

TIVERTON TOWN CENTRE CCTV ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014

Cabinet Member Cllr Colin Slade
Responsible Officer Head of HR, Learning and Development

Reason for Report: To update members on the annual use and performance of the Tiverton town-centre CCTV system, in accordance with the terms of reference for the CCTV management group agreed by the PDG on 27 July 2013.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That the Community Well-Being PDG notes the report provided including the operational and management issues going forward.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: None

Financial Implications: Tiverton town centre's CCTV is run with a very small budget that is jointly funded by MDDC and Tiverton Town Council with ad-hoc support grant funding from Devon & Cornwall Police.

Legal Implications: The CCTV system must be operated lawfully.

Risk Assessment: If CCTV is operated unlawfully Mid Devon District Council could be fined by the Information Commissioner. If the system is ineffective or not operative then it would not fulfil its function in terms of preventing or reducing crime and disorder.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The current system links 16 digital cameras in the town centre which vary in capability from static cameras to those with full pan, tilt and zoom functions.
- 1.2 The camera locations have not significantly changed in 2014, however a review has been completed with the Police. The purpose was to tweak fixed camera angles in particular to ensure maximum possible overlap of coverage and have confidence that cameras remain effectively located in respect of reported crime and known hot-spots.
- 1.3 One camera on the former Twyford Inn Public House was destroyed by a fire at the premises last year. Insurance cover by the building owners at the time of the fire has compensated the Council fully for this loss. The camera been replaced onto the building at the corner of William Street/Bampton Street. Suitable locations for this camera were limited. The location finally selected was chosen on 3 points:
 - To minimise wireless transmission issues that had affected the old camera
 - Provide monitoring for the late night economy in that area of the town
 - Permissions to locate being obtainable

- 1.4 This new camera is working and is producing excellent quality CCTV images that are proving far superior to the images from the old camera/location.
- 1.5 Procedures are in place and continue to be adhered to ensuring the CCTV system operates legally within the approved terms of reference and codes of practice.
- 1.6 All requests to view and obtain images by the Police have been carefully logged and managed in accordance with data exemptions under the Data Protection Act 1998 (Section 29 - data processed for the prevention or detection of crime) with image evidence being managed appropriately under the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984. More information on requests for image viewing and release is given Section 4 below.

2.0 System Performance and Upgrading

- 2.1 There have been previously reported issues with CCTV images 'breaking down'. This has been a long term intermittent fault. A significant effort has been put into resolving this problem during the past year. As with any intermittent fault, finding the source of the problem was time consuming, more so when, as it turned out, there were multiple causes.
- 2.2 Repairs have been required to the fibre optic cable control boxes carrying camera images (and which link all the cameras) within the control and in Phoenix Lane. This work was funded out of the current operational budget. Further work was then required to replace the connector units that link the optic cables to the CCTV hardware. This required external funding from the Police via a grant of £2500 from the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) funding.
- 2.3 The result is that all CCTV cameras on the Tiverton town system are currently stable and fully operational.
- 2.4 Further maintenance has been completed as per operational requirements and all camera lenses were externally cleaned during December 2014 using a water-repellent silicone product designed to reduce rainwater staining/light refraction where suitable, thereby further improving images.
- 2.5 Working with Devon County Highways, trees at the top of Phoenix Lane have been thinned and cut-back to improve camera coverage at the central Phoenix Lane/Fore Street axis. Further work is required on MDDC owned trees on the northern side of the Multi-storey car park (MSCP) to improve the viewing angles on the system camera located externally at that location.
- 2.6 The CCTV system hardware continues to require overhaul and enhancement to ensure it remains technologically current and fit-for-purpose. Essential required upgrades identified for 2015 are:
 - Replacement digital video recorder (DVR) – the current DVR is at maximum capacity and cannot record all camera images at full resolution. A new system would increase both capacity and recording

image quality, enabling integration with the MSCP system into a single control set-up. This is proposed to come from operational budget identified for financial year 2015/16.

- An additional town-centre fibre-optic cable running alongside the existing ageing cable. This work should be linked into future town development and allow not only for the future CCTV needs of the town but facilitate other data transmission requirements if possible. Funding for this is subject to capital grants programme bid of £40k and is currently identified in the MTFP for financial year 2014/15.

2.7 Options to extend the current system into the Westexe area of Tiverton continue to be explored, however are not currently viable in budget terms. This is due to technical issues with wireless connection and the excessive cost of cabling to relay high-memory data images to the control room across town.

3.0 **System Management, Funding and Review**

3.1 The town centre system continues to be managed by Environmental Services with overall day-to-day responsibility now with the Public Health and Professional Services Manager.

3.2 The Council continues to employ one person directly to supervise and operate the system. This is the CCTV Supervisor who works 7-hours weekly on a flexible basis, typically involving a mixture of key monitoring on Saturday nights with additional time during the week. The supervisor also works as a volunteer with the Police and the Council and, as such, contributes more hours to the running of the system outside of his contract.

3.3 The Licensing and CCTV officer also contributes a flexible number of hours per week to the management of the system, in particular on funding and legal compliance issues.

3.4 The work of the above is supported and directed by the CCTV Management Group whose make-up and terms of reference were approved by the Community Well-Being PDG and Cabinet in July and September 2013, respectively. The current group membership is as follows:

- Public Health and Professional Services Manager (replaces Licensing and Community Services Manager – post redundant)
- Licensing and CCTV Officer
- Community Safety Officer
- Police representatives x2
- Elected Member (MDDC) x2
- Elected Member (Tiverton Town Council) x2
- Clerk of Tiverton Town Council
- TARCA – Tiverton Against Retail Crime Association representative

3.5 The Management Group met six-monthly during 2014. During 2015 it is proposed to change the frequency of meetings to quarterly in order to facilitate more proactive management and greater engagement from all

members. It is not proposed to change any other terms of the group however membership may be extended to include a representative from MDDC Estates Management (especially if integration with the MSCP system goes ahead) and the Tiverton Town Centre Manager (when appointed).

- 3.6 The Management Group continues to work with the Police to introduce more vetted and trained volunteers to monitor the system. Attempts were made during 2014 to set-up two new volunteers following liaison with the Police. One volunteer did not complete the vetting process and we are currently in communication with the second. However, some data security issues have arisen which may need resolution before volunteers work with the system. There are requirements to have tier-level password protection on the DVR system in order to protect access to, and the integrity of, recorded images. An option on the CCTV software is currently being explored and tested, however appropriate resolution may not be in place until the DVR is replaced.
- 3.7 The system continues to operate within a limited MDDC operational budget of approximately £8k per annum with additional support from Tiverton Town Council and ad-hoc grant funding where available. Under its terms of reference, the Management Group should continue to identify and assess the future development of the system and secure sources of funding.
- 3.8 During 2015 it is proposed to undertake a full review of the on-going management and operation of the town centre CCTV system, with a view to securing its longer-term future within a sustainable ownership and management structure. This review will be completed jointly by the Public Health and Professional Services Manager, the Head of Service (Jill May) and the Management Group in consultation with all partners and stakeholders. This review will be reported back to the Community Well-Being PDG with recommendations for consideration in due course.

4.0 **System Use and Data Requests**

- 4.1 The town centre system continues to be widely supported by the public, Tiverton Town Council, traders and the Police as a vital component of preventing crime and disorder within the town and for detecting crime/securing evidence for the conviction of offenders.
- 4.2 The system operates and records images 24/7/365 and is monitored on a paid and voluntary basis as described above.
- 4.3 During 2014, as was the case in previous years, all requests to view and obtain data images came from the Police. All such requests followed formal data viewing and release procedures where each individual request was documented and signed by an appropriately ranked Police officer and then counter-signed and actioned by one of the above MDDC officers if appropriate. Images were only copied and released where there is evidence of a crime, in which case data was physically managed in accordance with logging and continuity of evidence/exhibit requirements under the PACE legislation.

- 4.4 We have recently trained an additional officer from the Environmental Health team to be competent in handling data viewing requests. This provides additional support to the small CCTV team and ensures we can respond to requests as promptly as possible. Typically, such requests follow soon after the event of a specific crime or where there is on-going intelligence that criminal and/or anti-social behaviour may occur. As such, being able to view CCTV images promptly is of a key benefit to the Police.
- 4.5 Up to 15 December 2014, we had received 50 data viewing requests from the Police during the year. Additional requests are likely over the busy Christmas period and therefore the number of requests will, in all likelihood, remain comparable with the 67 received in total during 2013.
- 4.6 Especially in the case of current investigations, it is not possible to detail all the circumstances when CCTV images were requested and where monitoring prevented crime or where evidence obtained led to the conviction of an offender. However some example cases which occurred during 2014 are given below.
- Several requests were received in connection with assaults
 - Identification and effective intervention with known individuals with a history of nuisance and anti-social behaviour
 - A request for footage in connection with vehicle interference which led to additional evidence being obtained
 - Monitoring a female handbag snatcher at the bus station where CCTV footage played a key part in her conviction
 - Dealing with a number of incidents where males gave females unwanted attention
 - Tracking and potential identification of shop-lifting offenders
 - A female was stabbed near the old railway line, footage showed the female with the offender in the town a few moments earlier clearly showing them together and confirming the victims statement of clothing and direction and at one point her trying to get away from the offender
 - Numerous Saturday late-night public order/drunkenness issues whereby active monitoring of CCTV allowed to police resources to be effectively directed (or stood down to be directed elsewhere)
 - Obtaining evidence in connection with vandalism in the town-centre

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Circulation of the Report: Cllr Colin Slade, Management Team

List of Background Papers: CCTV Code of Practice 2008 issued by Information Commissioner