

## **Interim Draft report of the CCTV working group to the Scrutiny Committee**

At this stage we are in a position to share with members the first part of our report into the CCTV service at SDC.

This draft report consists of:

- A statement of our aims in producing this report
- An overview of the technical specifications of the CCTV system
- A list of the kinds of work we have undertaken in evidence gathering

We are not yet in a position to give the committee:

- Our full evaluation of each piece of evidence we have collated
- Our agreed set of recommendations

### **Remit/Aims**

To Consider:

1. The effectiveness of the service in reducing crime
2. Whether the quality of images needs to be improved
3. The privacy impact of the service
4. Whether the financial resources of the council are being well applied, i.e. the cost effectiveness of the service.
5. The number of convictions arising from CCTV.
6. Whether and to what extent CCTV deters crime, and how this might be measured.
7. The positioning of our town centre CCTV systems, "Are they in the right places?"
8. The implications of emerging facial recognition technology.
9. Whether and how a financial contribution to CCTV could be garnered from other agencies (e.g. The police, CPS).
10. What recommendations to make following consideration of the above.

## Overview of the CCTV system at SDC

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) maintains a system of 144 cameras<sup>1</sup>. The majority transmit their data, either via cables (owned or hired) or over an encrypted internet connection, to the SDC CCTV control room. This data can be shared by operators, with Police, in real time, via two police monitors (i.e. screens which mirror their feed to the Police)<sup>2</sup>.

The majority of these 144 cameras have Pan Tilt and Zoom (PTZ) capacity, meaning they can be directed over a wide range of angles (often 360 degrees) as well as being able to zoom in or out considerably.

The system's structure dates back to 1997 when Central Government funding was provided to encourage camera systems nationwide, though most of the original cameras have subsequently been replaced. The number of cameras has also grown by around 50% since that time, and the technical capability of each camera is, in most cases, significantly greater, in both resolution and PTZ capacity. This has sometimes allowed one camera to replace two.

SDC does not use facial recognition on its systems, and no backup of the bulk data is kept. Data which has not been marked for preservation is deleted after 31 days.

While some cameras only see in the visible spectrum, the CCTV manager reports that most also have infrared sensitivity, no part of the CCTV system undertakes audio recording which is not allowed under the CCTV code of conduct.

Official figures show the financial cost of the system<sup>3</sup> is four hundred and fifteen thousand pound per year (£415,000 p.a.) net and four hundred and seventy five thousand pounds per year (£475,000 p.a.) gross (i.e. another council pays us £60,000 p.a. for our CCTV operators to man their out of hours telephone line). The service has 7 full time members of staff.

### **Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

For historical reasons we often talk about "CCTV" cameras, a term, presumably coined because "closed circuit" was somewhat reassuring to those with privacy concerns.

There are some who would argue for the correctness of this term today by saying that there is no upper limit on the size of a "closed" circuit and who would, therefore, be happy to call, for example, the national ANPR network a "closed circuit" spanning the entirety of Great Britain.

However, most of us would, I suspect, think this usage of "closed" stretches the meaning somewhat. We would probably only recognise a few of SDC's cameras, those in the Dunbrik storeroom, as "closed circuit" in any meaningful sense. The rest are centrally controlled from the basement of the Council's offices in Argyle Road, meaning that our "C"CTV is a network spanning over a 20 mile diameter.

Arguably we should not, therefore, continue to use the term "CCTV" and instead simply use the term "surveillance camera", or "networked camera".

We will, nonetheless, continue to use the term "CCTV", or just "cameras" throughout the rest of this report.

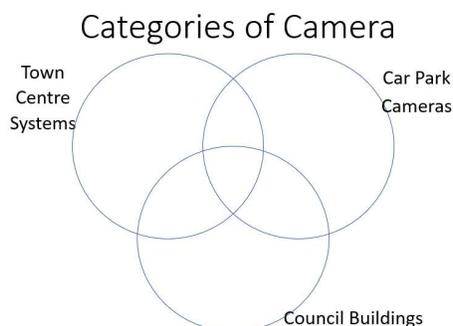
<sup>1</sup> Data correct as per November 2019 (actually we think it is correct as of today also, but will need to confirm this prior to publication of the final report)

<sup>2</sup> At any given time something will normally be being played over this link.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1 contains a breakdown of costs (actual and budgeted) for 2019/20, as well as budgeted costs for 2020/21

## (Types of) Camera Locations

It is helpful to break down the 144 cameras into three overlapping categories which happen to be nearly equal in numerical size<sup>4</sup>. These are: Town Centre Cameras, Cameras in Car Parks owned by SDC, and Cameras observing Council property:



### More information on these overlapping categories

#### Town Centre Cameras

There are five “Town Centre” camera systems. These are in:

Sevenoaks Town  
Swanley  
New Ash Green  
Edenbridge  
and Westerham.<sup>5</sup>

These are the cameras which are most heavily monitored in real time.

They are probably the most significant category in terms of privacy impact (on the general public, as opposed to SDC employees).

The operation of these cameras also represent the main financial cost of the system, in terms of officer time spent monitoring them, and they are the cameras which the system’s structure is built around (i.e. without at least one town centre system no one would suggest, for example, having a CCTV control room staffed through the night).

#### Car Park Cameras

A number of SDC owned car parks have CCTV. Most of these cameras are in Sevenoaks Town, including 22 in Buckhurst car park and a similar number in other Sevenoaks car parks.

A major privacy impact of car park cameras is that they keep a record (routinely for 31 days) of people’s movements, in a way that is highly searchable – even when this is not automated checking number plates is a lot easier than checking faces.

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<sup>4</sup> Roughly 48 in each category, although, especially within Sevenoaks itself, there may be cameras which observe council building as well as public land, or which observe pedestrianised areas as well as car parks. The precise position of a camera is, therefore, generally less important than the cameras field of view.

<sup>5</sup> Maps of town centre camera locations are publicly available, though not desperately easy to find, the final report will contain a link to these and/or a copy of the maps in an appendix.

One recent example of this is our cameras being used to place a vehicle in Lullingstone Car park as part of a high profile recent criminal inquiry. This was an undoubtedly positive outcome, so it cannot be denied that collecting very large amounts of data about the movements of mostly innocent people will sometimes allow you to catch criminals.

A question for members, of course, will be whether monitoring all movements of all vehicles in and out of numerous car parks over the course of 24 years was a proportionate level of surveillance to achieve this.

Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) can be used to extract very rich mass data sets from cameras without much human intervention, though, to the best of our knowledge, the only ANPR software used on our systems is in connection with a camera at the Dunbrik depot.

To underline the overlapping nature of these categories, cameras in relatively open car parks, or at entrances and exits to car parks, can function in the same way as Town Centre cameras to monitor pedestrians (this is especially the case with PTZ cameras).

### **Cameras monitoring the Council's own buildings**

These include the Council's building in Sevenoaks itself, cameras at Dunbrik, and at Swanley White Oak Leisure centre (both the car park and publicly accessible indoor areas).

There are also cameras which monitor the office of the Dunbrik manager and the CCTV control manager, though these are not fully integrated into the networked system.

This is a complete overview of where our cameras are located, according to the written information we have received<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Camera Numbers, Privacy Impact and Efficacy**

One of the first questions people often ask about any CCTV system is how many cameras there are in total, or in a particular location. While this is clearly a useful number to know in rough terms, there is a clear danger in thinking that numbers of cameras can easily quantify the privacy impact of a camera system.

To take an obvious example, consider a large multi-storey car park which could be fitted with no cameras, 2 cameras, or 22 cameras.

Clearly 22 cameras has a significant privacy impact relative to having zero cameras. But consider the privacy impact of just two cameras recording the number plates (and hence time of entry/egress) of every car entering or leaving a car park. Very few people would suggest that these two cameras had less than 10% of the privacy impact that the 22 would have.

Clearly some drivers would prefer to have full privacy while others would prefer cameras to be present, perceiving that this mitigates the small risk of car crime. However, the idea that privacy impact of public space CCTV can be quantified by reference mainly to the total the number of cameras is a commonly made, and unhelpful, tacit assumption.

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<sup>6</sup> In the full report we would like to attach information showing the details of the districts 144 CCTV camera locations, but this should, properly, be discussed before being attached, so it is not in this draft.

**Monitoring schedule**

The control room is currently manned 152 hours per week (i.e. there are 16 hours when it is not manned), according to the following schedule:

**CCTV control room manning (current schedule)**

Day \ Time	0000 - 0900	0900 - 1300	1300 - 0000
Monday	yes	yes	yes
Tuesday	yes	no	yes
Wednesday	yes	no	yes
Thursday	yes	no	yes
Friday	yes	no	yes
Saturday	yes	yes	yes
Sunday	yes	yes	yes

yes = manned    no = unmanned

Because the control room staff are present throughout the night, at weekends, and on Bank Holiday Mondays, they also answer the out-of-hours telephone line for the council.

### **Method and Findings:**

1. Paper based enquiries
2. Cllr. Pender's visit to the control room
3. Examination of exemplar footage provided by the CCTV service.
4. Report of Dr. Emmeline Taylor, criminologist at City University.

A copy of her report is appended to this interim report. It looks to try and evaluate the evidence for cameras deterring crime and whether it displaces criminal activity (e.g. to other places).

5. Discussions with police

Discussions with Chief Inspector Jon Kirby at scrutiny committee

Correspondence with Mathew Scott (in respect of a Police financial contribution)

Evidence of Acting Chief Constable Mark Stubberfield

6. Discussions with CCTV control room manager
7. Query about costs (Police)
8. Query about costs (attachment to prosecutions)

### **Recommendations**

TBC

**Appendix 1: Briefing Note on the financial costs of the service.**

The following shows the actual cost and budget for the financial year 2019/20 and the budget for the financial year 2020/21.

	19/20 Actuals £	19/20 Budget £	20/21 Budget £
<b>Direct Costs</b>			
Staffing Cost (Including Pension and NI)	222,322.63	227,634.21	228,508.00
Running Costs	19,510.29	15,401.00	16,092.00
CCTV Control Room Costs	75,344.63	107,753.00	90,178.00
Income from Partners	- 44,935.00	- 85,564.00	- 57,674.00
<b>Net Direct Cost</b>	<b>272,242.55</b>	<b>265,224.21</b>	<b>277,104.00</b>
<b>Recharges</b>			
Support Services	75,350.83	72,772.00	79,878.00
Asset Maintenance Recharge	19,778.84	24,867.00	28,095.00
Capital Charges	5,443.00	29,947.00	29,947.00
<b>Total Recharges</b>	<b>100,572.67</b>	<b>127,586.00</b>	<b>137,920.00</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue Cost</b>	<b>372,815.22</b>	<b>392,810.21</b>	<b>415,024.00</b>
<b>Capital Costs (CCTV Equipment)</b>	<b>19,031.37</b>	<b>20,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>

The staffing cost is based on 7 FTE's (1 manager and 6 CCTV operatives.) Income from partners comes from agreements with Tunbridge Wells BC and Tonbridge and Malling BC.