

14. CCTV Report

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Purpose of the Report

Councillor Tom Parsley asked for a report on Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Yeovil at the meeting held on 2nd April 2008.

Recommendation

That Members note the report.

Report

The South Somerset District Council CCTV system comprises 33 cameras within the Yeovil Town Centre area. Twenty-three cameras are capable of panning, tilting and zooming (PTZ) therefore being able to follow people or vehicles within range as well as having the ability to zoom in for close-up images. The remaining 10 cameras are fixed, static cameras in that they are incapable of PTZ functions and only focus on one particular view within an agreed field of vision. Seven of the PTZ cameras are mono-colour i.e. black and white images only with sixteen being colour/mono in that they can be manually switched to mono during hours of darkness. Black and white images provide clearer night time images over the colour option. All static cameras are mono and cover car parks.

The stated objectives of the system are as follows: -

- To help reduce the fear of crime
- To help deter crime
- To help detect crime and provide evidential material for court proceedings
- To assist in the overall management of Yeovil Town Centre
- To enhance community safety, assist in developing the economic well being of the areas and encourage greater use of the Town Centre, car parks etc
- To assist the Local Authority in its enforcement and regulatory functions within the Yeovil Town Centre
- To assist in Traffic Management
- To assist in supporting civil proceedings which will help detect crime
- To assist in the training of CCTV operators, the police and others involved in the use of the CCTV system

The camera images are transmitted back from their locations to Petters House in Petters Way, Yeovil by a variety of transmission mediums, BT fibre, radio and hard wired but in the main via eighteen BT fibre circuits. These circuits are terminated in the CCTV equipment housed at Petters Way thus allowing the selection of camera image and associated control functionality by the remote CCTV operators. The Yeovil camera images are transmitted via five BT fibre circuits to the CCTV Control Room situated at Bridgwater House in Bridgwater. The cameras are monitored in the Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) CCTV Control Room under contract by SDC employed CCTV operators. The operators can view any two of the Yeovil cameras as 'live' images at any one time and the rest of the cameras as a series of multiplexed images.

The SDC Control Room operators have access to the police Airwave radio system enabling them to speak directly with police officers attending or at incidents and are able to transmit live images through to the police Communications and Control Room. In the near future the police will install into the SDC CCTV Control Room an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system linked to police databases. This will be a powerful tool in identifying and tracking a variety of offenders who use vehicles in the course of crime.

The South Somerset District Council (SSDC) Yeovil Town Centre CCTV system is operated and monitored by Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) under an agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for an annual payment of £2,000 per pan, tilt and zoom camera, twenty-three in number and £500 per static camera, ten in number, totalling £51,000. The current SLA commenced on the 1st April 2006 and is in force for a period of three years therefore ending on the 31st March 2009.

The system is managed under an agreed Code of Practice signed by the Principal Engineer. The Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act and other legislation covers the operation of the CCTV system.

There are 12 FTE operators working in shifts to provide a 24/7 monitoring operation. The roster provides for two operators 24/7 and an additional operator between 1800 and 0300 or 0400 hrs on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. The operators have a CCTV Daily Procedures Manual which directs the operators in routine duties, such as checking that the DVR's are recording correctly, or checking the times shown on the monitors and DVR's. All SDC CCTV employees are licensed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA) as they are required to be.

The operators receive information from a variety of sources, which will dictate their priority in selecting cameras to view in more detail on their spot monitors. They have a Retail Watch radio scheme operated by the traders in Yeovil Town Centre, which switches to a Pub Watch radio scheme during the evenings.

The use of these radios in conjunction with the cameras forms a powerful tool in directing resources to a particular incident especially as the CCTV operators are able to transmit the relevant camera live images to the police stations and the Police Communications Centre at Taunton. This allows the police radio operator to monitor the incident and send resources as necessary.

The CCTV operators record details of incidents viewed on an Operator Incident Report Log. The basic details are transferred from these Operator Logs onto Monthly Returns, which splits the incidents into incidents by Camera Operations further broken down to those incidents instigated by the Retail/Pub Watch radio scheme or the police. A fourth sheet records the number of arrests made as a consequence of CCTV involvement. These sheets are forwarded to the Police, SSDC officers and the Yeovil Town Centre Manager. An example monitoring sheet for June 08 is attached to the report.

Financial Implications

None arising from this report.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

CCTV contributes to Corporate Aim 4, ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities.

Background Papers: *None*