

By: Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishley

To: Kent Community Safety Partnership Members - 24 February 2012

Subject: Public Safety CCTV in Kent

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to outline the challenges faced and partnership arrangements in relation to the continued provision of public safety CCTV systems in Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

1.1. As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review and consequent fiscal cuts across the public sector, District, Borough and Unitary Authorities are reviewing the provision of their public safety CCTV operations.

1.2. Unlike some other responsibilities, public safety CCTV is not a mandatory function for Local Authorities to undertake. Hence several District/Borough Councils in Kent, have reduced their 24/7 pro-active (operator driven) CCTV monitoring operations.

1.3. This is a national issue and some Local Authorities have suggested that their respective police force provides a level of funding in order to keep their public safety CCTV operations in place.

1.4. Only recently Home Office minister Mr James Brokenshire stated the following - "..... we have not been able to prioritise capital expenditure for community safety purposes. We would, therefore, look to Local Authorities and the police to fund CCTV from local resources alongside their other priorities."

1.5. Kent Police is facing its own significant financial challenges and has to make savings of approximately £53million. This makes it very difficult for Kent Police to offer any level of direct funding in support of public safety CCTV at this present time though it is supported via other means as outlined below.

2. Partnership Arrangements

2.1 As with many other UK Police Forces, Kent Police relies on Local Authority public safety CCTV operations to:-

- Provide '*real time*' CCTV images to support work in Kent Police's command and control facility.
- Deter town centre crime, and support the detection of the offenders when town centre crimes are committed.
- Assist major crime and Counter Terrorism investigators, via the viewing and reviewing of their recorded CCTV product.

2.1 To enhance partnership working and to increase the operational effectiveness of Local Authority public safety CCTV operations, at no cost to partners, Kent Police has installed and supported Airwave radio sets which are situated in each local council's CCTV control room. This provides a 24/7 Police/Local Authority CCTV communications functionality.

2.2 In two District Council CCTV control rooms Kent Police provides 2 full time police staff (CCTV Coordinators) to review and download recorded CCTV product required by police investigators.

2.3 Since the advent and subsequent proliferation of security / public safety CCTV, Kent Police, as with many other police Forces has made significant financial investment in CCTV in the form of specialist staffing and equipment. This has been necessary in order to ensure that police investigators are adequately supported and so can meet their legal obligations under the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act (CPIA). In particular this is in relation to initial viewing /reviewing and if necessary the retrieval and further processing of recorded evidential product from third party CCTV systems, and monitoring and recording images from spaces that on occasions become scenes of crimes.

2.4 It is worthy of note that third party CCTV systems, as opposed to Local Authority CCTV systems, provide the vast majority of CCTV product used in police investigations. Product from Local Authority CCTV systems tends to get used more for Counter Terrorism and major crime investigations, where wider CCTV trawls are required.

Collaboration

2.5 Collaboration with regard to public safety CCTV provision is already taking place between Medway and Swale Councils, with Medway Council providing the Control Room and CCTV operators for the monitoring of Swale's public safety CCTV cameras. Such collaboration has enabled Swale Council to retain a 24/7 public safety CCTV operation but at a reduced cost.

2.6 It is understood that Medway Council are already in advanced discussions with both Gravesham and Maidstone Borough Councils about working with them in a similar way.

2.7 To the West of the County, collaborative working has already resulted in one CCTV manager managing the public safety CCTV operations for District/Borough Councils, namely Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Despite the austere times faced across the public sector, partnership working and collaborative arrangements in relation to the provision of public safety CCTV remains strong in Kent.

3.2 Public safety CCTV provision will continue to evolve as budgets constrict further and it is likely that other options such as one or more multi agency 'super CCTV Control Rooms' will be explored in earnest in the future.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members of the Board are asked to:

- i. Note the content of this report

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