

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Holy Trinity, Friary & St Nicholas, Stoughton, Ash South & Tongham, Ash Wharf, Worplesdon, Stoke, Mellow, Shalford, Westborough, Onslow.

Report of Director of Service Delivery

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Town Centre CCTV Equipment Upgrade

Executive Summary

The Guildford Borough CCTV, covering principally the town centre and operated by Surrey Police, was first installed in 1995. Many of the cameras are over 20 years old and are nearing the end of their useful serviceable life. The report explains the background and proposes that the older cameras are replaced with new cameras incorporating IP (internet protocol) technology. The system will then be more reliable and resilient and will produce better quality images.

Recommendation to Executive

To approve to move the Town Centre CCTV Equipment Upgrade project from the provisional to the approved list of the General Fund Capital Programme.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

To improve public safety and improve protection from and detection of crime.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to highlight a need to update much of the Town Centre CCTV cameras and associated equipment to ensure the system continues to operate to the highest standards. The report will seek authority to undertake the necessary procurement.

2. Strategic Priorities

The primary aim of the CCTV system is to assist the police in keeping our community safe. It does this by gathering video data to help the police in

managing operational resources, gathering intelligence, and gathering evidence for prosecutions. There is also considerable evidence that the presence of a properly functioning CCTV system does much to make the general public feel safer. CCTV therefore contributes to all three of the fundamental themes of the Council's strategic framework and in particular supports four of the nine strategic priorities, i.e.

- Regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas
- Supporting older, more vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community
- Creating smart places infrastructure across Guildford
- Using innovation, technology and new ways of working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council services

3. Background

3.1 The Borough's public space CCTV system was originally installed in 1995 with an initial 23 PTZ (pan, tilt and zoom) cameras linked through an optical fibre broadband network to a control room in Guildford Police Station. The initiative was a partnership collaboration between the Council and Surrey Police whereby the Council owns and maintains the system and the police operate it. This partnership has developed under the Safer Guildford banner and remains in place today. The system has been extended and enhanced as and when needs have been identified and funding has been available. Please see the table in **Appendix 2.**

3.2 It can be seen from the table that many of the cameras installed in 1995 are still in place and working. These "Surcha" cameras have proved remarkably resilient with a service life beyond the 20 years normally expected for a public space CCTV camera. Whilst they are robust and remain operational, their age carries with it several disadvantages:

1. The picture quality, though good for its time, no longer matches that of modern cameras.
2. The cameras are bulky. Modern cameras are smaller and less obtrusive, particularly important in conservation areas.
3. The manufacturer of the original cameras no longer exists, making spares difficult to source. We are fortunate in that our current maintenance engineer worked on these cameras in the early days and is familiar with them. Should we lose his services for whatever reason, it would be difficult to find the necessary expertise to repair and maintain the cameras.
4. Unlike modern CCTV cameras, the older cameras are not IP (Internet Protocol) enabled. This means that extra equipment is needed in the control room to manage the analogue data and convert it to the digital form required by some of the more recently acquired monitoring equipment in the control room.

- 3.3 Although the age of the cameras provides sufficient incentive to replace them, this latter point in 4 above adds a further important dimension to the requirement to renew the cameras. Effectively, two different control systems are being used adding to the complexity of operating the system. This was referred to in Section 9.0 of the academic research paper appended to the CCTV Working Group report (**Appendix 1**) where it says:

“During brief conversation with the operator on duty, issues hindering the effectiveness of tasks were made clear. It was suggested that the operation of two different systems (analogue and digital [Internet Protocol a.k.a. IP]) running concurrently was a hindrance, as two different camera control systems were being used. This also touches on the issue of having too much equipment and not enough room. Desks contained a large variety of different artefacts including radios, keyboards, control systems for operating cameras, etc. The older equipment for controlling cameras generated a sense of unease, as it was suggested that if equipment failed, replacements could not be found due to the age of the technology.”

- 3.4 Modernising the cameras and associated equipment would enable a simpler and more ordered environment for operating the CCTV system and would, by becoming IP enabled, allow us to take advantage of future technology thus making the system more resilient and future proofed. The proposal is to replace 44 of the existing 59 cameras with new IP enabled cameras and associated control equipment at an estimated cost of £250,000.00.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 During 2019, the Council together with its Safer Guildford partners facilitated a working group to review the effectiveness and relevance of the Guildford CCTV system. The group included representatives from the Council, Surrey Police, Pub Watch, University of Surrey, and Experience Guildford. The findings of this group are presented in their report “Briefing Note – CCTV working group outcomes” which is included in **Appendix 1**. The work of the group was supplemented by academic research undertaken by a research student at the University of Surrey, which is also included within the body of the report. The principal conclusions were that:

- CCTV is highly valued by local groups and businesses
- Police shift patterns were revised to enable cost savings by relaxing the need monitor during periods of low demand.
- Comparison with other systems did not reveal any clear or obvious improvements to the way we are managing our system (though future benchmarking will continue).
- The need to upgrade and modernise the cameras and associated equipment was highlighted and endorsed.

5. Key Risks

The key risk is that the older equipment will cease to be repairable. Replacement will ensure that the system remains reliable and serviceable for the foreseeable future.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The £250,000 funding for the project is already accounted for within the Provisional General Fund Capital Programme. The Executive is asked to authorise moving the scheme into the Approved General Fund Capital Programme. It is worth noting that there are savings of £21,000 under the earlier and now complete Safer Guildford CCTV & Lighting Strategy that could contribute to funding this project.
- 6.2 It is difficult to quantify what revenue savings would accrue from this project however, it would not be unreasonable to expect say 10% of the maintenance budget, i.e. about £10,000.

7. Legal Implications

CCTV is cornerstone of the Safer Guildford community safety strategy and as such makes a major contribution to the Council fulfilling its duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

8. Human Resource Implications

There are no human resources implications.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

This duty has been considered in the context of this report and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

There are no climate change or sustainability implications.

11. Summary of Options

A “do nothing” option would result in lower resilience and reliability of the existing system. If cameras become non-repairable, there will be a tendency to replace but only if funds are available. Over time there will be a gradual reduction in effectiveness.

If the option to upgrade the equipment is taken, the system will continue to remain effective and resilient. The adoption of IP technology will allow opportunities to be taken to improve through new technical innovation.

12. Conclusion

The current Guildford Borough CCTV system has many cameras that are 20 or more years old. As well as nearing the end of their serviceable life, these cameras also utilise obsolete video technology. The existing system can be brought up to modern standards by replacing cameras that are not reliant on old analogue video technology and that are IP (internet protocol) enabled. The resultant system will be more resilient to developments in technology, will have an operating system that will be simpler to use and maintain, will be more reliable and will produce higher quality images. The proposal is to replace 44 of the cameras and associate equipment at an estimated cost of £250,000.00.

13. Background Papers

General Fund Capital Programme – Estimated Expenditure 2019-20 to 2024-25.

14. Appendices

Appendix 1: Briefing Note – CCTV working group outcomes

Appendix 2: Summary of Camera Locations

Allen J, 'Guildford Borough Council CCTV Project: report on evidence gathered from academic research' Unis, 2019