

## **EVALUATION OF CCTV PROVISION**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee considered a report on this issue in July of this year (Min 234/06). This report brings Members up to date with action taken since then and suggests a way forward.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In July, a report was submitted to this Committee recommending the replacement of out of date CCTV equipment within the District. At the meeting it was resolved as follows:-

- (1) That the analogue cameras be removed and replaced with digital equipment at the local shopping parades at an estimated cost of £20,000.
- (2) That the older digitised cameras be replaced at a cost of approximately £9,000.
- (3) That early discussions be agreed around the further management and maintenance of the CCTV system involving Holmes Place, the local Chambers where they are the providers and those Town and Parish Councils who have installed their own systems, with a view to determining whether a common approach can be developed.

- 2.2 Subsequently, this decision was called in by the Review Committee who, after consideration, recommended to Council:-

“ that the decisions made on CCTV Evaluation at the meeting held on 13 July 2006 be reconsidered by the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee on the basis that alternative consideration should be given to the purchase of covert cameras (suitable for use as evidence in any criminal proceedings) and the merits of improved lighting rather than replacing the analogue provision and upgrading the older digital systems (resolutions (1) and (2) above). Considerations to include:-

- Identification of the preferred Police option and clarification of the management/operating arrangements around such an option. If mobile covert cameras were the preferred choice, there would need to be agreement around publicity and usage specifically within the District
- Examination of best practice in other authorities in terms of equipment used and management of those systems.”

It was felt that there was merit in pursuing the third resolution agreed by the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee. Council endorsed these recommendations at its meeting on 25 July.

### **3 EVALUATION OF CCTV**

- 3.1 As a result of the above, a number of actions have now been implemented, including a site visit to Southend Borough Council's CCTV control room. On the basis of these, the following has been established:-
- The Police's preferred option is the use of covert cameras. However, at present South Eastern Division has in excess of 40 units and therefore does not require more.
  - There is agreement that Rayleigh High Street is really the only area in Rochford which might benefit from CCTV monitored on a 24-hour basis.
  - Southend Borough Council and Rayleigh Town Council have agreed to investigate the possibility of joint working on the provision and monitoring of equipment in Rayleigh High Street. The detailed costing work is now underway on developing a test site. Its effectiveness would then be used as a benchmark for its impact on crime reduction and detection. However, this work is still ongoing and its implementation will depend on the outcome of discussions between the two parties as to its viability and feasibility.
  - There is no support from the police for the continued operation of the analogue CCTV systems currently installed at Golden Cross Parade, Ashingdon; the Co-op in Great Wakering and London Road, Rayleigh.
- 3.2 Members should also be aware that, in recent weeks, a letter has been received from Essex County Council asking that all CCTV equipment be removed from their lamp columns by the end of January. This is due to safety concerns and affects provision at Hullbridge, Hockley and Rochford Market Square.
- 3.3 On the basis of the above it is suggested to Members that all analogue CCTV equipment be removed. Also, in the light of Essex County Council's request, that the provision at Hullbridge, Hockley and Rochford be removed. The total cost of removal will be approximately £5,000. As a result, the Council's CCTV activities will be centred around its own sites, buildings & activities, such as car park security, and be maintained and managed within that context. Outside of these areas across the District, greater reliance will be placed on covert usage by the Police, with the possible exception of Rayleigh High Street where Southend Borough Council and the Town Council are looking at the potential for 24 hour monitoring.

### **4 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council's reputation may be at risk if it provides CCTV equipment that is out of date and ineffective or results in Health & Safety issues around provision on lamp columns.

**5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There is a view that overt CCTV is perceived to act as a deterrent to crime and the removal of the equipment may have an impact. At the same time, research indicates that CCTV is actually not as effective as it is perceived and that improved lighting is more effective in impacting on both crime and perceptions around the fear of crime.

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There will be a cost of approximately £5,000 in arranging for the removal of the equipment, which can be met from the Crime & Disorder reserve.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To remove all the Council's analogue CCTV equipment and that installed on lamp columns in Hockley, Rochford and Hullbridge.
  - (2) To continue to consider CCTV within the context of the management of the Council's sites and property, with appropriate provision being made for the management and maintenance of such equipment.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

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**Background Papers:-**

None

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