

**Agenda Item No:**

**Report to:** CCTV Scrutiny Review

**Date of Meeting:** 16th September 2008

**Report Title:** Relocation of Control Room

**Report By:** Rasoul Shahilow  
Head of Parking & Highways

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**Purpose of Report**

To update members of the current CCTV and the proposals from Sussex Police to reduce the number of CCTV monitoring centres in Sussex and a key role that the future CCTV/ Control Room operations in Hastings can play in light of new developments for the Town.

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**Recommendation(s)**

1. To note the report
2. Members views on the proposals to relocate the control room to the Station Plaza complex are requested.

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**Reasons for Recommendations**

To meet the requirements of the agreement with Sussex Police and ensure the continued operation of the CCTV system.

To ensure the continued contribution to the regeneration of the local economy and enhanced community safety by the Council.

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**Background**

1. The Control Room at Carlisle Parade became operative in May 1999 following the implementation of Decriminalised Parking. The control room initially was set up for the sole purpose of providing radio communication for the Parking Enforcement Team and monitoring CCTV for car parks, in order to reduce crime within the car parks and provide security for customers. Through progressive changes that have been introduced, the Control Room now provides the dual

monitoring of Sussex Police Cameras, the monitoring and control of pedestrianised areas, CCTV monitoring of council's offices, together with communications for other services including a Bar Watch Scheme.

2. The operational hours of the Control Room were extended through a combination of successful bids to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Safer Hastings Partnership. This together with changes to working practices allowed the introduction in 2007 of the 24 hour control room operations, which ceased on 28th June 2008 when the external funding stream ended. Due mainly to our Partner Agency's desire for a continued 24 hour control room operations, savings were identified to enable the re-introduction of this operation to March 2009.
3. The introduction of a 24 hour control room operation also provided the opportunity to support the Out of Hours Service for the council in the event of sickness and holidays. During the period of 24 hour operation of the control room, a total of 528 incidents were detected after midnight by our staff of which 170 have resulted in arrests being made by the police. The extended coverage continued the aims of developing the night time economy, community safety and the tackling of public place violent crime through the support of the schemes such as Bar Watch.

### **Sussex Police CCTV Monitoring**

4. The on street CCTV monitoring and recording system deployed by Sussex Police is some 14 years old. It has reached the end of its useful life. And is at the stage where some spare parts are no longer available to maintain the system. Because of this and their need to identify efficiency savings of £6 million overall, Sussex Police have carried out a review of their current CCTV operations. This review concluded that only two manned CCTV control room facilities at Brighton and Haywards Heath will be available within Sussex in the future. The other two sites Eastbourne and Bognor Regis will be maintained as unmanned sites to provide resilience and flexibility for their operations.
5. Local authorities and other partners have been informed of the review. For the purpose of moving the scheme forward a project board has been established. Hastings has a representative on this board. There is a budget of £1.3 million that has been set aside for the scheme. Equipment within the dual monitoring centre such as ours in Hastings will not be compatible with the new system. All equipment needs to be upgraded the estimated cost is £120,000. Sussex Police are seeking a £20,000 contribution towards the cost of the upgrade from Hastings Borough Council. Safer Hastings Partnership meeting on 22nd July 2008 agreed to fund the upgrade.

### **Station Plaza Site**

6. The crime prevention officer, following a report addressing public place violent crime suggested that Hastings control room can play an important role in addressing public place violent crime and thereby help to promote a more diverse evening and night time economy and help regenerate the local economy. The matter was considered to be crucial, especially in the future, in



light of increasing student numbers due to the relocation of the college to the town centre. Thus, a police lead group was set up consisting of the developers, Seaspaces, Police and the Local Authority in order to explore ideas in improving the current CCTV monitoring.

7. At early stages it was recognised by the group that there are limitations within our current CCTV monitoring facilities. Due to the fact that the site experiences flooding in high tide and heavy rain, the group agreed that if a new site is found then this could serve the community better in the future. These dialogues have resulted in an agreement reached with the College that an area within the Station Plaza complex, can be allocated for the new CCTV monitoring facilities. The new facilities would provide for future expansion opportunities as well as enabling the police to have easy access to CCTV monitoring facilities and the establishment of a dedicated space for the purpose of assisting the police operations for the town.
8. The Council has previously installed dedicated ducting from Carlisle control room to Priory Street car park. This ducting has been extended to link to the new site at Station Plaza by Seaspaces as part of their contribution to the scheme. The accommodation provided by the college will be at a peppercorn rent. Quotations have been sought for the relocation of the control room equipment to the new site and the estimated cost of this is £120,000. There are other costs associated with the fitting of the structure, such as air conditioning and additional power requirement. These works need to be undertaken by the contractor employed by the college as part of the building project. The college has confirmed that this cost is £30,000.

## Discussion

9. There are a number of weaknesses identified with the current location of the control room at Carlisle Parade. On a number of occasions the control room has experienced flooding, resulting from a high tide and heavy rainfall that threatened business continuity. The control room has reached its optimum capacity and the inability for further expansion, in light of the police plans to reduce their number of CCTV control rooms from currently 4 to 2, the need to maintain and extend the current control room is even more important for the community.
10. The opportunity to develop partnerships with other organisations such as Hastings College, Sea space, the Police and Priory Meadow, will provide a comprehensive CCTV monitoring system for the town centre together with a control room function for all front line council services. The new service will be able to provide the security at the college and moreover further enhances community safety and crime reduction initiatives in response to increased commercial and educational activities in the town centre.
11. Analysis of the nature of Public Place Violent Crime in Hastings over the last 12 months strongly suggests a link between these offences and the night-time economy, particularly in the town centre hotspots. The location of most offences, times and days of offences and perpetrator profiles all suggest the pivotal role of alcohol and the night time economy. Furthermore, 528 incidents



that have been detected following the introduction of 24 hour CCTV monitoring indicate the existence of major problems. Thus policies and resources should be arguably focused to address this problem.

12. It is believed that the merger of the Out Of Hours service and the Control Room function will provide an economy of scale for services provided. The combined service will enhance the current service by providing adequate out of hours service and in addition fulfils the contribution to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

### Financial Implications

13. It has proved impossible to accurately determine the operational cost associated with the CCTV control room as there is no specific cost centre for the service. The service is provided for within the current on street parking budget, where apportionment of the cost (25%) is recharged to the off street account. It is believed that the maintenance cost and other associated expenditure in relation to control room operations will remain the same whether operated from Carlisle Parade control room or from the new site in the Station Plaza. However if a 24 hour control room to be introduced on a permanent basis, then although there will be additional staffing cost but initial analysis shows that saving achieved through efficiency savings on parking operations will enable the introduction of the service on a revenue neutral budget to the service.
14. Table below shows set up cost for relocation of control room from Carlisle Parade control room to the new site at the Station Plaza:

**Table 1 – set up – Control Room**

Set Up costs)	2009/10
Relocation and commissioning in new site	£120,000
Heating and ventilation	£30,000
Contingencies (10%)	15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£165,000</b>

### Policy Implications

15. The Corporate Plan 2008-9 to 2010-11 sets out priorities that have identified economic and social inclusion, making Hastings and St Leonards safer, cleaner and the public realm as some of the top priorities for the Town. Hastings' control room has a unique position in East Sussex where joint local monitoring between the Council and Sussex Police has brought about many advantages to both organisations in meeting their obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act.
16. There is evidence that there has been a significant improvement in many factors that affects quality of life in out Town. A safer community still remains among top priorities for the community and based on our track record that the extended CCTV control room function has enhanced crime prevention and detection of crime, it is believed that our control room's role will be vitally important in the



delivery of this priority for the Town in particular in light of plans to reduce the number of CCTV control rooms by Sussex Police.

17. There is a need to create an environment and image that will promote the town as a vibrant place, which is free from crime, particularly in the evenings. Once the fear and perception of crime is reduced with the help of active CCTV monitoring, this in turn should attract more people into the town centre, thus boosting the evening economy and will assist with the corporate priority of the economic regeneration.

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**Wards Affected**

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

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**Area(s) Affected**

Central Hastings, East Hastings, South St. Leonards

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**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	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes

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**Supporting Documents**

None

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**Officer to Contact**

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