

Agenda Item No:

Report to: Services Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report Title: Scrutiny Review of CCTV Monitoring

Report By: Rasoul Shahilow
Head of Parking & Highways

Purpose of Report

To provide the Services Committee with the Final Report of the Scrutiny Review of the effectiveness of CCTV as a crime deterrent.

Recommendation(s)

1. The Committee agrees the report and recommends that it is placed on the agenda of the next available meeting of Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

The review team have completed a detailed review including interviewing a cross section of community representatives, the police and council officers and undertaking site visits.

Background

1. A Scrutiny Review of CCTV monitoring linked to antisocial behaviour was included in 2007/2008 overview and scrutiny annual work programme.
2. The review fell within the focus of the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillors Fawthrop (chair), Webb and Chowney were appointed to carry out the review.
3. The agreed terms of reference for the review were to examine the effectiveness of CCTV as crime deterrent including antisocial behaviour by;
 - i. Reviewing historical trends in crime in Hastings with particular reference to public place crime.

- ii. Reviewing the history of the development and introduction of CCTV in Hastings.
- iii. Identifying any correlation between the introduction of CCTV in Hastings and trends in crime.
- iv. Seeking evidence and opinion from partner agencies on crime trends and the influence of CCTV.

Methods of Enquiry

4. The review team met on a regular basis, had a site visit to Carlisle Parade Monitoring Room and had detailed investigative sessions with representatives from the following community groups and police representatives;

Broomgrove Residents Association

Castle Ward Forum

Seniors Forum

Barwatch

Hastings and Rother Disability Forum

Police CCTV Project Manager

An Inspector from Hastings Police

Throughout the review the review team were assisted and advised by Rasoul Shahilow, HBC Head of Parking and Highways and Katrina Silverson, Scrutiny and Development Officer.

Findings

4. The review team identified that the police and Hastings Borough Council's monitoring rooms contributions towards detection, prevention and reduction in crime has been very effective in Hastings and St Leonards.
5. The statistics presented by the police show that since the end of the first quarter in 2003 until the first quarter in 2008 show that the numbers of incidents monitored by CCTV were 21,388, with 3916 arrests and 294 incidents resolved.
6. From interviewing the community representatives it was evident that in most cases, they were not aware of these good works being done within their community. The review team considers that it is essential for the community to be informed of service as this would lead to a reduction in the fear and perception of crime.
7. This in turn will improve the quality of life for the people of Hastings and St Leonards and should attract more people into the town centre, thus boosting the economy. It is therefore recommended that all means of communications should be explored so that the community can be informed of all activities in relation to CCTV operations on a regular basis.



8. Also from interviewing the community representatives, a number of new sites needing coverage were identified. The review team suggests that officers in consultation with the police should use all means including external funding to extend CCTV coverage to the following locations.
 - i. Queens Road/ Waterworks Road
 - ii. Coverage throughout George Street
 - iii. The area around Priory Quarter
 - iv. Area around Station Approach
9. The site visit by the review team to the control room highlighted that since the introduction of an Airwave Digital Radio System by the police, the effectiveness of communications between the control room and the police had been hampered. Operational staff in the control room are no longer able to hear the police radio transmissions, hence they are not able to use their local knowledge in assisting with detection and prevention of crime. The review team recommends that officers should explore at the highest level the possibility of the provision of a digital radio by the police, to rectify this deterioration of the service.
10. For the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and other relevant legislation, a Code of Practice was produced. This code requires the establishment of a "Lay Visitor's Group" to monitor the operation of CCTV. The objective of the scheme is to ensure that the Code of Practice for the operators is fully complied with. The code is attached at appendix A to this report.
11. Alongside this review, another scrutiny review team completing the Scrutiny Review of Car Parking has agreed to recommend to the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a "Parking Advisory Group" is set up. This will consist of elected members working with officers and will be able to receive the views of community groups. The Advisory Group will make recommendations on parking issues across the Borough.
12. The review team completing this review (CCTV), considered that rather than set up two new groups, the CCTV Lay Visitor's Group should consist of the Parking Advisory Group when established, together with community representatives consisting of the chair of the Bar Watch Scheme, Chair of Hastings and St Leonards Town Centre Management Board, Chairs of the Old Town and Castle Forum residents associations.
13. The review team also considered the relocation of the CCTV control room from its present location in Harold Place underpass. The Head of Parking and Highways presented a detailed report on this which is attached to this report at appendix B.
14. It was recognised that there are considerable limitations with the present control room at Harold Place underpass, as the site has experienced flooding during high tide and periods of heavy rainfall. The site has reached its ultimate capacity and there are no further options for expansion.



15. It is noted that the composition and dynamics of the Town Centre will soon change with the relocation of Hastings College to its new site and the presence of a large number of students there. The college have offered an opportunity to relocate the control room within the development. This move offers business continuity, the opportunity for further expansion, and importantly provides a platform where the police presence will assist the enforcement of law and order during busy periods.
16. The review team supports the proposals to relocate the control room to the new site at the Station Plaza. The group also considered that while this would be a real improvement to working environment for staff, it was important that staff and their representatives are fully consulted as the project develops.

Conclusions

17. After considering the views of the community groups, local police and taking into account the monitoring statistics, the review team fully support the continued use of CCTV monitoring as an invaluable tool for deterring crime and for combating anti social behaviour.
18. The review team also that the success of CCTV should be publicised and its use expanded into other areas as highlighted by the interviews with community groups. Further that in order to properly monitor this service, that the "Lay Visitors Group" be established involving community representatives and HBC Councillors.
19. Finally, after considering the detailed report attached at appendix B, the review team fully endorse the move and expansion of the CCTV Monitoring Room from the poor quality accommodation in Harold Place Underpass to the new accommodation on offer at Station Plaza. Also that the issue of poor radio reception is addressed as part of that move.

Recommendations

20. Head of Parking and Highways to promote and communicate the CCTV operations of the town by informing the community on a quarterly basis.
21. Head of Parking and Highways to explore all means of external funding to extend CCTV coverage to Queens Road/ Water Works Road, George Street, Priory Quarter and Station Approach.
22. A formal and at most senior request is made to the Chief Constable of Sussex Police for the provision of a police radio within the control room.
23. The "Lay Visitors Group" should be established and the composition of this group should be members of the Parking Advisory Group when established and community representative consisting of the chair of the Old Town Centre Business, chairs of the Old Town and Castle Forum residents associations.
24. The proposals to relocate the control room to the Station Plaza are supported and the out of hours coordinators are fully consulted upon new working conditions.

Wards Affected



Castle, Central St. Leonards, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill

Area(s) Affected

Central Hastings, East Hastings, South St. Leonards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Yes
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	Yes
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	Yes
Organisational Consequences	No

Supporting Documents

Appendix A: "CCTV Codes of Practice - Lay Visitor Group" report
Appendix B: Report on the Relocation of the CCTV Monitoring Room to Carlisle Parade
Appendix C: Action Plan from the Scrutiny Review of the effectiveness of CCTV as a crime deterrent

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