

Appendix E

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 2 June 2020

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 21 July 2020

Report of: Director, Environment and City Management

Title: Future CCTV Provision

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

To report on the current state of Council's public space CCTV provision across the city and explore future options

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 To invest £255,000 in upgrading key components of the existing public space CCTV system to improve reliability and create potential income opportunities; and
- 2.2 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer (or Deputy) and Leader of the Council (or Deputy), to give final approval to proceed once the Council's financial position is secure.

3. Reason for the recommendation:

- 3.1 To prevent the existing system becoming completely obsolete but doing so at a far more affordable cost than a complete upgrade

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

- 4.1 Financial implications are the £255,000 stated (although it is anticipated the Police and Crime Commissioner would contribute approx. £50K towards this figure)
- 4.2 There will be a demand on officer time during procurement and installation stages

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

- 5.1 Please refer to the main report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None identified.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer

8. Report details:

- 8.1 The Council operates a 24/7/365 Control Room from a city centre location away from the Civic Centre.
- 8.2 From this Control Room a current team of 13 x FTEs proactively monitor public space CCTV cameras, operate the Council's own community alarm scheme (Homecall) and deal with all 'out of hours' calls into the Authority (with the exception of Housing Repairs enquiries).
- 8.3 Other service areas employ CCTV cameras and whilst some of these relayed back to the Control Centre for recording and monitoring (RAMM, ARK, various Car Parks and Corn Exchange) others operate on a stand-alone basis (Civic Centre). Both RAMM and Corn Exchange have expressed a preference to move to a stand-alone system as they see clear advantages of staff being able to monitor from their own site (and from any location via smart phone).
- 8.4 In addition the Control Centre monitors CCTV cameras on behalf of Princesshay Shopping Centre on a contractual basis for an annual fee and also has access to a number of Devon County Council traffic cameras within the city centre area.
- 8.5 Much of the existing CCTV network is supported by a fibre optic infrastructure installed in 2003 at a cost of £680,000 and funded in the main by the Home Office. This fibre optic network is managed on a partnership basis between the main beneficiaries (Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, University of Exeter and Exeter College).
- 8.6 It is understood that the fibre optic network has commercial value for telecommunications providers should the partnership wish to release any latent capacity. Similarly many of the posts on which CCTV cameras are positioned do have the scope to provide a modest income stream from this commercial sector.
- 8.6 The Authority has been in discussion with the Police & Crime Commissioners Office over the past 2 years in respect of the Commissioner's aim to create CCTV hubs across Devon based on the successful model already operating in Cornwall.
- 8.7 Becoming a CCTV hub would require the host Control Room to receive and monitor CCTV footage from surrounding smaller towns and villages. The Police & Crime Commissioners Office have funds available to help ensure the connectivity and compatibility of systems to allow this to happen. Additional on-going income would be achieved for each camera monitored on behalf of surrounding areas, similar to the

existing arrangement with Princesshay Shopping Centre. However, to date only one town has approached the Council for a price to monitor on their behalf.

- 8.8 The Council commissioned a CCTV consultant (Global MSC) to review our existing CCTV infrastructure. This was to explore the compatibility and connectivity issues ahead of any further moves towards becoming a CCTV hub but also to make recommendations on future maintenance provision. The previous situation involved a sole maintenance provider charging considerable annual sums to maintain failing/obsolete equipment.
- 8.9 The combined Control Room budget (CCTV costs less Homecall income) has drastically reduced over the past seven years (£588,740 in 2012/13 to £198,830 for 2020/21) with the majority of these savings being made through a reduction in maintenance. Our last maintenance contract ceased on 31/3/19 and during the interim period there has been no preventative maintenance work undertaken and any critical defects have been attended to on an 'hourly rate' basis.
- 8.10 In summary, we are operating Public Space CCTV on a 'holding position' basis and a decision needs to be made as to whether the Council:-
- a) Invests at a level recommended in the consultant's report
 - b) Continues with existing kit and minimal maintenance
 - c) Ceases to operate a CCTV Control Centre
- 8.11 Each of these options have significant financial, operational and reputational impacts which are detailed below:-

a) Investment

The consultant's report advises on three levels of investment. The most expensive being a replacement of Control Room equipment (which essentially enables cameras to be controlled and footage recorded), renewing specialist furniture as well as replacing existing cameras with HD quality and adding cameras at identified beneficial locations. Indicative cost is £1M. This is recognised as being unaffordable at the present time.

The second level would be to implement the first option but without adding any additional cameras. Indicative cost £800K.

The third option is referred to as a 'make-do' option and although not recommended by the consultant it would improve the resilience and reliability of the system. This involves replacing some core Control Room equipment but would leave 'beyond life' cameras and monitors in place. Indicative cost for this option (including repositioning some key cameras to enhance public and staff safety in car parks and providing a link to the Police) is £255K.

Cameras would need to be replaced on an ad-hoc basis when they became unrepairable rather than a wholesale replacement programme.

Benefits – any investment to the Control Centre equipment would attract capital funding from the Police & Crime Commissioners Office as it would ensure compatibility with other towns and provide hub status. This has the additional benefit of then providing potential revenue income opportunities in monitoring on behalf of other towns.

These upgrades in Control Centre equipment are expected to provide the opportunity for staff to deal with multiple issues from a single workstation (Homecall, CCTV, phones, alarms) therefore increasing their ability to absorb additional income generating (or cost reducing) services such as first response to intruder alarms at Council buildings.

c) Continue with Existing Equipment

This approach would leave the Council exposed as the majority of the equipment would be unsupported. Current equipment does not allow for the compatibility required for the Control Room to exist as a CCTV 'hub' so external capital and revenue funding would not be realised.

This option would only act as a temporary arrangement and defer the real question of whether the Council wishes to operate CCTV properly or not at all

d) Cease to Operate a CCTV Control Room

Public Space CCTV provision is not a statutory duty for the Authority to discharge. However, the current CCTV service supports the city centre economy through Exeter Business Against Crime (EBAC) and provides on-going partnership working with the Police on crime and safeguarding issues. There would be a reputational damage risk associated with withdrawing the service.

A number of other functions undertaken by the Control Centre would need to be undertaken by others and there would be costs attached (out of hours provision, fire and lift alarm response).

Although Homecall does deliver a profit (£104K in 2019/20) many of the overheads are absorbed within CCTV operating costs (accommodation, utilities, some management time etc). A further decision would be required as to whether Homecall continues to operate and from which location.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

9.1 Demonstrates a well-run Council and helps promote a safe city centre

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

10.1 The income generating prospects may not come to fruition if other towns lack interest in the 'hub' programme. This should not affect the Police & Crime Commissioners Office funding contribution

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
 - advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
 - foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.
- 11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.
- 11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because:-
- 11.4.1 The provision of public space CCTV, proactively monitored by Council staff, improves the safety of the most vulnerable using the city centre

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

- 12.1 No negative carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations are expected.

13. Are there any other options?

- 13.1 All three options have been covered in the report (invest, do nothing, stop providing the service)

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

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