

Minutes

Economic Scrutiny Panel

18<sup>th</sup> December, 2007, Newton Hall Community Centre

**Present:** Councillor Hopgood (in the Chair) and Councillors Bartle, Colledge, Kelly, Lightley, Marsden, and Simmons.

**Also Present:** Councillors Bell, Kellett, Thompson and Turnbull

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Plews and Stoddart

**NOTE:** 5.31 p.m. Councillor Thompson joined the meeting

2. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 were agreed as a true record.

3. **Scrutiny of CCTV**

The Chair advised the Panel that she had sight of Durham Police draft report on Durham City CCTV system recommendations. The recommendations were as follows:-

*It is recommended that a quarterly meeting be established between Durham Constabulary and Durham City Council to maintain common objectives review strategic plans and deal with real or anticipated problems.*

*It is recommended that Durham Constabulary investigate the possibility of establishing an appropriate and effective feedback procedure on cases where CCTV System product has been provided.*

*It is recommended that consideration be given to establishing a programme of visits for new and experienced officers so that awareness of procedures is built up and communication processes enhanced.*

*It is recommended that as part of a wider information strategy a wider ranging survey be carried out with stakeholders in the retail, commercial, academic and residential sectors within the boundaries of the CCTV System.*

*It is recommended that consideration be given to having a decision maker in the CCTV Control Room during busy times or special events who can advise on the evidence during live incidents or immediate review to assist in the arresting of offenders and detection of offences.*

*It is recommended that consideration be given to promoting the use of the system by private sector interests within the geographical area of coverage.*

*It is recommended that consideration be given to reviewing staffing levels for the CCTV to limit the cross abstraction with Careline.*

Members discussed the recommendations of the Police report and agreed that a recommendation of the Panel be to support the police report.

Councillor Colledge gave a précis of the Panel visit to the Control Room. Members agreed that the quality of the images from the CCTV was excellent.

Members discussed the compatibility of the mobile cameras and the quality of the images they produced and recommended that mobile cameras purchased should be compatible

Members agreed that training should be given to control room staff but this should be a joint training session with Police Officers.

At no time had any person involved with the scrutiny had asked for additional cameras therefore, it was agreed by the Panel that a budget be made available to upgrade existing cameras.

Members were concerned with incidents at the Bus Station had suggested that another camera may be required. Also it was suggested that if the problems continue, then petitions to the County Council for another dispersal order would be required.

Meeting terminated at 6.03 p.m.

## **Economic Scrutiny Panel**

### **Scrutiny of CCTV**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Economic Scrutiny Panel were tasked with scrutinising the effectiveness of the current provision of CCTV.
- 1.2 The purpose of the scrutiny was to check that the system currently in place was fit for purpose and value for money and whether the system should be extended.
- 1.3 Members agreed that they would approach the scrutiny in the first instance with a stock take of equipment currently used and asked that the City Care Manager responsible for CCTV be invited to attend a panel meeting to give Members an insight of this.
- 1.4 In 1997/98 Durham City Council installed a City Centre CCTV system which is monitored from a central Control Room by City of Durham employees.
- 1.5 The intention of the CCTV system is directed towards deterring antisocial behaviour and preventing crime, thereby providing a safer environment for the benefit of the whole community.

#### **2. Findings**

- 2.1 The cameras are monitored twenty four hours per day 365 days per year most of the cameras are owned by the City of Durham but there a small number in the new Walkergate development that are privately owned and which the Council is paid £22,000 for monitoring their cameras
- 2.2 Most of the cameras in use are digital and produce excellent quality images, the VHS images are of good quality too. The City Council has always purchased the best equipment and the quality produced has been excellent. As the quality of the images is so good, defence solicitors often question control room staff about procedures and practices used – the staff has been congratulated by solicitors for the way in which they carry out their duties.
- 2.3 The section provides a monitoring service to pub watch and shop watch and is in radio contact with the police. This is a much more effective way of dealing with street incidents than telephoning the police station.
- 2.4 City of Durham Council pays for the service in its entirety; they receive no contributions from either the Police or the Shopkeepers, other than the payment from the Walkergate Development.
- 2.5 Control room staff are multi skilled and training is regularly updated, each member of staff has a training log and regular checks are made on staff members.
- 2.6 Three senior Police Officers had attended a Panel Meeting together with the Council's Community Safety Officer and had advised Members that CCTV is an excellent preventative tool. Some towns in the County do not have CCTV

systems and there were increases in retail crime and other crimes. The Police use the evidence provided by the cameras to prove offences have been committed.

2.7 The Community Safety Officer informed the Panel that separate deployable cameras are used in areas identified as hot spots. These cameras are funded by the Partnership. While the images are good they are not of the same quality as those used by the control room.

2.8 It was suggested that there was an emphasis on the City rather than the villages as far as crime and disorder was concerned. However, the fairest system for the villages to use the mobile camera was based on the numbers of calls received, this is intelligence lead. A village has the use of the camera for twelve weeks, but this may change should the camera be needed elsewhere, it would be moved.

2.9 Concerns had been raised over the Bus Station and the incidents which had occurred since the expiry of the recent dispersal order. The Police Officers stated that should the need arise they would seek another dispersal order.

### **3. Recommendations**

3.1 That the Council support recommendations 1 - 6 made in the Durham City CCTV System: A Review by Durham Constabulary (Appendix A)

3.2 That a joint training session be arranged for Control Room Staff and Police Officers.

3.3 That a budget be given to upgrade the existing cameras from video tape to dvd disc, this will take up less room in storage and give better quality images.

3.4 That all mobile camera equipment purchased is compatible with other CCTV equipment.

**Durham Constabulary  
Durham City CCTV System: A Review**

**Summary of Recommendations**

- It is recommended that a quarterly meeting be established between Durham Constabulary and Durham City Council to maintain common objectives, review strategic plans and deal with real or anticipated problems.
- It is recommended that Durham Constabulary investigate the possibility of establishing an appropriate and effective feedback procedure on cases where CCTV System product has been provided.
- It is recommended that consideration be given to establishing a programme of visits for new and experienced officers so that awareness of procedures is built up and communication processes enhanced.
- It is recommended that as part of a wider information strategy a wider ranging survey be carried out with the stakeholders in the retail, commercial, academic and residential sectors within the boundaries of the CCTV System.
- It is recommended that consideration be given to having a decision maker in the CCTV Control Room during busy times or special events who can advise on the evidence during live incidents or immediate review to assist in the arresting of offenders and detection of offences.
- It is recommended that consideration be given to promoting the use of the system by private sector interests within the geographical area of coverage.
- It is recommended that consideration be given to reviewing staffing levels for the CCTV to limit the cross abstraction with Careline.