

**TIVERTON TOWN CENTRE CCTV OPTIONS FOR ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE**

- Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Dennis Knowles, Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing
- Responsible Officer:** Andrew Busby, Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change
- Reason for Report:** To provide Members with the Options on completing essential maintenance on the Tiverton Town Centre CCTV system.

**RECOMMENDATION (S):**

- 1) To give delegated power to the Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing and the Deputy Chief Executive (151), in consultation with Property Services to seek the remainder of external funding required for the delivery of Option 2 as a minimum, but to aim to achieve Option 3 and complete the works within the current calendar year.
- 2) To accept the grant of £25k from the OPCC, subject to the terms and conditions on Annex C.
- 3) To accept the fund of £3,161 from the OPCC, subject to the terms and conditions on Annex D and as detailed in section 11.
- 4) To accept £5k from the Tiverton Town Centre Partnership, as detailed on para 9.1.

**Financial Implications:** The Council has been awarded a grant of £25K for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). In line with the grant terms of the agreement for the successful grant awarded.

The Council will approach Tiverton Town Council (TTC) for a further financial contribution and a discussion about the future ownership of the system. The ongoing maintenance and servicing of the system is a revenue cost pressure, which is partly offset by the financial contributions already received annually from TTC. For further details please refer to para 9.1.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** The OPCC grant application submitted in March 2021, was successful, the grant award is £25K. The cost to deliver the recommended option for the essential maintenance of the TTC Public Space Surveillance (PSS) system will require additional funding, otherwise the Council would need to return the value of the grant to the OPCC. The grant has to be fully spent by the 31 December 2021.

**Legal Implications:** Any CCTV Scheme owned and operated by the Council must comply with the following legislation:

- General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (and the Data Protection Code of Practice for Surveillance Cameras and Personal Information issued by the Information Commissioner);
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (and the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice issued in accordance with this Act);
- Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- Regulatory and Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The Council has to ensure that the CCTV scheme used (including the equipment) allows it to comply with the above statutory requirements. In particular, one of the key obligations is to process personal information in a manner that ensures appropriate security. See para 2.4 below.

**Risk Assessment:** If the CCTV is not operating the police, and the Council, have less evidence to identify and pursue individuals who have been involved in criminal and/or anti-social activities in the area, therefore crime, and anti-social behaviour, could potentially rise. If there is wider coverage of the town centre area more incidents and criminal/anti-social activity can be monitored and images provided to the police/relevant Council services, which can be viewed in real time as part of a new PSS system or provided on USB as part of a chain of evidence. The cameras that form part of the TTC system provide security on Council land.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** This report does not specifically highlight any Equality implications, however Officers will continue to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** Property services are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of Mid Devon communities. The way that the Council manages CCTV has a direct impact on the safety of the community so it is therefore important to ensure that the CCTV is operating correctly and efficiently.

**Impact on Climate Change:** The environmental impact is considered to be low; however, the operation of the CCTV will be included when calculating our carbon footprint.

## **1.0 Introduction/Background**

1.1 The Tiverton Town Centre Public Space Surveillance (PSS) system comprises 29 pan tilt zoom (PTZ) and fixed view cameras around the town. These are pro-actively monitored by a dedicated operator in a control room situated in the Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP), for a number of hours each week dependent upon the likelihood of potential incidents and times of day of these events. Transmission from these cameras utilises a combination of fibre optic, hard wired and wireless links, with a main wireless backhaul to the control room location.

- 1.2 The PSS CCTV is a discretionary service to which the Council has a limited budget to maintain the system. The monitoring of the CCTV system is done on a voluntary basis with additional hours when necessary to protect the MSCP. The Council pays the volunteer 7 hours per week towards the monitoring of the CCTV. The police service regularly contacts the CCTV volunteer to aid officers in policing activity, crime prevention and improving community relations.
- 1.3 The PSS CCTV was an initiative from June 2011 when a working member's group review of the CCTV led to some of the CCTV systems being upgraded during the 2016/17 financial year, utilising technology available at the time, much of which has now been superseded with replacement items proving more cost effective and providing increased surveillance capability.

## **2.0 TTC CCTV System Current Arrangements**

- 2.1 The PSS system that was originally installed was updated to a low cost, high-definition camera system five years ago. The Council consulted with the partner agencies including the Police, Highways and Devon County Council to identify the best location for the cameras to ensure the best possible coverage of the town centre's key areas. These are areas where there is most public footfall or known hotspots for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.2 The control room has two monitors and a large hard drive to store the footage, for up to 31 days. Software is in use and the CCTV operator has had the relevant data protection training to view, retrieve and add footage to secure memory devices as required by the Police Authority, following a strict protocol for chain of evidence.
- 2.3 Current levels of investment mean we have an operational system however; repairs are costly and have increased significantly, which in turn places additional pressure on this discretionary service. There was no sinking fund set up for future replacement of this system when the technology required replacement.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the current Dahua cameras and control equipment installed in the PSS system are Chinese manufactured. Although these cameras can provide reasonable images, they are at the low end of the quality scale and relatively inexpensive. More importantly, in order for digital/Internet Protocol (IP) to interface with different manufacturers' equipment, there is a standard known as Open Network Video Interface Forum (ONVIF). When the Council's cameras were installed, Dahua and other Chinese manufacturers were full members of ONVIF, although from March 2020, they have had restrictions placed on their membership.

This is due to them being placed on the US government's (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-tech-china-idUSKBN2A10QJ>) 'Entity' list. This is a list of countries that the US government has blacklisted for human rights violations. The Entity List prohibits a US based business from

exporting their products to the named organisations. ONVIF is a company incorporated in the US, hence the restrictions on Dahua.

From a practical perspective, this means that although Dahua may still be members of ONVIF, they are no longer entitled to relevant updates and the new test tools. This places any Dahua equipment belonging to the Council at risk to cyber security breaches, making the equipment and data vulnerable.

- 2.5 The control room supervisor has highlighted there are frequent “drop outs” of much of the town centre camera system, this indicates a failure at the main collection point in Phoenix Lane, due to the network switch at that location becoming overloaded. It is recommended that this switch be upgraded or removed and the fibre link re-instated, to handle the substantial data throughput of all of the connected cameras, becoming the transmission medium to the control room.

### **3.0 PSS Transmission**

- 3.1 A collection point is provided within a street cabinet located on Phoenix Lane. This acts as a collection point for the fibre optic, hard wired and wireless transmission of the cameras and provides connection to the wireless backhaul link to the control room.
- 3.2 Cameras located on Fore Street shop fronts are hard wired back to this location with existing redundant cabling remaining in situ along Fore Street, Fibre optic cable interconnects the cabinet to a camera in the Pannier Market which also comprises a point to multipoint link for cameras within the market area, and Newport Street. There exists a redundant fibre optic cable which is suspected to link to the old control room location in the MSCP. This has been replaced with a microwave link to the MSCP, however the opportunity should be explored for re-utilising this fibre link, which provides a robust transmission of data and improved transfer reliability.
- 3.3 The individual backhaul links of the cameras are of low capacity and in several cases camera data is aggregated onto a single link, causing delays in transmission. These require upgrading to provide reliable transmission of all cameras.
- 3.4 All redundant equipment and cabling should be removed and general housekeeping of the entire PSS undertaken, whilst the cameras are generally fit for purpose (although not ONVIF compliant), advances in technology mean that the entire camera fleet would benefit from an upgrade to ONVIF compliant cameras with improved low light capability, as several areas have inconsistent lighting, meaning the camera is on the threshold of changing from daylight to low light, resulting in poor images in darkness.

### **4.0 Options Available and Condition Survey**

- 4.1 Option 1 would be for the PSS to remain in its current format and state of repair, it would be able to be controlled by the new MSCP system but the “drop outs” and failures of the system would continue.
- 4.2 Option 2 is less cost than Option 3 in that it utilises some of the existing equipment (which would not be fully compliant) and proposed camera upgrades would not be completed.
- 4.3 Option 3 is the complete replacement of the PSS system and linking to the future hub in Exeter.
- 4.4 Option 4 is for the Council to withdraw from providing the service and move to decommission the CCTV system. Officers would also explore with Tiverton Town Council if they were interested in taking the CCTV system on as a service.
- 4.5 A copy of the Town PSS Condition Survey is at Annex B – Part 2 Restricted Town Centre Condition Survey Infrastructure.

## **5.0 MSCP**

- 5.1 To complement the PSS, a new 20-camera high-definition system has recently been installed and commissioned into the MSCP. This project has merged the two separate control systems into one in order to create a more manageable solution for the provision of evidence and for the operator. This system will be live during June 2021.
- 5.2 The control room layout has been altered to enable the supervisor to be able to operate and monitor both the MSCP and PSS systems as one surveillance system. This new system will also enable remote access to properly authorised police officers with a full audit trail from a fully ONVIF compliant system. Some of the MSCP cameras will also view public space areas and roads outside the car park.
- 5.3 A full Operational Requirement (OR) and Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out on the existing PSS and MSCP CCTV systems.
- 5.4 It is intended to increase the quality of evidence from recording at 10 images per second to 25 (real-time) images per second and to retain all images in line with the OR/DPIA for 31 days.

## **6.0 CCTV Surveillance**

- 6.1 The CCTV supervisor remains employed for 7 hours per week; however, he increases these hours considerably in a number of ways, additional hours to cover school and public holidays, police requests for weekend operations support and voluntary monitoring of the PSS and MSCP CCTV systems. Presently the cameras are currently ‘staffed’ and funded in excess of 35 hours per week, with the aim of reducing ASB in the MSCP in particular across the busy period of the day when visitors to the Town and users of the MSCP are heading home at the end of the day.

- 6.2 The CCTV supervisor continues to work very closely with the local policing team and can on occasions be called out when an operation is planned and when a particularly serious crime has occurred in the area and where CCTV can play an important part in identifying suspect individuals or vehicles that have been in the town centre on that evening.
- 6.3 In order to support the police the CCTV supervisor will change or increase his hours to help with any police operations. Recent operations have included targeting public order offences, anti-social behaviour (ASB), assault, violent attacks, drug related offences and shop lifting. This time is re-charged accordingly to the Police, which is time and date dependent upon receipt of the request.
- 6.4 As part of the operational review we intend to ensure that the CCTV operator receives payment for services where applicable. We will also establish where the boundary for voluntary work starts and finishes.

## **7.0 Incidents**

- 7.1 In the last 12 months the police have made 85 formal requests and daily live requests that are not captured under the formal system for CCTV footage in relation to incidents that have occurred in the Town Centre area. Time is also spent searching for any useful evidence relating to criminal activity or vehicles that can assist police investigations. Gaining intelligence regarding the movement of known individuals and their associate's helps give the police a good overview of their activities and can assist when planning warrants or operations.
- 7.2 During this reporting period there have been authorised requests from the CCTV operator relating to a traffic incident for insurance purposes, a number of serious assaults, some including weapons, a rape, and a missing person incident, that was captured on the cameras.
- 7.3 Regular phone calls are received by members of the community asking for footage relating to damage to their vehicles but these are then routed via the Police to gain a crime number and their insurance company. The CCTV operator will review the information required and will release CCTV images in accordance with data protection requirements.
- 7.4 It is not easy to identify how many cases go to court where CCTV footage has been requested by the police, as it is not always possible to get the information from the CPS or the courts. However if the Corporate Facilities Manager and CCTV Supervisor have any incidents in 'live view' we will provide a Landlord's statement to the police at the same time as providing the footage. In these cases, we may be notified of the case results directly from the court.

## **8.0 Stakeholders**

- 8.1 The Council continues to liaise with other agencies that have an interest in the town CCTV system. This includes the police, Town Council and local traders.

8.2 The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for MDDC is now represented on the Tiverton Town Partnership, which a useful link to discuss and understand local traders concerns about the PSS system and its current and future capabilities.

## **9.0 Financial**

9.1 The operational budget for the CCTV systems across the portfolio in the 2021-22 financial year is £51.2k with an annual contribution from Tiverton Town Council of £6k and an additional £5K from the Tiverton Town Partnership that will be utilised to provide the interface controls between the new MSCP system and the existing PSS system. The 21-22 budget includes £40k of specific maintenance works for CCTV across the corporate portfolio.

9.2 The options for the future funding for the operation and upgrading of the Town Surveillance system are as follows:

- Option 2: To utilise some of the current equipment, complete substantial repairs, and build resilience into the PSS £83K less the secured OPCC grant of £25K is £58k.
- Option 3: To replace the current system and to link to the new MSCP system creating one holistic surveillance system that will support proactive policing and the community £110K less the secured OPCC grant of £25K is £85k.
- Option 4: To decommission the CCTV system it would cost circa £7k, which includes camera removal. It would save the Council circa £4k per annum on operational costs but would also avoid on-going capital costs and associated depreciation charges should external funding not be available. There would also be implications under the Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment (TUPE).

## **10.0 The OPCC grant agreement Annex C**

10.1 Annex C details the terms and conditions of the OPCC agreement.

## **11.0 OPCC fund for Unlock and Summer 2021 Annex D**

11.1 The Council has also secured £3,161 from the OPCC Covid 19 unlock and summer 2021 partnership fund to provide additional hours for the CCTV supervisor to monitor the Tiverton Town Centre CCTV system. Tiverton Town Council have also contributed £1k and a further £2,161 will be met from the Welcome Back Fund. Annex D details the OPCC agreement.

11.2 This scheme runs up to 31 September 2021 and is based on increasing the operational monitoring hours from 7 hours per week to 37 hours per week from approval to the 31 September 2021.

## **12.0 Conclusion**

- 12.1 The surveillance system in the town has proven its worth against crime and identifying local criminal activity, however this has been difficult in recent times as the system regularly falters and has been out of action for days at a time in the last year. The local community and traders are concerned about crime prevention in the town and they rely on a resilient system that is functional.
- 12.2 The Property Services team has completed an assessment to ensure that the Council is operating its CCTV system in accordance with the latest Information Commissioners Office (ICO) guidance and has updated existing procedures to determine how the CCTV system is used in practice.
- 12.3 It is the recommendation of this report that Officers seek additional external funding to implement Option 2 as a minimum but to aim for Option 3 . The external funding needs to be in place for completing Option 2 or 3 before works commence. The Council would need to return the value of the grant to the OPCC if further external funds cannot be secured.

**Contact for more Information:** Andrew Busby, Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change. Email: [abusby@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:abusby@middevon.gov.uk) Telephone: 01884 234948

**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Dennis Knowles, Leadership Team.

**List of Background Papers:**

Annex A - Cost Plan

Annex B - Part 2 Restricted Town Centre Condition Survey Infrastructure

Annex C- The terms of the grant agreement from the OPCC

Annex D- The terms of the funding agreement from the OPCC for increased monitoring hours