

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
JOINT CCTV EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 18
NOVEMBER 2021, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Hollywell
Stevenage
Council

North Herts Councillors Clark,
Council

East Herts Councillors P Boylan and A Curtis
Council

Hertsmere Councillor Newmark
Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Bourne	- Control Room Manager
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Rob Gregory	- Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhoods)
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Sarah Pateman	- Community Safety Manager
Mike Read	- Operations Manager

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor Hollywell and seconded by Councillor Clark, that Councillor Boylan be appointed Chairman for the meeting. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Boylan be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Williamson (East Herts), Councillors Lloyd and Henry (Stevenage), Councillors Billing and Albert (North Herts) and Councillors Choudhury and Spencer (Hertsmere).

3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2020

Councillor Curtis proposed, and Councillor Newmark seconded a motion that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 be approved as a correct record. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

6 CCTV OPERATIONS REPORT

The Operations Manager presented the report to the Committee. He said that the partnership continued to look to improve standards across the whole partnership and was looking at alternative ways of working to help alleviate budgets. He informed Members that the partnership had four RIPA requests from the police and had no data breaches.

The Operations Manager said that the team had trialled downloading CCTV footage via a link which was successful but were now waiting for the police to provide the team with the relevant protocols to launch the service. He explained that currently, police must attend the Control Room to download footage onto a disc.

The Operations Manager further reported that the number of mobile cameras across the partnership was increasing and Hertsmeres had recently purchased five cameras. He updated Members on the ShopWatch and PubWatch radio link which was now digitalised and working well in seven towns that were monitored. There were 250 radio users which helped with continuity within those towns and was something the partnership would like to expand.

The Operations Manager invited all Members of the Committee to the Control Room to see how it operates.

Councillor Curtis referred to Appendix A of the report which stated that there were no proposed changes to the Code of Conduct. He asked the Operations Manager if he was confident that the operations in the CCTV service were as good as they could be.

The Operations Manager said there were no major amendments to the Code except the change in the

reporting system that the Control Room use.

Councillor Newmark thanked the Officer for the informative report. He asked if the Officers could explain more about the protocols that they were waiting on from the police in order to move to a cloud based file sharing system. He said that he recalled it being an issue 18 months ago and the Constabulary regularly reported to the Hertsmere Scrutiny Committee about their frustrations at not being able to download footage easily. He asked when the issue would be sorted.

The Control Room Manager said that the service had proven that they can upload footage to a secure server but the server needed to be provided by the police alongside any protocol for sending the correct links to load to a secure file system. He said the system needed to conform to the relevant GDPR protocols and enquiries had been made but he had not received any response to date.

The Operations Manager added that the review was now with a Sergeant who was looking at resourcing a full time member of staff to the downloading suite. There was currently only one part time member of staff manning the suite who carries out all the downloading of footage for the whole of the Hertfordshire Police Service. It was a police issue but one that the team were trying to move forward.

Councillor Boylan asked if the issue could be escalated to ensure it was resolved quickly.

The Operations Manager confirmed that the team were in dialogue with the individual officer at the police responsible for the system.

Councillor Newmark asked for clarification on what the GDPR issues were. He said that if the CCTV partnership had footage that could aid police with their criminal investigation then it seemed frustrating that there was not an option to download it remotely.

The Control Room Manager explained that all CCTV footage had to be accounted for. In a criminal investigation, it must be proven in a Court of Law that it had been downloaded from a secure system. It is a requirement to account for how much footage was downloaded, the time and date and the reason for obtaining the footage. This was achieved by writing an incident log when the footage was downloaded otherwise it could be thrown out in Court. He said that the concept had been proved with the road policing department but need to have it implemented across the whole constabulary.

Councillor Clark said that the police needed to prove a chain of evidence in order to prosecute. He referred to the replacement cameras mentioned in the report and asked if they would be Regulation 10 cameras that could be used for parking enforcement.

The Operations Manager said he would give a written response to the question about the new cameras.

Councillor Clark said that he had raised it previously and referred to Transport for London who uses their cameras for issuing penalty notices.

The Control Room Manager explained that Officers had to have a specific licence to enforce parking penalties.

Councillor Curtis said that he was pleased to see the service were planning to recruit more Independent Inspectors and asked if the Officers could remind the Committee as to what their role is.

The Operations Manager explained that the Independent Inspectors were volunteers that come into the Control Room to watch random CCTV footage to check what the operator has recorded and check it was appropriate for the scenario. The Inspectors complete a report and submit it to show what footage they have watched and what they have seen. The service was suspended over the lockdown periods but it was now continuing.

Councillor Curtis said he understood that the age group of the Inspectors meant they would have been unable to carry out the role during the lockdowns but was disappointed the service was suspended as the oversight was important.

Councillor Clark asked for clarification on the position of the inspectors and what the cost was.

The Operations Manager said the Inspectors were volunteers with a full DBS check. A donation of £10 is given to a local charity for their time.

The Committee noted the report.

7 MANAGEMENT BOARD REPORT

The Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods (Stevenage Borough Council) presented

the report to Members. He said that that the Officer Board from each of the four councils meet on a quarterly basis in between the Joint Executive meetings. At the last meeting, Members were concerned about the increasing costs of the partnership so an immediate review into costs was held in relation to operations and how savings could be made. The CCTV Group Manager at Stevenage Borough Council retired and the decision was made not to replace the role and restructure the team which had a financial saving. The Board also commissioned a review into neighbouring districts CCTV provision with exploratory work around potential expansion of the partnership. The review has looked beyond Hertfordshire into surrounding counties. Some of the conversations have progressed and a detailed set of proposals would be brought in front of the committee at a future meeting.

The Assistant Director also highlighted to Members the position of the Town Councils in East Herts which have served notice on their intention to withdraw whilst they carry out a procurement exercise to ensure they were getting best value for money.

Following from the minutes of the last meeting, the Assistant Director explained that there had been some discussion around the progression of the company and investment in business development management. The Officer Board met with the Company Board to understand where the work was going and have encouraged them to present to the Committee at a future meeting.

Councillor Boylan referred to the action points in the last set of minutes not being actioned. He was disappointed that there was no evidence of progression presented to the Committee and did not feel there was any urgency to

progress. He said that the Committee had been made aware of the Town Councils intention to withdraw and the partnership cannot assume that they would get the business back.

The Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods (Stevenage Borough Council) said that the partnership could request that the company provide information and a report but they do not have any control over them. He said that he understood that work was going on and could push for it to be shared with the Committee. Officers were not responsible for writing the business plans as it was a Director responsibility but they had looked a partnership expansion to understand the CCTV service in other Districts. He said the partnership had met with the Chief Finance Officers across Hertfordshire to discuss the financial implications. He said that time was critical, especially with the potential loss of the Town Council cameras and the partnership cannot be complacent and needed to act more commercial.

Councillor Newmark said that the Hertsmere Scrutiny Committee had decided to open a scrutiny review into CCTV to include the operation of the partnership. He felt that the group was opaque, hard to understand and too complicated that it was hampering progress. He said that the Committee have not been presented with an update from the last meeting 12 months ago and no representative of the company was at the meeting to ask questions of. He said that he could see the business case for expansion but expressed a fear that it might lead to dilution of the partnership with less focus and less local knowledge. He also asked what the financial implications were of the loss of the Town Council cameras.

The Head of Housing and Health (East Herts Council) said that there were 30 cameras within the Town Councils which equated to £65k in payments.

The Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods (Stevenage Borough Council) said that the Committee asked for a governance review due to the confusion between the company and the partnership. The recommendation of that review was that the public realm cameras for each council were to be managed within the partnership and should be owned by the partnership and third party contracts would be managed through the company. He said that there was an opportunity through the procurement exercise with the Town Councils to look at building in variation clauses to allow for a variation in costs related to level of activity. He added that it would make sense to have other authorities on board due to the close relationship with the police. There was a lack in a contribution to the CCTV service from the police who benefit the most from it and the additional authorities coming on board would strengthen the case for a police contribution for crime prevention and detection.

Councillor Curtis said that the company should be serving the interests of its owners, the four councils in the partnership. He said that he was pleased to hear the proposals were being progressed.

The Head of Housing and Health (East Herts Council) said that he heard the frustrations from Members about the company. He said that the remit of the Joint Executive Committee was not the oversight of the company. The four councils each have a representative on the Board of Directors which liaises between councils through the shareholders. He suggested that councils may wish to

interact with their shareholder representatives about their frustrations and concerns.

Councillor Boylan said he had been a member of the Committees for two and a half years and said the same plans were presented every time yet the partnership contains the same four councils and has not grown as anticipated.

Councillor Hollywell said she understood the frustrations but said it was a separate conversation to be had in a separate place. She asked if the withdrawal of the 30 cameras by the Town Councils was a potential withdrawal or would definitely be withdrawn.

Councillor Boylan said the Town Councils were required to give notice of their intention to withdraw. They have given that notice whilst they carry out a procurement exercise. They might be looking for a bid from the current provider and they might find that it is best value for money.

Councillor Newmark said that he appreciated the separate governance and lines of accountability but was disappointed that no one from the company was in attendance at the meeting and said that Members should be able to talk to them directly.

The Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods (Stevenage Borough Council) said that the company has to be accountable to the shareholders. Each council nominates a shareholder representative to ensure the council's interests were represented. He said that there was a clear opportunity to have a standing item on the agenda to invite the company to every meeting to give an update.

The Head of Housing and Health (East Herts Council) said that the governance review did have a number of ideas about setting up an advisory group with Members involved but at the time, the decision was not to set it up. He suggested that it might be time to revisit and look again at the remit of the group and whether they could act as advisors.

Councillor Newmark said that he felt it was getting over complicated. He said that the Joint Executive Committee should be able to scrutinise. He suggested looking at the group's terms of reference and include a standing invitation to the Directors of the company to attend the meeting and be held accountable.

Councillor Boylan felt that was a logical solution to the frustrations expressed.

Councillor Clark felt it should be a requirement to attend, not an invitation. He said he had no problem with expansion and Highways England had 1000 cameras across multiple counties and said that the partnership should be grown sensibly.

The Head of Housing and Health (East Herts Council) said that there could be a shareholder agreement that laid out the expectations on both sides and the agreement could include a line that the group expect attendance. The Committee could task Officers to go away and work on amendments to the Terms of Reference and enshrine in a shareholder agreement.

Councillor Clark asked for a timescale on this.

Councillor Boylan suggested the Committee meet again in February.

Councillor Curtis proposed, and Councillor Clark seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - That

- (A) the Committee notes the work carried out by the Officer Management Board since the last meeting of the Joint Executive.
- (B) the Committee notes the service planning and budgetary estimates being proposed for 2022/23.
- (C) the Committee notes the notice served by East Herts District Council on cameras within the Partnership.
- (D) a further report is presented to the next Joint Executive to present expansion opportunities to introduce new partner councils and cameras into the CCTV Partnership.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Democratic Services teams from the four authorities to liaise with each other to set a date for the next meeting in February 2022.

9 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm

Chairman

Date

This page is intentionally left blank