

BRIEFING REPORT - CCTV & WEST KENT HUB UPDATE

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 18 October 2022

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report updates members on a recently undertaken technical report on the Council's CCTV system and options to create a multi-council West Kent Hub.

This report supports the Key Aim of: Safe Communities: A safer place to live, work and travel.

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Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee: That the CCTV & West Kent Hub report is noted and that officers further consider with our partners the options outlined in the technical report.

Reason for recommendation: The Council's CCTV service plays a critical role in making our communities and public spaces safer, they also assist the police evidentially in preventing, reducing and detecting crime.

Introduction

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) maintains a system of 144 cameras. The majority transmit their data, either via cables (owned or hired) or over an encrypted internet connection, to the SDC CCTV control room. Images can be shared by operators, with the Police. The majority of the 144 cameras have Pan Tilt and Zoom (PTZ) capacity. The CCTV system and equipment dates back to 1997 when Central Government funding was provided to encourage camera systems nationwide, though most of the original cameras have subsequently been repaired or replaced, however the transmission operating system remains as originally supplied and is analogue in operation, which is no longer supported.

- 2 On 14 April 2016 the Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee considered a report provided for information that had been considered by the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee on 12 April 2016 and would be considered by Cabinet on 21 April 2016. The report provided an update on the feasibility of merging the Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) CCTV Control Rooms and proposals to establish a West Kent CCTV hub, based at the Sevenoaks Offices.
- 3 The proposal, depending upon the monitoring option taken forward, could provide a return to 24/7 staff monitoring whilst achieving identified savings on monitoring costs and increasing resilience in the control room, particularly for the out of hours service.
- 4 The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services advised that the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee had considered the report and agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.
- 5 On 21 April 2016 the Council's Cabinet considered further a report from the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services that reported and updated figures for the preferred Option, advising that the potential savings were less than those quoted in the report at £18,000 for SDC, £21,000 for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (T&MBC) and £10,000 for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). However, it was likely that this could be even less if the monitoring arrangements were exposed to competitive tendering.
- 6 Cabinet resolved that a) in principle, a joint agreement be entered into with TWBC and T&MBC to establish a West Kent CCTV hub, based at the Sevenoaks offices; b) the preferred monitoring arrangements be '24 hour CCTV coverage and out of hours service for all 3 Councils. This model includes a dedicated Supervisor and 12 operators. This provides, mainly for three operators to be on duty, but at certain less busy times this will be reduced to 2 operators. Estimated Cost: £104,933 per Council; and c) a one-off Capital budget of £37,300 be approved, representing 50% of the cost of enlarging the existing Sevenoaks CCTV control room.
- 7 Although the proposal for a West Kent CCTV Hub was approved by SDC, partnering borough's decided not to proceed with the project.
- 8 In 2015 all 3 councils upgraded the server matrix to a Meyertech system. This is coming to its end of life with limited support available for spare parts. In 2019 SDC Upgraded the CCTV Control Room with new recording equipment, monitor wall screens, rewired the control room and refurbished all furniture and desks. In 2020 all the old cameras started to be replaced with hybrid cameras, this project has only another 20 cameras to be upgraded from the total of 144 cameras.
- 9 In November 2021 SDC, TWBC and T&MBC agreed that the West Kent CCTV Hub could now be an option as all of the Council's CCTV requirements had changed over the last 5 years. It was agreed by all three Council's that a technical report would be undertaken by an independent CCTV expert to see what the current options are.

- 10 Ilker Dervish was commissioned to carry out the technical CCTV review and to report his findings on all three Council CCTV systems and the options for combining these systems into a West Kent CCTV Hub based at SDC.
- 11 Ilker Dervish is a very experienced CCTV and Security professional with more than 35 years' experience in dealing with a wide range of public sector organisations at all levels. He has invaluable insight into understanding how organisations operate and has sat on several boards and committees devising policy, reviewing compliance and setting standards. He is currently Vice Chairman of the National CCTV User Group (NASCAM) and Managing Director of Comfort Zone Technology. Ilker is also the lead consultant for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets CCTV Transformation project.
- 12 The CCTV Technical report can be found in Appendix 1.

CCTV Technical Report - Overview

- 13 In summary the overwhelming conclusions of the CCTV technical report are two-fold, 1) the current condition of the Council's own CCTV system and 2) the options around providing a West Kent Hub opportunity.
- 14 SDC CCTV system - It is clear that regardless of progressing the West Kent CCTV Hub, although it would be critical for this opportunity to be delivered the Council's current system is in dire need of upgrading.
- 15 Our current CCTV system uses and relies upon end-of-life equipment which no longer can be supported by the respective manufacturers, which will result in the gradual piecemeal (or in the worst case catastrophic) failure of the CCTV system which it turn would have corporate reputational damage for the Council.
- 16 West Kent CCTV Hub - It also clear that the existing systems operated by Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council are all at an end of life status and the continuing use of which present a significant risk to services provided to residents mitigating security public space concerns.
- 17 In regards to Kent Police funding CCTV networks, Matthew Scott Kent's Police & Crime Commissioner has said that 'the Crime Reduction Grant can be used to support CCTV, however CCTV provision is not a core function of the Police and it is up to Local Authorities to decide what the CCTV service looks like going forward. The CCTV service will also be meeting and working with the district's new commander, Chief Inspector Elizabeth Jones to ensure the CCTV system is being used in the best interests of keeping the public safe by supporting and working with the police.
- 18 In 2021-2022 our CCTV Service were involved in over 100 assisted, monitored and instigated arrests with over 300 evidence and CCTV seizures from Kent police and other partners. Our CCTV Operators also dealt with over 1,500

requests from Kent Police's Force control centre for CCTV assistance within the district.

Strategy Options

19 The CCTV technical report sets out five strategic options for consideration for the West Kent CCTV Hub project, which are:

- **Do nothing** - resulting in gradual decline in effectiveness and the potentials for the eventual ceasing of equipment and the service;
- **Go it alone** - Each authority to deliver their public space CCTV service separately and upgrading their own system when required. How each authority's systems are to be monitored will need to be resolved (may have significant maintenance and monitoring cost implications).
- **Switch to an unmonitored operation with incremental system upgrades in response to equipment failure** - resulting in immediate decline in effectiveness and eventual ceasing of the service for each authority or authorities (as failure in the system may impact in another authority's service delivery).
- **Create a single operating centre (West Kent Hub) utilising existing equipment and delivering incremental system upgrades in response to equipment failure** - results in improvement in monitoring effectiveness but postpones the requirement for further investment in upgrading cameras
- **Create a single operating centre (West Kent Hub) utilising existing equipment and upgrade all systems to the latest IP technology** - brings the systems up to current standards and futureproofs the service whilst reducing system revenue costs

Recommendation

20 That officers further consider with our partners the options outlined in the technical report and provide a further update to members on options that are available.

Key Implications

Financial

All budget and financial issues are detailed in the main report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The technical report has highlighted a risk to system failures on all CCTV equipment, which could render the system as unusable if the equipment fails, due to the age of the infrastructure.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be neither an increase nor decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

Conclusions

Clearly further decisions are needed between all partners to decide if there are any possible options for progressing and developing this project. Once partners position have been decided upon Sevenoaks District Council will need to consider its position regarding the CCTV equipment and its future development and operation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Technical CCTV report

Background Papers

None

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Finance & Trading