

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

3 July 2018

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND
CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER**

K.Jones

Matters for Information

Wards Affected: Aberavon, Neath East, Neath South, Port Talbot,
Sandfields East, Sandfields West

CCTV Position Statement

Purpose of Report

To provide the Scrutiny Sub-Committee with information about the reviews of CCTV conducted in recent years.

Background and Summary of Options Explored to Date

a) Crime and Disorder Duties and initial funding

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) places duties on local authorities, the police, police authorities, health authorities and probation committees (amongst others) to co-operate in the development and implementation of a strategy to tackle crime and disorder in their area. Part of the local strategy to tackle crime and disorder included (in 1996) the installation and monitoring of public

space CCTV. CCTV is a discretionary service with the camera estate initially funded from grants available from the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme. Whilst grants were available for the purchase and installation of the infrastructure, there has been no funds available to operate the service and the cost of that service has therefore been funded from the Council's general revenue resources.

b) CCTV Control Room arrangements

The Council provided a purpose-built CCTV Control Room at the Council's offices at the Quays in 2007. A technology refresh programme was completed in early 2018 as the infrastructure was at the end of its life – the costs of which have been funded from the Council's capital programme. Incoming camera images are continuously recorded on a digital system 24/7. In addition to monitoring the public space CCTV estate, the service also provides the Council's Out Of Hours telephone answering service

c) CCTV Monitoring Service

The CCTV monitoring service was reduced to meet savings targets in 2014. Whilst cameras remain operational 24/7, staffing resources were reduced from a dedicated service manager and 10 FTE staff to six FTE with management oversight being provided by the Council's Contact Centre Manager. Hours of monitoring are as follows:

- Mon-Thurs (19:00hrs – 07:00hrs)
- Fri – Sun and bank holidays – 24hr monitoring each day

d) Camera Estate

As part of the service review carried out in 2015, the 96 public space cameras in place at that time were reviewed, in particular to ensure that the Council could demonstrate that the necessity test set by the Office for the Surveillance Commissioner could be satisfied. As a result of this review, the Council determined that the camera estate should be reduced to 52 cameras focused in the town centres of Neath, Port Talbot and along the seafront at Aberavon.

e) Options Considered to Date

In 2015, a number of options for the future of the service were considered:

- i) **Do nothing** – this was rejected as additional savings were required to be made by the service as part of the Forward Financial Plan;
- ii) **Provide a passive service** – this option would have seen the cameras remaining operational but no monitoring service would exist. This was rejected as demand indicated that there was a continuing need for a monitoring service, particularly on weekends and bank holidays;
- iii) **Reduce the number of cameras** – it was agreed that a review of the camera estate should be undertaken. Following the review, the number of cameras were substantially reduced with the remaining cameras located in the two town centres of Neath and Port Talbot and along the seafront at Aberavon;
- iv) **Cease the service** – the Council has no statutory duty to provide CCTV. This option was rejected on the grounds that the Council would have continued to pay for line rental etc until 2019 at a cost of some £60,000 per annum and would also have seen the loss of the six remaining CCTV jobs;
- v) **Income Generation** – the Council receives virtually no income to offset the costs of CCTV. South Wales Police were asked to make a contribution to the service but refused to make a contribution. Research indicated that all but two police forces do not make a contribution to CCTV across Wales and England. Placing a levy on licensees was considered but ruled out on the basis that there was insufficient evidence to justify the imposition of such a levy. Relevant town and community councils were approached to make a contribution to the service but no town or community council was prepared to make a contribution to the running costs.
- vi) **Diversification** – demand into the CCTV control room was analysed and it was identified that there are times in the week when there is downtime. Options for using the spare capacity were considered, including in-sourcing alarm monitoring work and the careline service. The Council was paying in the order of £200,000 per annum to external suppliers for this service for its own buildings and around £90,000 per annum to Carmarthen

Council for its careline service. This was ruled out at the time as the infrastructure was reaching the end of its life and an up front investment would be required to reach the levels of accreditation that would be required in both instances;

- vii) **Outsource completely** – this option was rejected as it was unlikely to generate the savings that were required;
- viii) **Collaboration** – it was agreed that the Council should explore combining its control room monitoring function with Bridgend or Swansea councils. Both options were actively explored. Bridgend initially indicated that they would be interested in running the service but subsequent analysis revealed they did not have sufficient capacity in their control room to do so. Swansea also indicated they would be prepared to consider a collaborative option but subsequently determined to move forward with an internal option that saw the Council amalgamate their public space CCTV service with their housing service (their housing function has been retained by the Council).

Next Steps

The current operational arrangements were only ever intended to be a short-medium strategy. The review conducted in 2015 anticipated that the longer term strategy would see the control room function merged with either Bridgend or Swansea councils. As neither council was able to agree to a collaborative solution, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council needs to re-examine options for the long term sustainability of the service.

Of the options considered previously, diversification or out-sourcing are the two options that would appear to be available. The Council's current policy is to retain services in-house where this is possible.

Consequently, it is intended that the feasibility of in-sourcing alarm monitoring is examined, together with the prospect of selling a CCTV monitoring service to other public service providers in the Council's area. It is intended that this feasibility work be undertaken during the current financial year, with a report setting out the analysis and conclusions to be considered by the Cabinet Board prior to the commencement of the next financial year (2019-20).

Given that the Scrutiny Sub-Committee has expressed an interest in the future of this service, the Sub-Committee is invited to indicate whether/how it would wish to be involved in identifying a sustainable future for this service.

List of Background Papers

- CCTV Service Options – Policy and Resources Cabinet Board, 15th October, 2015
- CCTV Appraisal – Policy and Resources Cabinet Board, 7th January, 2016
- CCTV Options - Policy and Resources Cabinet Board, 19th February 2015

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