

SCRUTINY PANEL B

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Tuesday, 29th January, 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Helen Hollis in the Chair;
Councillors Cathy Mason, Glenys Maxwell,
Lauren Mitchell, Mick Murphy and
Christine Quinn-Wilcox.

Apologies for Absence: Chris Parkes and Rebecca Whitehead
(Community Protection Team).

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Mike Joy and Shane Wright.

SB.11 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SB.12 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 27th November, 2018, be received and approved as a correct record.

SB.13 Scrutiny Consideration of CCTV

The Chairman introduced the item and reminded Members that the Panel had commenced the CCTV review some sixteen months previously and had given valuable time to gain an understanding of the Council's CCTV provision, its impact within the community and how it contributed to the Council's Corporate Priorities.

As part of the review, Members had considered an overview of the Council's CCTV Scheme, visited the CCTV Control Room at Sherwood Lodge on two occasions to view both daytime and night-time operations and took part in an informal Working Group with key officers. The Panel were now in a position to consider the formulation of final recommendations to Cabinet and the Scrutiny Research and Support Officer took the opportunity to introduce some potential considerations for discussion as follows:-

Recommendation 1

To consider and explore the possibility of upgrading cameras located on the Council's parks to incorporate HD/infra-red capabilities.

The recommendation had arisen following the second visit to the CCTV Control Room, whereby Members had viewed the Council's camera under darkness and had been disappointed with the quality of vision of the cameras located on Sutton Lawn and Kingsway Park. A subsequent demonstration of the HD/infra-red cameras utilised by other authorities had revealed vastly improved clarity and quality of image. It was agreed by the Panel that an evaluation exercise to consider possible costs and benefits to upgrading existing cameras should commence as soon as possible.

Recommendation 2

Following acknowledgement that three CCTV cameras within the District had been identified as poorly performing for some time (Camera 1017 Community Hospital, Portland Street, Kirkby in Ashfield, Camera 1033 Annesley Road, Hucknall and Camera 1025 Ogle Street Car Park, Hucknall) it be requested that Cabinet consider undertaking an evaluation exercise to consider their relocation without delay.

Ongoing data analysis of CCTV performance data had identified three cameras as consistently underperforming. Having recognised that the process for relocating cameras would be time-extensive and require thorough investigation (the process included privacy assessments, access to power supplies, planning consideration, existing CCTV network integration and analysis of crime data and hotspots) it was agreed by the Panel that an evaluation exercise to consider possible relocations should commence as soon as possible.

Recommendation 3

A request for the Council to improve and enhance its public awareness of the Council's CCTV provision via social media, looking also at improving the utilisation of available performance data (i.e. linking into any website improvements, social media campaigns and public awareness efforts) including an ongoing commitment towards increasing collaboration with the Police and gaining more analytical support from them as required.

Following lengthy discussions as part of the review, Members consistently reiterated the importance of increasing public awareness of the Council's CCTV provision and its impact, or otherwise, on the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the District.

Recommendation 4

To consider the possibility of installing a call filtering system at the Sherwood Lodge Control Room to enable Control Room Operatives to spend more time monitoring cameras and responding to relevant issues rather than answering a diverse range of non-urgent Council service enquiries through the out-of-hours call handling service.

The Panel raised concerns that the out-of-hours call handling service, as facilitated by the Sherwood Lodge Control Room, could be better managed to enable the Operatives to spend less time responding to non-urgent calls and more time monitoring CCTV. The Control Room handled around 3,000 out-of-hours calls for the Council in 2018 and although many calls were pertinent, the majority concerned non-CCTV related issues such as Council Tax enquiries and repairs thus diverting staff on numerous occasions from their main duties.

The Scrutiny Research and Support Officer whilst presenting the recommendations, informed the Panel Members that their previous suggestion regarding the potential for engaging additional authority partners to join the Shared Service Arrangement had been considered by officers. However, following initial examination, it had been agreed that this particular course of action was not viable at the present time.

Members welcomed the potential recommendations as presented and proceeded to debate their content as follows:-

- the potential for CCTV footage being available to identify individuals displaying anti-social behaviour in town centres/public places (i.e. cycling on pavements around busy shopping areas/market spaces) to enable officers to display appropriate signage, issues warning letters or fixed penalty notices as appropriate;
- reiterating concerns that the Council does not maximise its opportunities for promoting its CCTV provision through all the available internet/media channels and if done properly, the benefits to raising resident's awareness of the Council contribution towards deterring and reducing crime whilst increasing community safety;
- acknowledgement that a camera relocation evaluation exercise would be welcomed and confirmation from the Scrutiny Research and Support Officer that if approved, the review process would be predominantly undertaken by the Community Protection Team which would include a public consultation exercise once potential costs and relocation sites had been earmarked;
- the possibility of the Council adding covert cameras to their current CCTV operation whilst conceding that the provision of any additional new cameras to the service would be costly to the Authority;
- the difficulties associated with relocating cameras especially the requirement to ensure any potential location site is in sight of the existing camera network to ensure continuity of signal to enable relay back to the Control Room;
- the importance of the Council ensuring their CCTV provision is utilised in equal measure for both assisting operations against crime (in conjunction with the Police) and for increasing community safety and reducing the fear of crime for its residents;
- whilst lobbying for the upgrade of cameras in the Council's parks to include HD/infra-red capabilities, a suggestion for the provision of a cost analysis outlining how much the Council had spent on rectifying vandalism, damage and graffiti within their parks over the previous few years;
- acknowledgement of a previous suggestion that the Council's Community Protection Officers (CPO's) could have remote access to CCTV images to enable real time responses to incidences of crime or anti-social behaviour and an explanation from the Scrutiny Research

and Support Officer that whilst credible, the proposal would not be viable at the present time due to legislative privacy implications.

Following the debate, the Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services thanked Members for their contributions and suggested that the recommendations could be expanded to include a reference to the potential for undertaking a more direct, responsive CPO work tasking programme based on real time CCTV evidence and a request that the Council endeavours to explore new advances in camera technology (both mobile and fixed) to ensure the Authority's CCTV provision remains fit for purpose in the future.

RESOLVED

that following conclusion of the review, the following recommendations be submitted to the next available meeting of the Cabinet for consideration:-

- a) a cost and benefits analysis of upgrading cameras located on the Council's parks to incorporate HD/infra-red capabilities be undertaken and to continue exploring new advances in camera technology (both mobile and fixed);
- b) an evaluation exercise to consider the relocation of the three cameras identified within the report as being underperforming, be undertaken without delay;
- c) public awareness of the Council's CCTV provision be enhanced via all available platforms including social media, website and press releases. This should include amongst others
 - Performance Information
 - Successful case studies / good news stories
 - Locations and usage;
- d) secure an ongoing commitment towards increasing collaboration with the Police and gaining more analytical support from them as required (beginning to end);
- e) explore the feasibility and benefits of installing a call filtering system at the Sherwood Lodge Control Room to facilitate more time monitoring cameras and responding to relevant issues rather than answering a diverse range of non-urgent out-of-hours calls;
- f) further work be undertaken to enhancing the CPO work tasking programme based on real time CCTV evidence as reported, thus ensuring the correct level of enforcement capabilities are primarily available at any required point of need;
- g) the conclusions of the additional review of locations and camera upgrades be reported back to this Panel in due course.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman.