

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 JULY 2018

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

SHARED SERVICE: CCTV

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The report informs members of the shared service arrangements currently in place, hosted by Stevenage Borough Council, through which CCTV cameras in the district are monitored.
- The report brings to members' attention (a) the review of CCTV coverage and configuration currently being undertaken by East Herts Council officers and (b) the governance audit recently commissioned by Stevenage Borough Council which is currently underway.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

That members:

(A)	consider the details of the shared CCTV service outlined in this report and offer observations to the Head of Housing and Health for consideration at an operational level;
(B)	note that reviews of the operational and governance aspects of the shared CCTV service are currently underway and provide any comments to the Head of Housing and Health for consideration during these reviews; and
(C)	request that a paper be brought to a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to consider the

outcome of the reviews.

1.0 Background

1.1 Since 2006, East Herts Council has been part of the shared CCTV monitoring service. There are currently four members; East Herts, Hertsmere, North Herts and Stevenage. The service is hosted by Stevenage Borough Council with the control room located in a Stevenage BC building in Stevenage town centre. The shared service is known as the CCTV Partnership.

1.2 The CCTV Partnership:

- monitors 37 fixed public space CCTV cameras in the district owned by East Herts Council and/or provided by or for Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware Town Councils
- detects faults in these cameras and arranges repair/replacement subject to the council agreeing to meet the costs
- moves and maintains four moveable cameras in the district
- manages all staffing, commissioning and such issues.

1.3 More recently, the partners to the shared service agreed to establish a trading arm wholly owned by the four partners. This enables the CCTV Partnership to trade with commercial bodies on commercial terms, thus profits can be generated that are returned to the partners (the shareholders of the company) as dividends. Any trading losses are also passed on to partner authorities.

2.0 Report

The shared service

2.1 In 2005, the council reviewed provision of CCTV cameras and monitoring in the district and sought tenders from existing control centres. Up to this time, cameras in Hertford town centre and St Andrews and Hartham Car Parks, along with

some wireless cameras across the district, had been monitored by the Stevenage CCTV control room through a series of ad hoc and informal arrangements. The council's review in 2005 was aimed at improving coverage of cameras across Hertford, Ware and Bishop's Stortford and entering into a formal contract for their monitoring.

2.2 Tenders were sought from four existing CCTV control rooms in Hertfordshire, with bids received from the then Stevenage/North Herts CCTV Service and the St Albans CCTV Service (representing a partnership of St Albans, Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield).

2.3 The Stevenage/North Herts Service was selected by the Executive at its meeting of 6 December 2005 on the basis of cost and quality considerations. In the covering report to the Executive decision, it was noted that the key aspects of becoming a member of the Stevenage/North Herts Service were:

- a financial open book policy with all partners having a share in any future development as well as any savings from commercial income
- capital match funding from Stevenage and North Herts
- an executive board on which elected members from East Herts would sit, below which is a management board
- a CCTV manager who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the control room
- the Stevenage control room was already monitoring some cameras in East Herts
- the Police were supportive of East Herts working with Stevenage.

2.4 In March 2011, the partnership expanded to include Hertsmere. At the time it was determined that economies of scale would lead to further efficiencies.

Workload and results

2.5 The CCTV service is a crucial element of ASB and crime reduction and detection in the district.

2.6 Key performance statistics relating to East Herts for last three years show:

Year	East Herts incidents addressed by the CCTV Partnership	Arrests in East Herts arising from CCTV input
2014/15	809	261
2015/16	852	224
2016/17	865	266

2.7 Recent case studies illustrate the breadth of CCTV support with local incidents as these extracts from the CCTV Partnership's newsletter show:

Fore Street, Hertford, 02:30 hrs, Sunday 11th March 2018

A controller viewing Fore Street in Hertford saw a group of men outside the Bosphorus Kebab who were pushing and shoving each other in the early hours of Sunday morning. Anticipating that a fight would break out, the controller informed the Force Control Room of the scuffle... the controller [then] noticed that another monitor was showing a vicious fight taking place...The CCTV cameras had captured images of [those] involved in the assault...

Birchley Green, Hertford, 11:47 hrs, Thursday 1st March 2018

A female shoplifter who was wanted for theft from several shops was spotted in W H Smith's in Birchley Green. The woman was monitored as she made her way to... a parked red Seat car. The police were aware of the vehicle and officers stopped the car in Fore Street where she and a male driver were arrested and put in handcuffs. The man was arrested for motoring offences as well as suspicion of theft.

North Street, Bishop's Stortford, 20:14 hrs, Thursday 12th October 2017

Controllers heard a report... that a man... wearing a black hooded jacket was very intoxicated and staggering in and out of the roadway. He was in imminent danger of becoming a pedestrian road traffic casualty. Controllers located the man ... and... advised the police control room of the man's whereabouts as he

was seen to stagger into the road in front of an oncoming Mercedes car that braked sharply to a stop. The drunken man was confronted by the car's driver as he refused to move and the driver in turn began to get aggressive. The police arrived to defuse the situation and detain the drunkard who was arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

St Andrews Street, Hertford, 00:35 hrs, Tuesday 28th November 2017

Controllers received a report of a break-in at the St Andrews Street Pharmacy, from a person in the flats above who had seen a man wearing a black coat over a blue jumper, running out of the pharmacy carrying a number of items... As controllers began an area search a police dog unit arrived in the area of the alleyway and spotted a man there who they apprehended...The man was found to be in possession of lots of prescription Diazepam and was arrested for burglary.

Bridge Street, Bishop's Stortford, 02:46 hrs, Saturday 11th November 2017

Controllers were contacted by the police control room who requested their help in searching for a suicidal woman... Controllers located the woman... near the Black Lion pub in Bridge Street. Images were patched through to the police control and officers and an ambulance crew attended the woman and dealt with the concern for her safety.

Fore Street, Hertford, 02:10 hrs, Friday 3rd November 2017

The Jungle Bar called controllers to advise them that a man was about to leave them and intended to drive his car whilst drunk. Controllers located the man getting into his car and patched the images through to the police control room. They continued to monitor the man until officers arrived and breath tested the man who was arrested for being over the blood alcohol limit.

Operational review

- 2.8 The council's CCTV arrangements have not been reviewed since joining the shared service. Hence, a review is already in the council's Housing and Health Service Plan 2018/19.
- 2.9 The timescale for this review is as follows:

Commence review of CCTV coverage – are the cameras in the right places?	April 2018
Recommend amendments / additions	September 2018
Seek resources through the Medium Term Financial Plan if required	December 2018

2.10 This work is now underway. The initial findings from the coverage review are:

- a number of cameras require renewal as they are out-of-date or in constant need of maintenance
- a high percentage of our cameras are fixed and unable to be moved. There are merits in switching to a greater number of mobile cameras as these can be moved quickly to areas of concern
- some of the cameras are positioned in locations which are no longer subject to reported ASB or crime
- there are some black spots in coverage which compromise the ability of the CCTV operatives / police to follow people of interest.

2.11 In order to draw up recommendations:

- officers are liaising with Herts Police regarding known hotspots of crime or ASB and gaps in coverage
- officers will seek the views of the town councils regarding the location and movement of cameras.

Governance review

2.12 At its inception, the shared service established a governance structure which incorporates:

- an Officer Management Group with officers from each partner authority and

- a Joint CCTV Executive consisting of three members from each partner authority.
- 2.13 Stevenage BC provides the secretariat function for these bodies.
- 2.14 Over time, these governance arrangements have fallen away to some extent such that there have been no meetings of the Officer Management Group for at least two years and the Joint CCTV Executive meetings which should be held on an annual basis have, on occasion, be held less frequently.
- 2.15 At the same time, separate governance arrangements for the shared service's trading company have been established. It was originally set that each partner authority would nominate two directors to the company board although it is understood that through mutual agreement this has since reduced to one director per authority.
- 2.16 Although the company's quarterly meeting schedule appears to have been maintained and the directors have received reports on the business plan, questions have recently arisen over the quality of information presented to enable directors to effectively discharge their duties under the Companies Act 2006.
- 2.17 Concerns among partners about the governance of both the shared service and the trading company were aired by members at the Joint CCTV Executive meeting held on 19 February 2018. This has led to Stevenage BC launching a governance review, the first stage of which has been a review of current practice conducted by the Shared Internal Audit Service, SIAS. The company's directors are supportive of the governance review as they are keen to ensure the operation of the company is fit-for-purpose.
- 2.18 Stevenage BC is leading this review given that they host the shared service, although partner authorities are participating and Stevenage is sharing results as they come forward. Stevenage anticipates the review being completed later this autumn.

Financial arrangements

2.19 The financial model for the shared service and the accounting of the trading arm has been determined by Stevenage BC. In overall terms:

- Stevenage determines the overall cost to provide a CCTV monitoring service
- Stevenage apportions fixed costs between the shared service and the trading company
- dependent on the number of cameras each partner has, Stevenage then recharges each partner a fee
- costs to repair or replace individual cameras are billed to the appropriate partner authority
- at the end of each year, Stevenage determines whether the trading arm has made a profit or a loss and provides a dividend to each partner authority or seeks a contribution from each accordingly.

2.20 In 2006/07, when East Herts joined the CCTV Partnership, the costs were around £3,000 per camera. With 37 cameras, this equated to around £111,000 per year. As noted above, Hertsmere joined in 2011. At the time, it was anticipated that the ensuing economies of scale would lead to a decrease in East Herts' annual costs of between £13,000 and £18,000 and this appear to have been borne out.

2.21 Costs will vary slightly each year to take account of the level of commercial activity by the Partnership's trading company and in-year repair costs met by East Herts. Also, Stevenage's charges increase by inflation each year. That said, the costs for East Herts have remained relatively stable in recent years:

- 2015/16 = £108,524
- 2016/17 = £109,265
- 2017/18 = £109,920.

2.22 Some costs are recharged to the town councils as appropriate.

2.23 Discussion among officers of the partner authorities in preparation for the governance review has indicated that these financial arrangements, including in-year forecasting, could be improved in terms of transparency and oversight and so the financial model will be included in the governance review discussed above.

Next steps

2.24 Officers believe that there are more opportunities for the Partnership to generate income for its constituent authorities through more commercial activity and that there is scope for efficiencies from reviewing day-to-day operations. The two reviews currently underway will be instrumental in identifying the potential scope for income growth and operational efficiencies and will enable officers to better understand any barriers to such efficiencies and growth.

2.25 Officers would be happy to bring the outcome of these two reviews – operational and governance – to a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to share the findings and seek members' views.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

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