

# **POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**7<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016**

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – KAREN JONES**

### **SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION**

**Wards Affected** - Aberavon, Briton Ferry East, Briton Ferry West, Bryn and Cwmavon, Glyncorrgwg, Neath East, Neath North, Neath South, Port Talbot, Sandfields East, Sandfields West, Seven Sisters

### **TITLE: CCTV SERVICE – OPTIONS**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To make final recommendations to the Cabinet Board regarding short and medium term options for sustaining CCTV public space provision across the county borough whilst delivering the savings targets identified for the service in the Forward Financial Plan.

#### **Executive Summary**

In October 2015 the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board authorised a further period of public consultation on options for the future of public space CCTV across the County Borough.

28 responses were received on the Council's Objective Consultation Portal.

Further dialogue has taken place with key partners.

Further consultation has taken place with staff.

This report sets out the results of the last stage of consultation and makes final proposals for Members to consider.

## Background

The report to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015 set out the findings of the consultation exercise conducted on options for the future of the CCTV service together with a summary of an independent consultant's report commissioned by the authority carried out in July 2015. The report detailed the options for the service in the short and medium term and the potential costs involved.

The consultant's report also highlighted the need to reduce the number of cameras in order to comply with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 irrespective of any reduction in cameras for cost saving purposes. There is an overriding compliance requirement under the guiding principles of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner. The Code states the use of CCTV must have a clear operational requirement, be fit for purpose and be necessary to address a "pressing need". The Authority has just received a communication from the Surveillance Camera Commissioner which requires the completion of a self-assessment tool to ensure compliance with the twelve guiding principles. This will be completed by the end of December. The Commissioner has stated there is strong evidence that cost savings and efficiencies are a realistic outcome of the Code if followed correctly.

The following three actions were recommended in order to further develop the proposals set out in the Council Budget 2015/16 – 2017/18 to make savings in the cost of the CCTV service and provide the Best Value for Money Option;

- A further consultation process with key stakeholders and the wider public on the preferred option to reduce the number of cameras across the county borough and to move the service to a demand-led model. This would mean active monitoring generally only taking place at the weekend and bank holidays. As a consequence of this reduction, staffing routines would need to be revised to meet the revised working pattern required.
- A feasibility exercise to be carried out with the City and County of Swansea to develop a full business case that tests the cost benefits of establishing a joint CCTV service either on a CCTV only scope, or, extending the CCTV service on joint basis to include other complementary functions.

- Explore alternative options to provide the out-of-hours/emergency telephone call response service in the event that the preferred option is supported. At present staff working in the CCTV control room deal with these calls.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update for Members on the outcome of the final phase of consultation.

## **Consultation – Summary of Responses**

The staff and public consultation process closed on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015 with twenty eight responses received from members of the public. This is significantly less than the response to the previous consultation where one hundred and nine responses were received.

In addition to the online consultation process all relevant stakeholders were contacted directly provided with a copy of the report and invited to provide feedback. The options have been discussed at meetings of the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership. A meeting has also been held with officers from the City and County of Swansea. The consultation also featured in the South Wales Evening Post and highlighted on the Neath Port Talbot Council website.

### ***Question 1 – Do you have any objection in reducing the number of CCTV cameras from the present level to the revised number quoted?***

**62% - YES**

**38% - NO**

The responses indicated that there is concern in reducing the number of cameras in the Authority. The proposal to reduce the number of cameras is based on statistical evidence on the use of individual cameras together with the findings of the independent consultant's report.

A specific concern regarding the removal of the three cameras in Seven Sisters has been expressed as they were paid for by the Community Council 16 years ago. These cameras have been monitored and maintained by Neath Port Talbot Council without charge.

A specific request has been received from Gwenda Thomas AM expressing concern at the removal of cameras in Seven Sisters and a request to consider providing a passive service. However, the analysis of CCTV demand data, anti-social behaviour and crime statistics does not support continuing this service in Seven Sisters.

Other respondents to the question were of the opinion that CCTV provided safety and is a deterrent to crime

Comment was also made regarding the regeneration schemes in the town centres of the County Borough i.e. Neath and Port Talbot. However, the proposal to reduce the number of cameras does not adversely affect the town centre areas as they would continue to be covered. This is in accord with the results of the previous consultation where the overall consensus was that CCTV is a priority in the town centres.

***Question 2 – Are you supportive of CCTV moving to a demand led service as outlined in the report?***

**46% – YES**

**54% - NO**

The respondents to this question mainly express concern that the proposed reduction to the service will result in an increase in crime. There were also comments relating to the effect that a demand led service will have on the current staff in CCTV regarding job security.

***Question 3 – Are you supportive of the Authority investigating the viability of collaborating with the City and County of Swansea in providing CCTV Services.***

**89% - YES**

**11% - NO**

The proposal to investigate the viability of collaborating with the City and County of Swansea is supported.

With regard to the City and County of Swansea, they do not currently provide an out of hours response service as part of their CCTV operation. However, Bridgend Council does and has the same approach as Neath Port Talbot. Initial discussions indicate they would be prepared to deliver the service on our behalf subject to further discussion and clarification.

**Question 4 *Are there any other views to be taken into account relating to the future of the service?***

A specific response was received on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales, this stated that the future of CCTV services in South Wales should be on the basis of a collaborative approach with neighbouring authorities in the short term with a view to a wider collaboration covering the whole of the South Wales Police Area in the longer term.

A further detailed response was made by the Operational Police Commander with responsibility for Neath and Port Talbot. The response included reference to increased crime levels both in shoplifting and drug offences which have increased, and it is perceived by the Policing Commander that the increase in this type of crime is directly attributable to the reduced level of monitoring of CCTV since June 2014.

The Police Commander is supportive of the following two areas of the report:-

- The need for change is recognised and the need for a demand led service is understood.
- The need to reduce the number of cameras.

They requested inclusion in any future decisions or consultations in the following areas:

- That the Police are actively involved and are a key partner in the reshaping of future provisions.
- The aspiration to return to a 24/7 service in the future is supported.

- It is requested that the Authority review and respond to any adverse impact resulting from any changes in the CCTV provision.

Members have already agreed that crime and disorder statistics will be provided on a regular basis to the scrutiny committee in order that the position can be kept under review.

## **Other Feedback**

Generally, there is acceptance amongst other stakeholders that the number of cameras should be reduced and ongoing requirements for public space CCTV kept under more regular review.

There is less support, particularly amongst Criminal Justice partners to reduce monitoring to a demand led model. However, none of the partners are in a position to contribute to the cost of running the service and reluctantly accept that the council will need to make further changes to monitoring arrangements to live within available financial resources.

A follow up meeting with officers from the City and County of Swansea has been positive. Both councils are committed to testing whether a business exists for creating a combined service. It is likely that the business case will be available during the autumn of 2016/17 and there would then be a need for further consultation prior to making final decisions on any joint initiative. There will inevitably then be a lead in period should support for a joint service go ahead.

Staff have been fully involved throughout this process of change. If the move to a demand-led model is supported then final consultation with staff on changes to contract regarding working patterns will need to be undertaken.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has now released his review of CCTV provision which proposes a joint solution between City and County of Swansea and this council be explored which is consistent with the recommendations that have already been put to the Cabinet Board and which have been the basis of consultation.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment was included with the February 19<sup>th</sup> report to the Cabinet Board. The previous on-line consultation questionnaire asked respondents to comment on the initial equality impact assessment that had been undertaken. 90% of respondents did not consider there were additional equality impacts to consider beyond those contained within the impact assessment.

None of the suggestions put forward in the original consultation indicates that the duty on the Council to assess the impact on people with protected characteristics had not been discharged. The demographic profile of respondents was captured in the survey and the Impact Assessment has been updated to reflect the profile of respondents. The amended Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 2.

## **Crime and Disorder Impact**

The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with “due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area”

CCTV makes a contribution to the prevention and detection of crime and disorder in the county borough. The preferred option recommended in this report is based on establishing the number of cameras that should be maintained based on an assessment of necessity and to comply with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013.

There is risk that the prevention and detection of crime and disorder in areas where cameras are proposed to be removed and during periods where staff will not be proactively monitoring cameras will be negatively affected. Monitoring of the position will be undertaken and reported to Members at regular intervals so that the position can be kept under review.

## **Conclusion:**

The operational need for CCTV across the county borough has been determined from demand data held, the independent report previously provided and responses from consultees.

In order to comply with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 the number of cameras in the Borough have to be reduced from the present level of 98 public space cameras to approximately 52. This is regardless of financial savings targets and has to be achieved to comply with the Act.

There are large periods of time during the working week where there is very limited demand for CCTV response. It has not proven possible to identify alternative work to bring the service up to acceptable levels of productivity and consequently, the option of moving to a demand led model is recommended in the very short term. This is not the preference of key Criminal Justice partners, however, they are also not in a position to contribute financially to the service.

The longer term option to collaborate with the City and County of Swansea is supported by Criminal Justice partners and would have the potential to restore the service to a 24/7 service. However, the financial and wider business case for putting a joint arrangement into place needs to be properly explored and both councils have now made a commitment to moving the work forward in early 2016.

### **Recommended:**

Following two periods of public and staff consultation and taking into account the Equality Impact Assessment and Crime and Disorder impacts it is recommended that:

1. Members agree that the number of cameras across the county borough be reduced to be compliant with existing legislation and Codes of Practice as set out at Appendix 1.
2. The CCTV service moves to a demand-led model. This would mean active monitoring generally only taking place at the weekend and bank holidays. During other times, cameras will remain operational but no active monitoring would be taking place.
3. Members receive an update report in early 2016 setting out the proposed methodology and timetable for developing the business case for establishing a joint service with the City and County of Swansea that tests the cost benefits of establishing a joint CCTV service either on a CCTV only scope, or, extending the CCTV service on joint basis to include other complementary functions.



4. That officers be authorised to finalise arrangements with Bridgend County Borough Council to deal with the Council's out of hours telephone response service in the short term.
5. That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services is authorised to implement the recommendations of the Cabinet Board, including entering into agreements to effect the necessary changes within the overall cash limit approved for the service.
6. That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services reports no less frequently than quarterly to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on levels of crime and disorder across the county borough so that Members can maintain an overview of the impact of the changes being recommended.

### **Consultation:**

There have been two periods of public consultation on the changes proposed in this report.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision:**

To develop further the proposals set out in the Council Budget 2015-16 – 2017-18 to achieve further savings in the cost of CCTV to the Council and provide the Best Value for Money Option.

### **Implementation of Decision:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call in period.

### **Officer Contact:**

Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.  
Tel: 01639 763284 or email; [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk)

Mrs Jayne Banfield, Customer Services Manager, Tel: 01639 686165 or  
e-mail: [j.banfield@npt.gov.uk](mailto:j.banfield@npt.gov.uk)

## **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 - Map of Cameras showing planned camera reduction
- Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

1. Policy and Resources Cabinet Board 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015 – CCTV Service – Options