

## **EVALUATION OF CCTV PROVISION**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In line with minute 45/2006, this report updates Members on the CCTV provided by the Council across the District, assesses its effectiveness and suggests a way forward.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 A number of agencies have funded CCTV across the District over a number of years, including the District Council, Town and Parish Councils, and local Chambers of Trade. In addition, there has been a growth in the provision by individual landowners, developers, and occupiers.
- 2.2 As a result, there is a 'patchwork' of provision across the district. Those CCTV cameras provided by the District Council fall into two distinct categories, depending on age - analogue and digital. The first cameras provided by the Council were initially at selected local shopping parades. Subsequently, provision has been made as part of the Town Centre upgrade programme in Rochford and Hullbridge.
- 2.3 Also, the opportunity has been taken to provide cameras at other Council sites when they were upgraded, e.g. Websters Way Car Park, the Windmill and adjoining car park. Holmes Place, the Council's leisure partners, has installed cameras at Clements Hall and the Mill as part of their refurbishment and cameras have been incorporated as part of the Rayleigh Leisure Centre development.
- 2.4 Those cameras covering public areas currently falling within the Council's responsibility, as opposed to partners such as Holmes Place, are scheduled below:-

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date of installation</b>	<b>Type</b>
Golden Cross Parade, Ashingdon	August 2001	Analogue
Goodmans Sheltered Accommodation, Great Wakering	August 2001	Analogue
Co-op, Great Wakering	August 2001	Analogue
Shopping Parade, London Road, Rayleigh	August 2001	Analogue
Rochford Square	July 2003	Digital
Council Offices, South Street, Rochford	July 2003	Digital
Spa Road Hockley town centre.	July 2003	Digital
Ferry Road, Hullbridge	July 2003	Digital
Websters Way Car park, Rayleigh	March 2006	Digital

**3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 It is clear that the principal effectiveness of the current CCTV provision is in terms of providing public assurance, and possibly stopping potential crime, rather than in terms of number of incidences recorded leading to a conviction.
- 3.2 That said, information retrieved from the camera system has proved useful on occasions in providing intelligence to support investigations undertaken by the police.
- 3.3 However, from discussions with the police, changing legislative requirements and advances in technology, a number of issues are emerging.
- 3.4 Firstly, the analogue cameras installed at the local shopping parades are now regarded as obsolete, offering poorer quality images. They are seen to be reaching the end of their working life. In addition, the analogue systems are solely reliant on a third party where the equipment is sited to change the video tapes daily and report faults. Data security, reliability and access can therefore be an issue at these locations. The only exception to this third party responsibility is Goodmans sheltered accommodation.
- 3.5 The options for dealing with them would appear to be either leave them in situ, acknowledging their declining value and use, remove them completely, or invest in their replacement with new digital technology. It is suggested that there would be value in replacing the analogue technology with new up-graded digital technology, at all the locations. The opportunity will also be taken to reposition where appropriate. The cost for doing this work is estimated at around £20,000, which could be paid for from the Council's Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy budget reserve.
- 3.6 Secondly, in the case of the older digital systems, each cluster of cameras is attached to stand alone units with each system only allowing three or four cameras. This has resulted in the cameras viewing a wide area thus not always being close enough to obtain positive recognition of people. Unlike the latest digital recording devices, these systems have low storage which means that they are unable to record in real time resulting in short gaps in the recording.
- 3.7 Issues are also emerging with these cameras in terms of health and safety. In some instances, the hard-drive recorders are fixed on the same lamppost as the CCTV camera. As health and safety requirements have tightened, gaining safe access to these recorders has become more difficult and expensive, with the ideal method being the use of a 'cherry picker'. Thus, to gain safe and proper access is becoming more expensive.

- 3.8 Consequently, the older digital cameras would also benefit from upgrading to provide night time vision and improve memory capacity. This would also ease some of the issues outlined above in terms of accessing the data. An estimate for doing this work is in the region of £9000. Again, this could be funded from the Crime and Disorder Strategy budget reserve
- 3.9 Thirdly, the current provision has grown incrementally over time and has changed in terms of numbers of cameras, focus and technology. There has therefore been no real re-evaluation in terms of the optimum way of managing, maintaining and developing the system as it changes and the technology changes. This has probably not been helped by the fact that there are a number of agencies involved in CCTV provision across the District, installation has been piecemeal and for a variety of purposes. It is therefore proposed that discussions take place with Holmes Place, the Chambers who have installed cameras, and those Town & Parish Councils with cameras, to see whether it would be possible to develop a common/joint approach to the management, maintenance and provision arrangements. It is felt that there should be economies of scale/ cost savings to be obtained from such an approach, although they may be over the longer term. Any successful conclusion from these discussions could then be brought forward for further member consideration.

#### **4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Within the constraints of funding, having an effective CCTV system is perceived to act as a deterrent which can impact upon the detection of crime and disorder.

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There is approximately £95,000 in the Council's Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy budget reserve. The total cost of the works proposed is estimated at approximately £29,000.

#### **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To remove the analogue cameras and replace cameras (plus additional cameras where necessary) and replace VCRs with digital equipment at the local shopping parades at an estimated cost of £20,000.
  - (2) To upgrade the older digitised cameras at a cost of approx £9,000.
  - (3) To agree to discussions around the further management and maintenance of the CCTV system involving Holmes Place, the local Chambers where they are the providers, and those Town & Parish Councils who have installed their own systems, with a view to determining whether a common approach can be developed.

Paul Warren  
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**Background Papers:-**

None

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