

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 28 February 2022

**Report of:** Transport and Infrastructure Manager

**Title:** CCTV operational review update / Use of mobile CCTV cameras

## 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 CCTV plays a critical role in the council achieving its Council Plan 2020-24 ambitions of ‘A happy and healthy town’, supported by its commitment to ensure ‘a safer Watford’.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the progress of the ongoing review of the CCTV operation in Watford, and highlights the need for early action on the implementation of mobile CCTV technology to help in the response to fly-tipping and incidents of localised vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.3 Alongside the current review, which will report later in 2022, there have been issues emerging in the town relating to short-term incidents at locations not currently covered by CCTV equipment, which could benefit from CCTV supervision without the need for extensive and longer-term infrastructure. The use of mobile CCTV technology is, therefore, being proposed for these locations to provide the solution needed.

## 2.0 RISKS

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control</b>	<b>Measures Response</b> (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	<b>Risk Rating</b> (combination of severity and likelihood)
Failure to comply with all legal regulations relating to CCTV when deploying mobile CCTV pilot	Deployment failure  Legal challenge  Reputational risk	Seek legal advice on deployment.  Evidence that all regulations have been followed with clear audit trail and sign off process	Treat	4 x 2 = 8
Failure to explore the impact of a pilot scheme before final recommendations of overall CCTV review	Loss of opportunity to establish an effective mobile CCTV solution	Plan and deploy a three month pilot solution	Treat	3 x 2 = 6

Failure to engage with Hertfordshire County Council / Ringway effectively in advance of CCTV mobile pilot	Late deployment	Early engagement  Escalation of any issues arising	Treat	3 x 2 = 6
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### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- a) Note the progress of the CCTV in Watford review.
- b) Agree to the implementation of a mobile CCTV pilot, subject to identifying and agreeing suitable sites, and the discharge of statutory duties and legal obligations in relation to privacy, data protection and consultation.
- c) Approve the allocation of £20,000 from the Council's Renewal Fund to support this activity.

**Contact officer:**

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**Report approved by:**

Kathryn Robson, Executive Head of Strategy and Communications

### 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A regular review of the CCTV operation, including a sense check on camera locations, a review of policies and guidelines and an investigation into new technologies, is essential for a healthy and effective CCTV operation, and it has been Watford's practice to carry out such reviews in order to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and value for money of the system.
- 4.2 The current review has been in progress since November 2021, and has focussed on new technologies, changes to national policies and compiling a full and complete inventory of existing equipment, including its condition. The review is due for completion in March 2022 and will inform the future development of the system, procurement of maintenance and operator contracts, and the relocation of the CCTV control room with the police station move to George Street at the end of 2022.
- 4.3 The issues of fly tipping and incidents of anti-social behaviour in locations not covered, or accessible, by existing CCTV provision is an area which the council's team responsible for CCTV has been asked to explore to help inform a pilot scheme and to feed into the

recommendations of the overall review. The council is currently aware of hotspots across the borough (such as St Albans Road (Bruce Grove) and Percy Road) and proposed locations for the pilot will be brought forward for agreement.

#### 4.4 **Current CCTV system**

Watford Borough Council owns, manages and operates the town centre and remote CCTV system from a purpose built control room at the police station in Shady Lane, with currently around 300 cameras. The majority of the CCTV system operates on wifi 'virtual' links to collector points, or hubs, around the town, which are then fed back to the control room at the police station via another wireless or hard-wired link. This system relies on clear line of sight between cameras and hubs, and makes the installation of standalone or remote sites complex and expensive, and unable to integrate fully into the main monitoring suite.

#### 4.5 **Mobile cameras**

Cameras that carry 4G / 5G connections are now becoming more commonplace. These can operate independently, like mobile phones, and communicate wirelessly back to the control room, without the need for a physical or virtual link. This enables single cameras to be deployed remotely and to be removed and relocated easily, allowing them to be used for short-term operations at key sites.

4.6 This technology is currently not yet in place in our CCTV operation but is likely to be recommended for wider use in the current CCTV review as a more cost-effective and useful alternative to the widespread use of fixed cameras. However, it is felt that piloting a mobile solution will be helpful in advance of the completion of the full review.

4.7 It is proposed, therefore, to invest in a suite of mobile cameras that can be used in such circumstances, and to initially deploy them at key sites identified around the town to combat localised problems of fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour that would not normally be accessible by the main CCTV camera system.

#### 4.8 **Technical**

Whilst the equipment is simple to install and operate, and relatively inexpensive, the camera needs to be mounted in a safe, discreet and non-intrusive location and have external power to operate.

4.9 The best scenario would be to mount on a suitable lighting column and to introduce a commando-style power socket to connect the camera, but this would require an element of lead time for approval from Ringway, Hertfordshire County Council's street lighting contractors, and to carry out the necessary modifications to the lighting column.

4.10 Alternatively, portable tripod arrangements can be used and the camera powered by external battery, but these are less secure, less reliable and, potentially, more expensive.

4.11 Each camera installation also needs an Operational Requirement Statement, which sets out the stated purpose and key areas for observation and should then be authorised by the Elected Mayor as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety. Alongside the operational justification a new camera would require a Privacy and Data Protection Impact Assessment

and compliance with the statutory code of practice issued by the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner and an appropriate level of consultation, which could all add to the lead time and potentially reduce the impact of the camera installation. It will be important, therefore, to explore at an early stage whether blanket technical approvals are available to reduce installation lead times, and to ensure we comply with the statutory guidance and legal obligations to establish appropriate levels of assessment for future installations.

#### 4.12 **FINANCIAL**

4.13 Initial estimates for the purchase and deployment of mobile CCTV cameras are in the region of £3,000 each for supply and £1,000 each for installation. There would also be a cost of around £1,000 each time a camera is redeployed, to cover the installation of a commando socket and the physical removal and relocation of the camera.

4.14 Costs for tripod mounts and battery power have not yet been established, but may be considered as a viable alternative, subject to reasonable supply costs and suitable security arrangements being possible when deploying on site.

4.15 The current CCTV operational budget carries some funds to cover additional site development, and would support the initial capital costs for the CCTV equipment and installations. Costs for redeployment and future development should be considered as additional expenditure from future CCTV budgets and allocated accordingly.

4.16 To support the pilot and subsequent roll out this year, a bid to the Renewal Fund of £20,000 will be submitted for approval.

#### 4.17 **NEXT STEPS**

- a) Purchase camera equipment for trials at up to three key locations
- b) Identify potential locations based on local knowledge and current issues, and draw up a priority list for the pilot sites in line with the outline programme in 4.18
- c) Develop protocols for future locations to be part of the overall CCTV review
- d) Explore alternative mounting and powering methods for short term use
- e) Review and update policies and assessments to suit mobile camera installations
- f) Discuss with Ringway and Hertfordshire County Council the use of blanket approvals for lighting column installation
- g) Discuss the use of CCTV images with the police in terms of how they will use the images to support community safety priorities in the town

#### 4.18 **INDICATIVE TIMELINE FOR MOBILE CCTV PILOT**

Below is an indicative timeline for introducing the mobile CCTV pilot:

### **February / March 2022**

Collate a list of potential sites and review for suitability

Assess each site and produce a final priority list for implementation

### **April 2022**

Carry out statutory reviews / assessments for each priority site

Carry out local consultation

Prepare individual site designs

### **May 2022**

Procure equipment and arrange for site installation

### **End of May 2022**

Go live with priority sites

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Issues**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there is sufficient budget to implement the pilot scheme both in terms of the capital cost of purchasing the mobile cameras and the associated revenue costs of installation and deployment. A request for £20,000 will be made to the Renewal Fund to support the delivery of the pilot.

5.1.2 Any budget implications arising from changes proposed as part of the pilot will need to be brought forward as part of the normal budget process.

### **5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the mobile pilot would need to ensure that all legal requirements and regulations relating to deployment including Privacy and Data Protection Impact Assessments and compliance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice are actioned before any new CCTV cameras are installed.

### **5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Under s149 (1) of the Equality Act the council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to :

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them
- foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them

5.3.2 An Equality Impact Analysis is being developed as part of the overall CCTV review.

#### 5.4 **Community Safety**

5.4.1 CCTV provides an important measure in supporting the council achieve its Council Plan theme: A happy and healthy town, and in delivering our commitment to ensuring a safer town.

#### 5.5 **Staffing implications**

5.5.1 Additional evidence captured by the mobile CCTV pilot may need to be reviewed by the council's Community Protection team. The extent of this will be one of the points to be considered as part of the review of the pilot.

Background papers – Watford Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22