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## Scrutiny Review on the Community Safety Role of CCTV

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TUESDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER, 2006 at 19:00 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: Councillors Davies (Chair), Dobbie, Mughal and Portess

### **AGENDA**

#### **6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (PAGES 1 - 10)**

To consider appropriate conclusions and recommendations for the review. An issues paper that highlights the key issues from the review to date is attached

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**SCRUTINY REVIEW ON THE COMMUNITY SAFETY ROLE OF CCTV****21 NOVEMBER 2006****ISSUES PAPER****1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to highlight the key issues from the evidence received so far in order to assist the Panel in its reaching conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.2 The review has received evidence from a number of sources:
  - Michael Pollak, CCTV Coordinator
  - Sean Sweeney, Police Projects Officer, Safer Communities Team
  - Rowan Fraser, Data Performance Manager, Safer Communities Team
  - Dr. Tim Pascoe, PRCI (the review's expert external advisers)
  - Mike Bagnall, Anti Social Behaviour Team
  - Ian Kibblewhite and Harvey Clues, Metropolitan Police
  - Anne Cunningham and Tony Chapman, Environment Service
  - Local resident and trader organisations.
- 1.3 In addition, a visit was undertaken to the CCTV control room at Woodside House. Documentary evidence has also been provided.

**2. Effective Use of CCTV**

- 2.1 The Panel received a presentation from Dr. Tim Pascoe from PRCI on how CCTV can be used most effectively;
  - Where CCTV systems have been successful, they have clear objectives and sustainable strategies.
  - CCTV has greater preventative effects on some types of crimes, such as car park crime, than others. It has little effect in deterring disorder but can be effective in assisting an effective response to it.
  - It is most beneficial when used in conjunction with other crime reduction measures and tailored to the local setting.
  - It appears to have a life cycle as a crime prevention measure. It is necessary to renew and update systems from time to time and to market them so that the public is aware of their existence otherwise deterrent value will be lost.
- 2.2 There is clear evidence that CCTV makes people feel safer and that they also have considerable faith in its deterrence value. It can reduce the fear of crime and prevent it occurring by impacting on risk and opportunity. It can prevent crime occurring by the early identification of trouble spots. Where crime does take place, CCTV can lead to an increased actual rate of offenders being caught. CCTV pictures can, for instance, be used as evidence for prosecution of offenders. In addition, CCTV can provide added value to other measures that were in place.

2.3 There were now over 4 million cameras in operation within the UK and their numbers has trebled within the last 3 years. The National Evaluation of CCTV has shown that CCTV could work but in a lot of cases, it did not work as well as it could.

2.4 In order for schemes to be fully effective, the following are required;

- Clear objectives for projects. The existence of specific funding for CCTV created pressure to bid for it during its early years, often in the absence of reliable intelligence indicating where CCTV would be likely to have the most effect. Its use needs to be supported by a strategy outlining the objectives of the system and how these will be fulfilled. This needs to take account of local crime problems and prevention measures already in place.
- Good management including;
  - Access to technical expertise
  - The full engagement of end-users
  - The appointment of a suitable project manager - there is a shortage of suitably qualified people to manage schemes
  - Independence – this is of particular importance as there can often be tensions between partners involved in schemes.
  - Effective operation of the control room
- Good camera positioning and coverage. Too little coverage tends to prevent efforts to track offenders for detective and evidential purposes. However, systems with a high density of cameras do not necessarily produce a greater reduction in crime. Camera coverage is linked to positioning and needs to take account of the nature of the area to be monitored and the objectives of the system. Police intelligence is invaluable when positioning decisions are taken as is the input of the operators who are to monitor them when schemes are to be extended.
- “Future proofing” of systems e.g. having sufficient capacity and capability for switching from analogue to digital recording methods. In addition, there needs to be proper maintenance to ensure that cameras continue to work effectively and are not obstructed.
- Independent review of schemes is important in order to ensure that CCTV systems are as effective as they can be and to help guide future investment.

### **3. Current CCTV Systems**

3.1 The review has heard evidence on all of the key CCTV systems that are used to address community safety issues within the Borough as well as strategic issues.

#### *Community Safety cameras*

3.2 Wood Green and Tottenham high streets, as well as two housing estates, are covered by a total of 33 community safety cameras which are monitored and recorded for 24 hours per day. Relocatable systems are in place in Crouch End and

Muswell Hill, which are situated near possible trouble spots. These are felt to not be entirely satisfactory as only one of the cameras that is in place in each location can be viewed at a time.

- 3.3 The budget for the management and operation of the CCTV Control Room is of £253,000. This includes fibre transmission services, power to the cameras and the control room. There is also a budget for the maintenance of the cameras. However, there is no mainstream budget for the CCTV co-ordinator and CCTV manager nor is there sufficient budget for the maintenance of the cameras.
- 3.4 The current CCTV Control Room is split between parking and community safety with separate teams working in each area. The current set up reflects the way that the service has always operated with the community safety part of the operation being outsourced. The current contract is with Reliance Security but re-tendering is currently being undertaken. Bringing it "in house" would have cost implications for the Council and there were no plans to reconsider this. The two roles are considered to be separate disciplines and staff undertook different training.
- 3.5 Control room operators look for well known offenders. They exchange information with police officers but it is felt that more information would help them to target their work better. In particular, regular daily briefing documents could be shared with the Control Room to enable operators to better target their observation. The system works better than normal when police officers are present in the control room to assist in directing operations. Police officers can often predict where criminals will go next and have a feel for the way they behave.
- 3.6 The Control Room has police radio so can hear and communicate with officers. This allows officers to direct cameras to a particular incident. Town centre radio systems also work alongside CCTV. They enable shop keepers to contact each other and are operational in Crouch End, Wood Green and Tottenham. The Control Room is linked into the system and traders are also able to talk to operators.
- 3.7 Police officers that work with the video sentry system visit the CCTV control room from time to time and use images gathered by the fixed cameras. They have encouraged operators to actively patrol locations but evidence of this being put into practice has yet to be observed. It is very rare for the Police to obtain images of sufficient quality from a fixed camera to be used in a prosecution. In particular, they do not always provide good quality pictures when "zoomed in" on targets. Images can also be too wide and individuals too small and therefore difficult to identify. Encouragement has also been given to operators to look more closely at people. In addition, the Police feel that operators could also improve their responsiveness to the Police radio that is in the control room. There is a high turnover of staff and many come from temporary agencies. It is felt to be difficult work and particular challenging to maintain concentration.
- 3.8 There are also a total of 11 parking enforcement cameras in place. These are used during the daytime or parking regulation hours. The cameras had originally focussed only on bus lanes but the Council has now taken on responsibility for enforcing box junctions. Whilst these are not specifically community safety cameras, they can be used for this purpose and are shortly to be more closely integrated into the community safety system. There are also 9 Transport for London cameras that are there to enforce parking regulations.

- 3.9 The installation of cameras for parking issues has been very successful and there are now very few people who drove or park in bus lanes. A high number of tickets were issued at the start of the initiative but this had now levelled out. The cameras have proven to be particularly useful in areas of the Borough where there had been a high level of abuse against parking attendants. They are felt to be very efficient and can capture detailed images of moving cars. The additional income that comes from enforcing these regulations is approximately £3 million but it is not possible to disaggregate the contribution made to this by the cameras.
- 3.10 The parking cameras cost £23,000 per year plus maintenance of £20,000. The operators that cover parking issues are directly employed. A decision could have been made to outsource the service but they were felt to be doing a very good job. They are all fully trained up to BTEC standard and had a dedicated supervisor. The Police commented that the parking staff were particularly well trained and effective.
- 3.11 The Police can take tapes from parking operators for evidence if required. Parking staff can access community safety cameras and tapes but have to obtain permission first. Sometimes the Police use parking cameras for direct surveillance.
- 3.12 The Control Room will shortly be moving to new premises in Ashley Road. This will enable community safety and parking control to be located within the same premises, which will improve communication and facilitate the sharing of resources. It will also enable better access to Transport for London (TfL) and parking cameras by community safety operatives. TfL cameras currently work during bus lane hours before being shut down. It is possible that agreement could be reached to use these for community safety purposes in their down time.
- 3.13 The Police stated that tapes were currently collected once per week from the Control Room. They felt that the new digital system would benefit from being networked into the video sentry system so that images could be shared with the Police. If this is not done, there is a danger that the service will be inundated with requests for images.
- 3.14 It has been recognised that any instances of any cameras not recording could undermine confidence in CCTV and therefore all CCTV cameras have to be fully operational. The cost of additional CCTV cameras needs to be justified by current crime levels in the area in question. In addition to the cost of the cameras, there are limits to how many cameras can be monitored by the control room. Housing estates are difficult to cover effectively and a large number of cameras are generally needed. In addition, private windows have to be blocked out.

*(b). Police video sentry system.*

- 3.15 This captures activity on the footway. Cameras are not monitored but film from them can be picked up and reviewed. Cameras cover the whole of the Borough and work alongside the local authority system. There are currently 130 cameras in place which have been installed within the past five years. It is relatively cheap in comparison to fixed cameras, which can cost as much as £25,000 per camera. The overall cost of the system has been £400,000 in total. The Council has contributed £180,000 of this. The cost of the equipment is coming down in price – the local authority has now spent £50,000 on obtaining 100 more cameras for the west of the Borough where there had been concern about the effectiveness of CCTV coverage.
- 3.16 The cameras have very large hard discs which can store a large amount of information. They are located in shops, offices and storerooms and cover a range

of locations including cash points and road junctions. In areas where it is operational, there is an 80% chance of an offender being caught on a camera walking to or from an incident. There are approximately 50 in Wood Green and 60 in Tottenham. The cameras are now being extended to Crouch End and Muswell Hill.

- 3.17 Evidence collected by the cameras have been used to identify and successfully prosecute over 600 offenders during the past 5 years. These are often serious offences such as robbery, assault, rape and murder. This has coincided with a 50% reduction in street crime in these areas. The scheme, although not monitored, provides very useful intelligence and complements the local authority system. Its main use is to gather evidence after a crime has been committed. As crimes are generally going down, it is now possible to scrutinise the tapes more thoroughly and address a wider range of issues. Posters with images of individuals who had been caught committing offences on the system were regularly displayed on Arriva buses in order to encourage people to help in their identification. It also helped to deter individuals from committing offences.
- 3.18 The system allows photos of offenders to be obtained and circulated very fast, thus enabling quicker arrests. In addition, the improved evidence that the images provides now means that it is rare to have a not guilty plea - 95% of offenders are now pleading guilty. This is enabling large savings to be made in court costs, which can be £10,000 per day. The system has some limitations – it is not monitored and therefore ineffective in enabling a response to an incident and images were also not centrally recorded. There is a 50% rate of identification on publicised images. One side effect of the cameras has been that a high percentage – up to 40% - of robbery allegations – had been shown to be bogus.

*(c). Police overt surveillance*

- 3.19 This has been used in a number of locations such as Tottenham Hotspur, Finsbury Park and around schools at the end of the school day. The rationale behind its purchase was to provide public reassurance and reduce crime and anti social behaviour. The use of the van is therefore primarily to deter disorder and robbery. It is felt to be a very effective deterrent and can cause potentially troublesome groups of people to disperse quickly. There have not been any prosecutions that have relied solely on evidence collected in this way but it has been a contributory factor in many cases.
- 3.20 When the van was bought, the intention was for it to be used 24 hours per day but, in practice, 6 hours a day had proven to be more achievable. It was generally used at peak times – early evenings and weekends. It was bought by the Safer Communities Partnership but has been used almost entirely by the Police. It can be booked by other partners but the Police have priority use and bookings cannot therefore be guaranteed. It had cost £75000 to purchase and £25000 to maintain over a 5 year period. This works out as being cheaper than the cost of one PC. It is used sometimes as a replacement for manpower when action is urgently needed.

*(d). ASBAT covert surveillance*

- 3.21 This is used to collect evidence in cases of anti social behaviour and had been successful in helping the closure of brothels and dealing with disruptive youths. The system has been in operation for four months now and is considered to be working well. It is heavily used and has proven to be effective. It has been particularly helpful in closing down several brothels and gathering sufficient evidence to enable

an ASBO to be obtained. It has also been used to address fly tipping and had enabled perpetrators to be identified. The service works closely with partners, particularly the Police. The strategy of the service is to capture ASB activity in action and use this evidence to take legal proceedings against perpetrators. The use of evidence obtained using CCTV considerably strengthens cases and is often was crucial in obtaining ASBOs and helps to prevent the need for residents to go to court. The cameras also save the Council money by helping to prevent vandalism by identifying perpetrators.

- 3.22 The covert nature of the surveillance helps to protect witnesses. The van that belonged to the Safer Communities Partnership would not have been suitable as it is designed for overt surveillance, with its main function being to deter crime rather than to collect evidence. It has been used 98 times over a four month period. Partners have accompanied the ASBAT when using the van on certain covert operations.
- 3.23 The van and all the associated equipment cost £142,000 to buy. The software is easy to update and action was to be undertaken to double the size of the memory. The only ongoing costs associated with the system arise from staffing costs, particularly overtime and regular maintenance of the van. The service is to be marketed to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and it is hoped that it will ultimately become self financing.
- 3.24 Images captured through surveillance can be shared with partners such as the Environment Service and Homes for Haringey. The ASBAT team do not normally get access to images captured by other CCTV systems. However, images would need to be of good quality if they were to be of use to them. They had tried to obtain images captured by the fixed CCTV cameras on one occasion but had found the process to be difficult. Publicity on how the Borough CCTV system was used, what happened to the images and how they could be accessed could assist in promoting the best use of data obtained. The use of CCTV by the Anti Social Behaviour Team could be assisted by having a dedicated CCTV officer in post as its use currently relied on the goodwill of staff.

*(e). Environment Service*

- 3.25 They have 9 mobile cameras that are used to address environmental crime. They are generally located within a particular hot spot for two weeks and used to gather evidence. The equipment is intended to act as a visible deterrent to continuous dumping of waste at known problem areas.
- 3.26 Prior to 2006/07, cameras were deployed at a number of known dumping hotspots. Reductions in the quantity and frequency of dumping were recorded although regular instances still continued. It was felt that there had not been enough follow up after surveillance to sufficiently deter people. Following the launch of the Street Enforcement Team in September 2005 and a planned recall of the camera systems for necessary maintenance between February and March 2006, the camera systems available have been used in conjunction with a series of proactive projects focussed on reducing hotspots identified by key partners in Haringey Accord and Waste Management. The equipment has now proven to be a much more useful tool when used in conjunction with proactive work rather than a stand along deterrent.
- 3.27 Before September 2005, no formal action had yet been taken using evidence gathered from these camera systems. Since the launch of the newly configured



Street Enforcement Teams, in excess of 50 reported dumping hot spots have been removed from the hot spot list following intensive surveillance, waste removal and education of the local community. Intelligence gathered from some of these locations have contributed to seven formal investigations concerning alleged fly tipping offences, five of which were being prepared for prosecution and two which had resulted in the offenders receiving written formal cautions.

- 3.28 The system cost £412,000 to purchase which had been funded by NRF monies. This included capital and revenue costs. General maintenance of the equipment costs approximately £6,500 per annum. All systems are now outdated and would benefit from upgrade to current technology available. Systems do not necessarily require replacing to do this but an upgrade to the current systems would still cost in excess of £30,000.
- 3.29 Images captured during an investigation were subject to the usual rules of evidence and generally depicted a specific alleged act or offence which would be dealt with by the service. However, any images caught while filming that might be of interest to partner enforcement agencies were made available at the time they were captured. It was the intention of Environmental Services to seek ASBO's against offenders found guilty of more serious environmental crimes such as large scale fly posting, fly tipping and graffiti vandals. Images captured through surveillance were made available to the Council's Anti Social Behaviour Team who were keen to support this approach.
- 3.30 Recent discussions with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams had shown an opportunity for further joint working in areas where cameras were to be deployed. If, for instance, a camera had been deployed to detect fly tipping, it might also cover an area affected by anti social behaviour and could therefore also provide support to the Police and the ASBAT.
- 3.31 The use of cameras reduces the need to have officer time used for surveillance, freeing up time to carry out other duties whilst the cameras recorded incidents for later investigation. Cameras can be used to detect "trends" at a given location to either show no investigation was required or resources should be used to pursue an investigation in this area. The equipment can be used to provide a deterrent similar to having a uniformed street enforcement officer patrolling an area.
- 3.32 New opportunities for deploying cameras are currently being investigated for enforcement against fly posters, graffiti vandals, dog fouling and littering. Combating instances of age restricted sales of goods to young people could also be helped with the use of covert surveillance equipment. The service was currently looking at the possibility of investing in this equipment with a view to carrying out "test purchasing" of goods such as spray paint, solvents, tobacco and alcohol to reduce the number of outlets for these items available to potential young offenders.

*(f). Strategic Issues*

- 3.33 Management and coordination of key CCTV installations within the Borough are undertaken by a CCTV Steering Group chaired by the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety. In addition, there was a Tasking Group that is responsible for looking at how the cameras were used.

**4. Resident and Trader Organisation Views**

- 4.1 The Panel received evidence from a number of local residents and traders from three locations within the Borough – Muswell Hill, Green Lanes and Tottenham.
- 4.2 Residents and traders from Green Lanes felt that they had been misled about the purpose of CCTV cameras that had been installed in the area. They stated that they had been told that their purpose was to help keep bus lanes clear and to promote community safety. Since their installation, people had stopped abusing bus lanes but the cameras were now being used to enforce yellow box junction offences. The camera near Endymion Road was now the 6<sup>th</sup>. highest earning camera in London. They felt that the cameras were not there for community safety purposes but to raise money for the Council.
- 4.3 In respect of Tottenham, it was also felt by traders in the area that the cameras were not being used for the benefit of residents but to raise revenue. They had originally been told that cameras would be used for community safety purposes after 7:00 p.m. and at weekends and that they could also be used to monitor any incident that took place during the day. This did not appear to be happening as cameras appeared to be switched off after hours. Cameras that had been placed in car parks had proven to be very successful and made people feel safer. The location of some cameras was felt to be not ideal and better positioning would enable greater usage. There had been a noticeable beneficial effect in the West Green Road area although it was possible that some crime had been displaced to side streets. Some of the revenue generated through parking cameras could be used to improve the community safety function.
- 4.4 They felt that the radio link between shops and the CCTV control room was inefficient and stated that it could be difficult to get hold of anyone. The system needed good management with operators being more proactive in their approach. They felt that having CCTV cameras was a good thing but community safety needed to be their highest priority and determine their use.
- 4.5 In reference to Muswell Hill, there had been pressure from residents for action to be taken and the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association had met with officers and contacted the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety and the Borough Commander. Crime had increased in the area and it was felt that CCTV cameras would provide reassurance, act as a deterrent and help direct Police operations. The current community safety system that operated in the area only allowed the use of one camera at any particular time. This was not satisfactory and it was known that the Police did not feel that it was adequate either. The cameras needed to be upgraded and integrated fully into the rest of the system. It was unclear where the funding for improving the system was likely to come from. The current system had not met their expectations and had not helped to reduce crime. However, they felt that CCTV should be capable of making a contribution. Not everyone knew that the cameras were there and this meant that people were less likely to be reassured by them or deterred from committing crimes. Amongst those that did, it was felt that the outcome had represented a missed opportunity
- 4.6 Residents and traders requested that there be better information about the various systems. It was noted that residents from the Harringay Ladder appeared to be confused about the various cameras and their purposes. In addition, there appeared to be a high level of cynicism with residents feeling that they were purely there in order to gather revenue rather than to protect the public. They felt that there needed to be far greater clarity as well as consultation with residents although that it was recognised that some information might have to be withheld for security reasons.

Information could be given out via Area Assemblies and through Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Residents and traders felt that signage was important so that people knew that the systems were working. In addition, it was important that traders the radio systems worked properly.

### **5. Issues for Consideration**

The following are suggested as key questions for the Panel to consider in reaching its conclusions and recommendations:

- Have the CCTV schemes got clear objectives and, if so, are they meeting them effectively?
- What difference have the schemes made to community safety?
- Do they provide value for money?
- How can current systems be used more effectively for deterring and detecting crime and directing an effective response to incidents?
- How could they be better coordinated so that resources can be used to their maximum potential?
- On what principles should CCTV systems within be developed in the future?
- How can they be better marketed so that residents have a clearer perception of their purpose and effectiveness?

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