


Cabinet 26 June 2019	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Denise Radley, Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community	Classification: Unrestricted
Tower Hamlets CCTV approach	

Lead Member	Councillor Asma Begum Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities
Originating Officer(s)	Amy Sherman (Strategy and Policy Officer, Health, Adults and Communities)
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	1 April 2019
Reason for Key Decision	Significant impact on persons living or working in two or more wards
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in. A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough.

Executive Summary

This report sets out proposals as to how the Council can best utilise the benefits CCTV offers going forward. There is currently no clear approach on how CCTV is utilised by the Council to support the delivery of its services and achieve its strategic priorities. A £3million capital investment has been provisionally agreed to upgrade the CCTV network. In light of this, the Council is seeking to update the approach to CCTV and ensure the system is being used most effectively. This report summarises the work undertaken to understand the utility of CCTV, outlines a framework for future use of CCTV in the Council and identifies opportunities for expanding the role of the CCTV network.

The Council currently employs CCTV across a range of services. These are mainly concentrated in Community Safety, Public Realm and Licensing. Despite this multi-faceted usage, the functions of the network seem to coalesce around three main intended uses - Deterrence, Detection and Investigation. Through a review of research literature on CCTV and analysis of evidence collected by the Council, findings suggest that CCTV is most effective in detecting and investigating crime (broadly defined, including violent crime, ASB and drug offences). Findings regarding

the deterrence effect of CCTV are consistent with national research, revealing that CCTV has only a minimal deterrence effect on crime, with the only significant correlation being for vehicle theft. There is some indication that CCTV plays a positive role in providing public reassurance. Research literature also provides insights into the potential opportunities provided by technology, such as the potential of mobile CCTV and high definition cameras.

In addition to this research, the locations of CCTV in the borough have been mapped and overlaid against crime and ASB hotspots to provide initial insight into where CCTV could or should be located in future.

In addition to internal and external stakeholder engagement, two focus groups with young people were run through the Youth Council to get their insights on the impact of CCTV on feelings of safety. The findings from these sessions were largely consistent with existing evidence in that CCTV does have a positive effect on feelings of safety. An online resident survey on the impacts of CCTV on feeling of safety was also created used to further test the hypothesis that CCTV can be used as a tool of reassurance.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report including the findings from the literature review, stakeholder engagement and local data analysis.
2. Agree to the eighteen recommendations contained at the conclusion of this report.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To create an evidence based rationale for CCTV that will inform the Council's future operation of the network and underpin the provisionally agreed capital investment.
- 1.2 To identify opportunities for future use of CCTV, including identifying ways of ensuring the CCTV network is compatible with future CCTV technology.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council could choose not to develop a CCTV approach. This would potentially involve investing £3 million into the CCTV network without a thorough evidence base about CCTV's effectiveness in achieving a number of aims.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Background

CCTV is one of a suite of tools used to respond to crime and ASB. Using evidence, we can ensure that each tool is most effectively deployed. Tower Hamlets Council currently has 349 CCTV cameras throughout the borough. Many of these cameras have been operating for up to 13 years and are using outdated analogue technology.

Whilst a £3million capital investment has been provisionally agreed to upgrade the CCTV network, there is currently no clear approach on how CCTV is utilised by the Council to support the delivery of its services and achieve its strategic priorities. As a result, it is also challenging to clearly measure the effectiveness of CCTV in the borough, or plan for how its usage might change over time.

Prior to the development of a technical specification for the network upgrade, it is important for the Council to clarify the role of CCTV in delivering its services and understand the impact of CCTV in achieving its outcomes so that it can ensure effectiveness and value for money.

To achieve this, the Community Safety service working with colleagues in Health, Adults and Communities Strategy, Policy and Performance proposed the following work:

- The development a robust evidence base that provides insight into current CCTV usage and performance, drawing on quantitative and qualitative analysis of CCTV performance;
- The development of an agreed approach to CCTV that sets out how the network will be used most effectively to deliver local services and achieve council priorities;
- Inform an operational guide for decision makers regarding the management of the CCTV network, including the installation of fixed CCTV assets and the use of deployable cameras;

This report outlines the process we have gone through, the findings that came out of this work and the recommendations being made.

3.2 Developing the Evidence Base

The Strategy, Policy and Performance service produced a scoping document in consultation with the Mayor, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and HA&C DLT, which agreed on a set of key questions to be answered:

- Is the CCTV network effectively contributing to the prevention, detection and prosecution of ASB, crime, terrorism and various public realm related contraventions, including gathering evidence for enforcement?

- Are the current locations of the fixed CCTV assets appropriate, e.g. are they in the 'correct' locations and are there any major gaps in coverage?
- What are the current challenges/issues facing the borough's CCTV network and how can they be addressed?
- What is the future role of the CCTV network in the context of delivering the outcomes agreed in the relevant Council/Partnership strategies, e.g. CSP Strategy, ASB Blueprint, Knife Crime Action Plan, Waste Strategy etc.?
- What is the Council's rationale for installing new fixed CCTV assets and decommissioning old ones?
- What is the Council's rationale for deploying mobile CCTV assets?
- What is the current investment in CCTV and future direction of travel – partnership working with TFL, RPs and police?

To answer these questions, a number of work streams were completed:

- A desk based Literature Review was conducted on the effectiveness of CCTV in achieving a number of aims, including the impact on crime and terrorism, environmental waste issues and traffic management, as well as future uses for CCTV, the risks and benefits of improved CCTV technology and risks to be considered.
- The mapping of locations of CCTV in the borough has been completed and has been used to identify possible improvements in the network.
- Data collection and analysis, including identifying gaps in data collection has been completed.
- A number of meetings with stakeholders to give insight into the way CCTV is currently used by internal and external stakeholders.
- Engagement with residents has taken place. Two focus groups with young people were held to understand the effect that CCTV has on feelings of safety. An online resident survey on the impacts of CCTV on feeling of safety was accessible on the Council website has been used to further test the hypothesis that CCTV can be used as a tool of reassurance.

3.3 Literature Review Findings

We conducted a desk based literature review of academic journals, focusing on recent studies that are relevant to the use of CCTV within Tower Hamlets. Some of the key findings from the review include:

3.3.1.1 CCTV and crime

There is no consensus about the effectiveness of CCTV in preventing crime. Some studies have found that it does reduce crime, while others found only minimal or no effect. Where a reduction in crime has been found, this tends to be for property crimes like burglary and car theft. In contrast, most studies of CCTV's effect on violent crime found no deterrent effect. Similar results have been found in studies of CCTV's influence on deterring drug offences, prostitution and vandalism. While there is limited evidence of CCTV deterring crime, there is more consensus that CCTV can assist in the detection and investigation of crime. However, it should be noted that CCTV's value in crime detection and investigation is dependent on a number of other factors such as police resources, the efficiency of CCTV operators and the quality of communication between these services.

3.3.1.2 Feelings of safety

The results of a number of studies appear to point to the conclusion that CCTV does increase public feelings of safety. However, some studies suggest that CCTV makes those who already feel the safest, feel safer. There is also some evidence that the increase in feelings of safety after CCTV is introduced is not sustained over time.

3.3.1.3 Environmental crime

CCTV can be effective in detecting and investigating environmental crimes like fly tipping and graffiti and if enforcement actions and prosecutions are publicised, as well as signage indicating CCTV is present, this combination can have a deterrence effect, particularly where efforts are sustained over time.

3.3.1.4 Improved CCTV technology

Improved CCTV infrastructure such as HD and 4K enabled cameras provide much more detailed images, meaning that in some cases, fewer cameras are required to cover the same ground/patch. However, the costs can be higher and they require more digital storage space due to the size of the images.

Re-deployable and mobile CCTV offers certain advantages over static systems including adaptability, flexibility and they are generally less expensive. There is also an argument that they can mitigate the impact of displacement by relocating in response to moving crime hotspots. However, there is an additional risk of resident complaints when cameras are moved away from one area and into another.

Facial recognition can be built into CCTV systems to automatically recognise selected facial features from a digital image. Supporters of the technology praise its ability to detect suspects, missing persons and its

potential role in preventing terrorist attacks. However, there are many critiques of the technology, particularly around its ineffectiveness or its tendency to deliver false positives.

3.4 Initial data collection and analysis, including network insights

Network mapping

By using crime and ASB data, we were able to overlay a map of the locations of Tower Hamlets CCTV with crime and ASB hotspots. This allowed us to make the following observations about the current location of the CCTV network:

- There appears to be a degree of year-to-year variation in ASB hotspot locations, whereas there is remarkably little year-to-year variation in crime hotspot locations. This may support the case for re-deployable cameras as a strategy for addressing ASB, though the case for re-deployable cameras is less strong in relation to crime.
- The maps suggest that cameras could be more effectively positioned in locations where they will serve greater use. In particular, there appears to be a disproportionate number of cameras in Victoria Park in relation to the limited experience of crime and ASB. The utility of fixed cameras CCTV in Victoria Park is helpful for event safety management e.g. festivals and bonfire night, such infrequent events may be better served by re-deployable cameras.
- The distribution and concentration of crime does not appear to have changed much over the period from 2015-2018, both in the areas with cameras and without cameras. This may suggest that CCTV is not having a deterrent effect on crime, which is consistent with national research.
- There appear to be approximately six main locations where there has been a high concentration of crime and no CCTV. Many of these hotspots occur at transport hubs. It could be suggested that CCTV in these areas could help detecting and investigating the high rates of crime. However, it should be noted that we do not know the exact locations of other cameras in the borough, particularly those operated by TFL, THH and other housing associations and there is a partnership role for other organisations. This report includes a recommendation to better understand how and where CCTV is used by these organisations in the borough, and to develop partnership working in this area

Hotspot maps of fly tipping and graffiti by ward and by street have also been analysed. Comparing these maps with the CCTV location maps mentioned above reveal that the CCTV locations are largely in the same areas as environmental crime hotspots. This suggests that CCTV could potentially be better utilised by the Council to tackle environmental crimes.

CCTV and deterrence

Strong evidence of CCTV's deterrent effect in Tower Hamlets has not been observed either in the mapping of CCTV locations over time or through the analysis of crime data.

Using reports of crime and the density of cameras in the borough (number of cameras per km of street), we analysed the relationship between the two. In all but one crime category, no statistically significant correlation was found. The crime category with a statistically significant negative correlation was theft and handling of a motor vehicle. This means that the higher the number of cameras in a street, the lower the levels of motor vehicle theft. Interestingly, this is consistent with the findings in the literature review, that CCTV may have a deterrent effect on motor vehicle theft (Welsh and Farrington, 2008).

CCTV and detection/investigation

Using data collected by the CCTV room on arrests, we found that between 2015-2018, approximately 8% of arrests involved Tower Hamlets CCTV.

Of the arrests involving CCTV in 2018, 65% were initiated by police reports in which Tower Hamlets Council provided CCTV footage, 24% of the arrests resulted from CCTV operators detecting the crimes and 8% were detected by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras. 1% are instigated by THEOs.

Of these CCTV related arrests, 27% related to violent crimes (assault, ABH, GBH, offensive weapon and robbery) and 17.7% related to drug dealing and drug possession. It should be noted that 24.7% of the offences are classified as 'other'.

These findings suggest that CCTV is useful in Tower Hamlets for the detection and subsequent investigation of violent crimes and drug offences, which are strategic priorities for the Council.

3.5 Findings

Tower Hamlets use CCTV for a broad range of purposes, but in the main it is utilised by services in the Community Safety Division and Public Realm.

The utility of CCTV in these areas primarily relates to its detection and investigative capabilities. This is especially so when it comes to violent crime and ASB. The literature review points to the limited value of CCTV in deterring such incidents and this is consistent with findings from data analysis conducted.

CCTV is more useful in the detection and subsequent investigation of violent crimes and drug offences. Initial data analysis suggests that the majority of arrests that come about as a result of CCTV occur where a police report is

made and the police use Tower Hamlet's CCTV to secure an arrest. This may suggest that the role CCTV plays in obtaining arrests, particularly those relating to violent crime and drug offences could also play a role in public reassurance.

Improving the capacity of the Council's CCTV network through technological advancements could have a number of benefits; including improving detection accuracy, securing higher arrest rates and meeting strategic priorities such as Strategic Plan Priority 3 of the Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan.

Through focus groups with young people, we found that CCTV made the majority of participants feel somewhat safer. Most felt that the value of CCTV was in its ability to keep a record of events, rather than serving as a deterrent to potential criminals. Participants acknowledged that CCTV could pose a risk to civil liberties but overall, it was felt that the positives outweighed the negatives.

Improving the technological capacity of the CCTV suite could also increase public reassurance as many participants identified that where CCTV had little impact on their feelings of safety, the outdated nature of the system and their perception of cameras "not working" played a role. Other improvements such as better lighting and signage were cited as tools that could increase the effectiveness of CCTV and its role in making residents feel safer.

In light of the findings from this work, the recommended CCTV approach is a '**Detect, Investigate, and Reassure**' framework.

3.6 Recommendations

The recommendations are framed within the overarching principle that the Council's approach to CCTV should focus on its role in detection, investigation and reassurance.

Partnerships/joint working

1. Scope how CCTV can best be deployed to deal with and manage environmental crimes like fly tipping.
2. Clarify the role of CCTV in the preparation, response management and post incident learning stages of civil contingencies.

Governance

3. Develop clear governance accountability to monitor the effectiveness of the CCTV network.
4. Explore the potential for the Council to offer a monitoring service to non-Council bodies like housing associations.

Infrastructure

5. Consider the Council's use of re-deployable cameras as a method of responding to ASB.
6. Consider the Council's use of re-deployable cameras for periodic events such as Bonfire night and festivals that take place in Victoria Park
7. Expand the Council's network of HD, UHD and 4K cameras
8. Ensure the ANPR system is equipped with HD, UHD or 4K cameras.
9. Consider the tactical placement of the Council's CCTV network as part of the infrastructure upgrade

Communications

10. In order to utilise CCTV as a vehicle for public reassurance about safety, consider the emphasis on CCTV in Gold Campaigns including Safer Together and Love Your Neighbourhood
11. Consider a 'media moment' linking the strategic approach to CCTV with the capital investment in infrastructure once it is finalised

Future work

12. Develop an assessment tool for making decisions on where future CCTV should be located
13. Develop an evidence base on the deterrent effect of CCTV on public realm services like fly tipping and parking enforcement.
14. Develop a commercial business model to reduce the burden of costs on the general fund.
15. Map the locations of non-Council owned CCTV networks such as those owned by TFL, THH and other housing associations.
16. Look into the potential of securing Community Infrastructure Levy funds for CCTV development
17. Further explore the role of CCTV in suicide prevention

Equalities

18. Consider ways of addressing the potential for unconscious bias through training of control room staff and equalities monitoring

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Where CCTV is monitored in control rooms, there is a risk of discriminatory targeting caused by human bias based on protected characteristics like ethnicity. In a study by researchers at the University of Hull it was found that "black people were between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half times more likely to be surveilled than one would expect from their presence in the population" and thirty percent of targeted surveillances on black people were protracted, lasting nine minutes or more, compared with just 10 percent on white people (Banisar and Davies, 2000). This has implications for the way equality is assessed as part of the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There may be similar trends of discriminatory targeting based on other

visible protected characteristics such as sex and age. The Council does not currently collect data on the percentage of arrests where a person has a protected characteristic. In updating the CCTV network, the Council may want to begin recording this data in order to monitor equalities impacts.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Crime Reduction – while this report suggests that CCTV may not have a direct impact on crime reduction, its use in detecting and investigating crime may lead to higher arrest rates and prosecutions, which could in turn have a general crime deterrent effect.

Safeguarding – there is some evidence that CCTV could play a role in minimising harm by faster detection and response to violent crimes such as knife crime.

Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment – CCTV is subject to the GDPR and Data Protection Act, which treat CCTV footage as personal data. The Human Rights Act requires local authorities to demonstrate a pressing need when undertaking surveillance.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The CCTV service has a 2019-20 revenue budget of £654,000, primarily for spend on employees and external call centre monitoring operatives. In 2018-19, CCTV spent £835,000. This was an overspend of £185,000 against its £650,000 budget. Part of the development of the CCTV approach will need to include how the annual overspend can be mitigated in future. The financial implications of potential actions to deliver some of the recommendations within this report will need to be assessed and given consideration as they are developed.
- 6.2 As part of the 2019-20 budget setting process, Full Council agreed on 20/02/2019 a provisional allocation of £3,300,000 of capital monies for essential CCTV equipment to be replaced. This provisional allocation requires Cabinet approval before any monies can be spent. Prior to this, a business case and Project Initiation Document (PID) will need to be approved in line with the council's capital governance process.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 This report seeks to note the findings in the report as to how CCTV is utilised by the Council and to update the approach to CCTV and to use the system effectively.
- 7.2 Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 makes provision for the regulation of Closed Circuit television (CCTV) and other surveillance camera technology.

- 7.3 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to the Code of Practice for Surveillance Camera Systems when exercising its functions in relation to the Code. The Code provides guidance for surveillance camera operators, promoting regular review to ensure the surveillance remains justified, encouraging transparency.
- 7.4 The Code is set on 12 guiding principles, which enable a system operator to reach informed and appropriate decisions when considering the development or use of surveillance camera systems or the use of processing of images or other information obtained by virtue of such systems.
- 7.5 The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be conducted at the early stages of planning any activity concerning personal identifiable data. For CCTV operation this will be considered widescale surveillance and the DPIA will need to be approved by the surveillance Data Protection Commissioner prior to any operational changes. The Data Protection Officer should be contacted as soon as possible.
- 7.6 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000(RIPA) – Part II of RIPA regulates direct covert surveillance by public authorities, which includes the use of CCTV. Local Authorities must have regard to the right to respect for private and family life – Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights when carrying out surveillance, ensuring that the surveillance is necessary, proportionate and justified. It does not apply to the day to day overt use of the public space CCTV system.
- 7.7 The Council is required when exercising its functions to comply with the duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, namely to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- CCTV Approach

Appendices

- NONE

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A