

<b>31 January 2013</b>		<b>ITEM 6</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny</b>		
<b>The Effectiveness of The Council's CCTV (Closed Circuit Television System)</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Steve Liddiard – Chair of Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-key	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Head of Housing		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Barbara Brownlee – Director of Housing		
<b>This report is</b> Public		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> to report on the findings of the working party on CCTV.		

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The working party members were satisfied that the CCTV system in Thurrock was working effectively and had been upgraded to an acceptable standard.

In partnership with Essex Police, Thurrock Division, CCTV has helped combat anti-social behaviour, vandalism and crime in the Borough.

Due to many changes within the force, some police officers were not taking full advantage of the service as they felt isolated from the CCTV operations.. The working party felt that much could be done to improve cooperation and understanding.

Thurrock does not have an highly active night time economy unlike Basildon, Southend, Chelmsford and Romford and is therefore, less vulnerable to anti-social behaviour after midnight.

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.1 Members recommend that officers should be sufficiently agile to take full advantage of those fast changing technologies at the heart of CCTV when funds allow to take**
- 1.2 Members recommend that Thurrock Council should do everything it can to improve communication and understanding with Police Services.**

- 1.3 Members note that the working party would like to thank Essex Police and officers from Housing and Public Protection for their input.**
- 1.4 Members recommend that the CCTV team investigate partnerships to enable more cost effective CCTV installation and operation where trouble spots are remote from existing broadband facilities e.g. car parks, railway operators, Lakeside shopping centre, private residential sites etc.**
- 1.5 Members recommend that the CCTV team appraise members of the CCTV working party of those local authorities that have CCTV beacon status that we may compare future operations to.**

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 CCTV has been part of Thurrock's community safety policy since 2001 and Safer, Cleaner, Greener Overview and Scrutiny committee members felt it was due for review bearing in mind the advances in wireless and camera technologies. A small working group was therefore set up to look into this area.
- 2.2 When first launched there were 16 CCTV sites across the borough consisting of some 160 cameras. Over the last ten years demand for cameras has increased and Thurrock now has 26 sites and 251 cameras.
- 2.3 The CCTV system operates on a secure Council run broadband network with cameras recording on a 24/7 basis. The recording capacity at each site is in excess of 30 days but can record longer periods depending on movement in the camera location.
- 2.4 Thurrock has around 60 Operator controlled Pan,Tilt & Zoom cameras which are programmed to carry out a "virtual patrol" in that they will automatically move around a 360 degree rotation recording for several minutes in each stop.
- 2.5 The remainder are fixed cameras at various locations mainly attached to Council buildings including flats where officers are able to view internal and external movement. These cameras also view entrance and exits to the various flats that the Council own. The cameras are of very high quality and can produce clear images even at night in well lit areas.
- 2.6 The image quality is dependant on natural occurrences such as trees/weather conditions. Sighting of cameras is particularly important as all of our cameras must be linked into a Council facility such as schools, libraries, Council offices, so that a broadband link can be enabled.
- 2.7 The CCTV suite operates on a 24/7 basis, 365 days a year with specially trained Council Operators working shift systems.

- 2.8 Over the last 3 years the CCTV system has undergone an extensive improvement programme which has enabled CCTV Operators to produce clearer evidential quality CCTV photographs and footage that can be used for the Police, Courts and other agencies. These agencies include Thurrock Council's Housing, Benefit Fraud and Trading Standards/Public Protection Departments.
- 2.9 The cost of the upgrade project was £240k and was spread over a 3 year rolling programme at a cost of £80k per year, funded from within the existing CCTV budget.
- 2.10 Of the 251 cameras, 48 are located in public open space areas such as shopping areas and parks, the remainder are located or attached to Council property or dwellings such as the high rise flats and other Council housing estates.
- 2.11 The CCTV suite is extensively used by the Police on a daily basis. Police surveillance operations, Benefit Fraud enquiries and Trading Standards operations are undertaken at times from the CCTV suite.
- 2.12 The CCTV control room is also fitted with Police Airwave radio system which enables the CCTV Operators to have two way contact with the Police, this enables Operators to react quickly to incidents that occur within the boundaries of the CCTV cameras and has proved invaluable.
- 2.13 Over the last two years hundreds of CCTV evidence packages have been produced which have resulted in some 80 successful prosecutions for a wide range of offences from anti-social behaviour to serious crime.
- 2.14 The CCTV Operators also provide reports and intelligence to both the Police and Thurrock Council Departments. The (CCTV) Concierge facility at the flats have an extensive Housing management and community safety role, using their knowledge of Tenants and visitors to the flats to minimise anti-social behaviour.

### **3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 Technology is now available which enables CCTV to be put up in areas that do not have a direct link to the concierge. This normally involves the use of "mobile" cameras which can be fitted to appropriate street lamps or free standing poles. Although these cameras are also capable of recording 24/7 for periods in excess of 30 days they are not viewed continuously, but can be viewed as and when required. These cameras work on a 3g wireless network and installation costs for these are in the region of £8-10k with an annual 3g fee of around £200 per camera.
- 3.2 Due to the high level of illegal pirate radio operators who have been using the roof space of high rise flae to erect aerials and install transmitters ,in the past

6 months additional equipment has been purchased by Housing to install electronic door operation/control to the roof space entry doors to the high rise flats. The doors are now operated 24/7 by Concierge CCTV Operators to control access to the roof space lift rooms of the high rise flats. Since the introduction, this activity has now ceased.

- 3.3 Housing have recently upgraded the automatic fire alarm systems to the high rise flats and live links have now been installed in the CCTV Control Room so that Operators are alerted immediately to fires within the blocks so that they can now react swiftly to the alarms to help co-ordinate emergency services response units.

**4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

- 4.1 The recommendations have been made following the investigations by the working party for CCTV. Members of that working party believe the recommendations will assist in moving Thurrock's CCTV service forward.

**5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Police, housing officers and public protection officers.

**6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 6.1 CCTV supports the Councils responsibilities in relation to Crime and Disorder

**7. IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
 Telephone and email: **01375 652772**  
**mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk**

There is currently a budget allocation for the operation, some maintenance and data useage charges in relation to CCTV. Any additional investment would need to be idenfied as a growth item and would need to be submitted through the budget setting process.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **To be confirmed**  
 Telephone and email:

No legal implications.

**7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**  
Telephone and email: **01375-652472**  
**sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk**

There are no equality or diversity implications noted in this report.

**7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

none

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**

- None

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- None

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