

MOTION ON NOTICE

- 1.1 The Proper Officer reports that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13, the following motion has been received from Cllrs M G Wilkinson, Mrs D Hoy and M Hoy:-

‘Motion to establish a working group to conduct a feasibility study into the installation of CCTV across the district.’

Background

At present there is a distinct lack of proper CCTV infrastructure across the Rochford district. The main market town of Rayleigh, which has over 35,000 inhabitants, does not have a single working council owned CCTV camera. What systems that do exist across the various parishes in the district are not linked and are all ‘stand-alone’ systems. There is no continuity of policy or procedure. Neighbouring towns such as Wickford, Basildon, Southend and Chelmsford; these all have fully functioning CCTV systems, owned and run by the local district council and supported by and used regularly by the local police.

As we all know, crime is on the increase, particularly violent crime and anti-social behaviour. This is at a time that whilst police numbers are increasing marginally, but the net gain to us as a district is minimal due to the extra policing commitments and the new style of policing which exists today. It is highly unlikely we will ever go back to the days of a policeman on the beat so we need to look to other options to protect the public. The police criminal investigation process relies heavily on securing ‘passive data’. This is data from systems which run automatically in the background and record data in the process. The most obvious of these is CCTV.

The ***Core Investigative Doctrine*** and the ***‘Murder manual’***, both issued by the National College for Policing give advice to Senior Investigating Officers. They both discuss ‘fast track actions’ which must be considered by the investigating officers within the ‘Golden Hour’. Consider that as a period of time immediately following an incident within which it is paramount to secure as much evidence as possible, as after that time the available evidence tends to diminish in both quantity and quality. CCTV scoping and collection is always on that list of fast track actions. Without exception. This principle applies not only to the investigation of crime as serious as murder – but for all criminal investigations. Fast track actions such as CCTV scoping is equally as important. Therefore, a decent fully functioning CCTV system will always have the support and backing of the police.

Alongside the difficulties faced by the police in prosecuting offenders is the added difficulty of securing sufficient evidence to secure a charge and conviction at court. Many factors play into this but an increasing factor is the reluctance of either victim or witnesses to provide documentary evidence.

Therefore at times, a case becomes one word against the other and the relevant evidential tests fail.

In the main, the reasons witnesses are reluctant to provide evidence is for fear of reprisal. Therefore, if we have a scenario where a victim makes an allegation to the police that they were attacked, for example and none of the witnesses come forward BUT there is clear CCTV imagery of the incident, then the evidential tests are satisfied and the case can progress.

Added to this, another benefit of having CCTV in our towns is for public reassurance. There has to be signage erected to comply with legislation which just adds to the effect. How reassuring will it be for our residents to not only see CCTV cameras erected and keeping an eye on their safety but also for signs advertising this fact?

Legislation and duty imposed.

Section 6(1) Crime and Disorder Act 1988 imposes a duty on 'responsible' authorities for a local government area to formulate and implement various strategies. One of these is the reduction of crime and disorder in the area, which includes anti-social behaviour. Another strategy, which this legislation imposes on the local authority, is to reduce re-offending in the area.

Section 5 of this Act also defines what a responsible authority actually is. It defines it as follows:

- a. The local authority
- b. County Council
- c. National Probation Service
- d. Police
- e. Fire & Rescue
- f. Clinical Commissioning groups.

It is important to note that the duties imposed under section 6(1) rest on all of the above list, not just the local authority but we are not talking about a full strategy here with a multi-agency approach where partners within the above organisations would be consulted. This is one small part of that strategy and sits squarely with the local authority, which is the district council not the parish or town councils as they are not a local authority. No member would expect the probation service or Fire and rescue service for example to be involved in the installation of CCTV. That duty rests with the district council.

Proposition

Clearly the installation of a CCTV system across the district is a large undertaking and not one to be organised in one meeting. Therefore my proposal and what I ask members to resolve this evening is the following: -

To set up a working group to conduct a feasibility study and assess the viability of installing CCTV across Rochford District.

That group, in my opinion should have a working plan, scope and ambition of what it aims to achieve. The below is a list of ideas for research by the group which are obviously not exhaustive.

1. Technological options.
2. Signage / Codes of practice and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
3. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
4. Locations and needs assessment
5. Funding options
6. Storage and hub.
7. On-going maintenance.
8. ANPR
9. Compile a council policy for CCTV which will ensure consistency across the district.

Please see Annexe A – for further thoughts on each of these areas.

Working group composition.

It is important that this group is entirely NON political. We are all councillors elected to represent our ward's needs regardless of political persuasion. It is equally important that the working group is properly representative of the members, including our geographical location across the district and of the council itself. Paramount of course is that, in my opinion, it consists of our Community Safety Officer. I would suggest that portfolio holders and committee chairmen should not be on the group as it is highly likely that factors involved in the research process may well need to be referred to their particular committee. So, there could be a conflict of interest. Equally I would be cautious of any members of the development committee joining the group as it is almost certain that planning consent will be required for the erection of most if not all of the posts or masts and therefore, they would render themselves predetermined in this respect. I therefore propose that the membership of this working group is as follows:

1. No more than 5 members from all sides of the chamber. The group cannot be too large or it will fail. 5 is a good manageable number to be productive.
2. The Community Safety Officer for Rochford District Council.
3. Representative from RHALC.
4. Representation from RDC Assets management team.

Selection of members on this working group can be conducted in one of a number of ways. I would invite members to make a decision as to how the council wishes to proceed on this issue.

1. Open volunteering for membership and subsequent voting by members in full council on 22 October.

2. Interested parties to send their nomination to Democratic services. Once this is done these can be referred to the review committee to decide who is on the working group.

Further options.

It is clearly important to explore as many options and possibilities at the outset to ensure that whatever system is designed is fit for purpose and 100% up to the demand of the job. In addition to whatever static or fixed cameras are installed – we can purchase a couple of portable cameras which work on the same system and feed into the same hub. These will be under the direct control of the Community Safety Officer for deployment where needed to tackle on-going problems across the district.

It would also be possible with a Wi-Fi system and using the agreed software system, if required any Parish or Town Council to increase their CCTV cameras to add to other locations but within any agreed working document.



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Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Michelle Power (Democratic Services Officer) on:-

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

1. **Technological options.** Technology moves on so quickly and most of the systems which were on the market two years ago have been superseded twice over now. Modern systems are now IP/WI-FI operations, and possibly even on 5G networks.

Whatever system recommended there is a need to consider the infrastructure involved in all cameras feeding to the central hub. Clearly a WI-FI or IP system will be far cheaper than one which requires the installation of hardware such as cabling.

- A WI-FI option might also have the advantage of creating '**WI-FI hotspots**' across the district for the benefit of the residents. Whatever system is chosen it needs to be stand alone, fixed to its own post or mast, so as to not having to rely on permission from shop premises and owners.
 - Wi-Fi will enable the Police and Councils to access and view the CCTV cameras remotely, as there could be a password available for selected Council officers and Police.
 - Cameras should be of dome design to ensure that potential offenders would not know where they are pointing giving further concern for any offending actions.
 - Enabling ease of cleaning and maintenance.
2. **Signage.** There are clear guidelines within the codes of practice for CCTV concerning the signage to be used for public CCTV systems. This will also remove any liability regarding RIPA.
 3. **The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).**
This is an area which will need some research /advice. By their very nature CCTV cameras gather personal data and store that data so we must be GDPR compliant. There are quite clearly ways in which we can achieve this otherwise all CCTV would have been removed from the entire country by now – which of course it has not. The CCTV Codes of practice will have the instructions in the practices to be followed.
 4. **Locations and needs assessment.**
I have been in contact with Assistant Chief Constable Andy Prophet from Essex Police, who is fully supportive of this project. He has already tasked Police analysts to conduct research for Rayleigh (which can be extended to include the district) for crime trends and hotspots to ensure that we locate the cameras accordingly. An authority cannot just put a camera where it wants –

it must be justified and backed up by data. ¹ This which work is already underway.

The Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) has been approached and is totally supportive too. Each parish and town council will be contacted in due course by the RHALC asking for input into whether or not cameras will be of benefit to their specific area, which will then feed back to the RDC working group.

5. **Funding options.** Funding is always a concern for councils especially for large projects such as this. There are a number of options open for investigation such as:-
- **‘Match funding’** between RDC and parish / town council on a pro rata basis – i.e. Cost would be subject to how many each parish or Town Council depending on the number of cameras installed in a specific town.
 - **Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)**
 - **Sponsorship.**
 - **Police and Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC.)**

To suggest but a few agencies

The aim and intention is to ensure that RDC retain minimum of 51% ownership for control of the system as it must be owned by the local authority but do not pay for the entire system. There are numerous options available to explore to assist.

6. **Storage.** There will be a need for one location to place the main hub into which the entire system can feed. One option is the disused toilet block at the top of Crown Hill in Rayleigh. It is owned by RDC. However other options will be explored.
7. **Maintenance.** This will form part of the tender process later in the project.
8. **ANPR.** It is possible to link Automatic Number Plate Reading (ANPR) technology to CCTV cameras. It has been used to great effect in Southend. In some parts of the district where there are only one or two routes in and out of an area, they can be used to obtain details of vehicles using the area as part of research into criminal movements. This is a tactic used by the police in investigating crime series.
9. **Policy.** The group can formulate a policy which the council can ratify and adopt for CCTV best practice and use across the district. This will then act as a benchmark for the standards required for CCTV hardware and access.

¹ *Codes of Practice for the use of CCTV cameras. Issued by the Information Commissioners Office Version 1.2 - Issued on 09.06.2017*