Finance Officer, Head of Legal and Democratic
Services.