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## **Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee    21 September 2010**

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services

### **Information Report on CCTV in York**

#### **Summary**

1. Following a request made by this Committee in January 2010, this report presents an Executive report on the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system operating in the City, which outlines protocols and opportunities for expanding the system. Based on the information provided, Members are asked to consider whether they wish to carry out a scrutiny review of CCTV in York.

#### **Background**

2. In January 2010, this Committee received a report on a number of suggested scrutiny topics, one of which was 'the Effectiveness of CCTV in relation to the costs involved'. Suggestions for what a review of this topic could cover, were:
  - i. the history of CCTV in York
  - ii. the management and funding arrangements for York's CCTV Service e.g. running/staffing costs, do Partners and/or external organisations contribute to the running costs etc
  - iii. present coverage in regard to area covered, staffing hours, number of cameras / operators etc
  - iv. staff training
  - v. the public's view on whether CCTV
    - reduces crime and anti-social behaviour
    - reduces their fear of crime and makes them feel safer
    - is an invasion of their privacy
  - vi. the retail sector's view on CCTV i.e. is its presence of value to them
  - vii. How effective has it been in York e.g.:
    - how many convictions have been achieved as a result of CCTV evidence
    - Can its effect as a deterrent be quantified
3. Members received information on the use of CCTV in York, provided by the Safer York Partnership, and were informed that a detailed officer report was scheduled to be presented to the Executive in July 2010. At that time, the Committee deferred their decision on whether to proceed with a review of CCTV in York, requesting that following its presentation to the Executive, the officer report be brought to a meeting of this Committee – see copy at Annex 1.

4. More recently, the Deputy Chief Executive of the North Yorkshire Police Authority has been tasked by the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum to bring together a 'Task & Finish Group' to look at CCTV and assess its effectiveness etc. In particular it was suggested that the group might look at:
  - Taking advantage of new technologies and networks
  - Agreed evaluation methods and results
  - Learning from other areas and national guidelines
  - Approaches to needs assessment
  - Opportunities to do things better, cheaper, more effectively & efficiently.
  - Opportunities of joint working.
5. In support of their review, prior to the last meeting of the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum, each of the councils in the region (including York) supplied basic information on their local CCTV provision, including costs, monitoring arrangements, camera numbers etc. Whilst representatives asked that the detailed information remained confidential, the cost 'to the public purse' is in the order of £1.5m per year.
6. The main issues that came out of that meeting were:
  - Costs appeared to vary greatly (in terms of cost per camera)
  - The numbers of cameras in districts was not generally relative to the population or its size.
  - No evaluation work in terms of effectiveness or value for money has been carried out. There was generally little appetite for 'doing things differently' as long as things were working satisfactorily.
  - North Yorkshire Network<sup>1</sup> (NYNET) provided opportunities for working together or sharing monitoring facilities. There was potentially funding threats in some councils
  - Funding was an issue in terms of contributions from partners.
  - There was potential value in reviewing the location of cameras to ensure that they were still relevant
  - There was general agreement that there would be value in a Geographical Information System<sup>2</sup> (GIS) plotting the 'line in sight' and location of all camera so that they could be overlaid with crime and other local data.
  - There was no consistency in terms of monitoring, funding, provision, ownership, camera quality etc
  - This was very much seen a local council issue and not something that needed a more holistic approach.
7. As a result, the Task & Finish Group have agreed to take forward two areas of work:
  - i) To agree and populate a standard template for the collation of data about the usage of the CCTV systems and to discuss with analysts/partners what more information could/should be collected to show value for money/need.

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<sup>1</sup> A North Yorkshire County Council promoted broadband service

<sup>2</sup> A computer database capable of storing / showing data by geographical location

- ii) GIS map CCTV cameras and their line of sight (to be taken forward late summer)
8. It is apparent that the CCTV landscape across York and North Yorkshire is complex both in terms of the actual facilities locally provided and ownership/management. It involves many interests and is subject to many influences and pressures, not least of which are budget/funding pressures.
  9. It is not clear how this can now be taken forward, but the Deputy Chief Executive of the North Yorkshire Police Authority has been asked to report back to the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum on the 30 September 2010. One option being considered, is to bring in specialist consultants to work with partners across the County & York to put forward options. This will of course need the cooperation of individual councils (many of whom have independently expressed an interest in looking at their CCTV provision), and it will need funding.

## **Consultation**

10. CCTV operational staff have been consulted in regard to the development of the Code of Practice detailed in the attached report.
11. In regard to a scrutiny review of York's CCTV provision, the Head of Network Management has provided the following feedback on carrying out a scrutiny review at this time:

'It is considered that a scrutiny review of the effectiveness of CCTV in York is not appropriate at this time. In addition to the attached Executive Report which we believe provides much of the information pertinent to a scrutiny review, there is also the proposal being developed by the North Yorkshire Police Authority to undertake a review of the costs and effectiveness of CCTV provision across the North Yorkshire police force area. The NYPA are in the process of agreeing terms of reference for this and establishing a Task & Finish Group to carry out the review. It is considered that this presents an extremely valuable opportunity to benchmark York's CCTV system against those of neighbouring authorities and therefore our recommendation would be that any review of CCTV by the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee be deferred until this wider review is completed and can be presented.'

## **Options**

12. Having considered the information in the Executive report attached, this committee may choose to:
  - i. Proceed with a scrutiny review of 'the Effectiveness of CCTV in relation to the costs involved' as originally considered
  - ii. Request additional information in support of a possible scrutiny review and defer the decision on whether to proceed with a review until such time as the relevant information has been provided
  - iii. Decide a review of CCTV in York is not required

## Analysis

13. A full analysis of the provision of CCTV in York is provided in the attached Executive Report.

## Corporate Strategy

14. The provision of CCTV supports the council's corporate strategy in a number of ways – see paragraph 41 of the attached report.

## Implications

15. The implications to the Council associated with the provision of CCTV in York are detailed in Annex 1, paragraphs 42-49.

## Risk Management

16. There would be significant risks associated with the failure to adopt a formal funding arrangement for new cameras across the city, as detailed in paragraph 51 of the attached report.

## Recommendations

17. Members are recommended:
- i. to note the information within this report and its annexes
  - ii. not to proceed with a scrutiny review of 'the Effectiveness of CCTV in York' at this time.
  - iii. Request an update report on the outcome of the review by the North Yorkshire Police Authority once that review has been completed

Reason: In order to progress the work of this Committee inline with scrutiny procedures and protocols

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Final Report Approved



Date

26 August 2010

Wards Affected:

All



Background Papers: N/A

## Annexes

- Annex 1 – Update Report on CCTV in York  
Annex 1A – CYC Code of Practice for the Operation of CCTV