



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2019 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Gugnani (Chair)
Councillor Thalukdar (Vice Chair)

Councillor Govind Councillor Hunter
Councillor Halford Councillor Waddington

In Attendance

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for
Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services
Councillor Connelly, Assistant City Mayor - Housing
Councillor Master, Assistant City Mayor - Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Sood, Assistant City Mayor - Communities & Equalities

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60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Westley and Councillor Alfonso, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Commission, whose members had been invited to this meeting to assist in the scrutiny of agenda items 7 and 8, (“Adoption of Civil Penalties for Non-Compliant Landlords” and “Selective Licensing in High Density Areas of Leicester” respectively).

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

62. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Commission received the minutes of its meeting held on 23 January 2019, noting that it was anticipated that the information requested under minute 55, "Community Cohesion and Hate Crime", would be reported to the next meeting.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission held on 23 January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

63. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

As this was the last meeting of the Commission for the year, the Chair thanked all Members for their hard work and support. He also thanked officers for their support, including reports submitted to the Commission and their attendance at meetings. He noted that various issues continued to concern Members, including the serious threat to the community from knife crime and the impact of Universal Credit.

The Chair advised Members that he had corresponded with the Director of Learning and Inclusion regarding concerns raised under minute 45, "Community Safety Plan: Knife Crime Update", (5 December 2018), about access for the Police and other agencies to schools. The Director's reply had been circulated, but the Chair advised the Commission that he was not happy with the reply and would be writing to the Director again.

Members also expressed some concern that their experience did not reflect the situation stated in the Director's reply and were invited to send any comments on the Director's reply to the Chair and/or Scrutiny Policy Officer by Friday 22 March 2019 for inclusion in the further letter.

64. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

65. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

66. ADOPTION OF CIVIL PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANT LANDLORDS

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report setting out the interim results of consultation on the adoption of civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution for certain housing offences.

The Head of Regulatory Service introduced the report, noting that:

- Interim results from the current consultation had been positive, with 16 of the 19 responses received to date being in favour of the scheme;
- The proposed penalties would be applied with the same level of care that would be used for a prosecution;
- Income from the penalties would be used to help cover costs and towards the operation of the service;
- An important element of the process was that sufficient opportunity would be given for someone to make representations against receiving a penalty;
- The scheme would cover all types rented properties, (for example, purpose-built, conversions, houses and flats) and would include housing association landlords; and
- The introduction of penalties would be publicised once approved.

Members welcomed the proposals, but expressed concern that tenants who complained about landlords could face retaliation. The Head of Regulatory Service advised that officers recognised this to be a concern, so legal protections and a robust regulatory capability were needed, to ensure that the penalties were seen by landlords to be a real deterrent. It was felt that the scheme as proposed provided this.

When a complaint was received, each case would be assessed with the first stage (where required) in the process. This normally involved informing the landlord of work that needed doing, with enforcement action following if the work was not done. Each case would be assessed on its circumstances.

When disrepair issues were found, a letter was sent to the relevant tenant(s) explaining this and that it was illegal for them to be evicted because they had complained. If a landlord served an eviction notice, the landlord needed to apply to the court for a possession order and a warrant for eviction. This could be challenged by the tenant(s) where the eviction was in retaliation to contacting the council about repair issues.

In addition, it was noted that, if a banning order was placed on a landlord, tenancies would be secure. In some cases, the Council could take over the management of the property and use rents received to manage that property. Advice was available from charities and other support agencies, as well as from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team.

It was noted that any response by the Council to a complaint had to be reasonable and proportionate. If major repairs were needed, (for example, if the tenant had no heating or hot water), notice could be served immediately. The landlord could be given 24 hours to take reasonable steps to, for example, get a boiler reinstated. However, more time could be considered appropriate for a landlord to undertake less pressing work.

In response to concerns that the levels of harm defined under the proposed scheme were potentially suggested at quite high thresholds, the Team Manager – Private Sector Housing advised Members that, if landlords committed more than one offence at a time, a penalty would be applied for each offence and a landlord could face a substantial fine at lower levels of harm. The Private Sector Housing Team was predominately a reactive service which responded to complaints by tenants.

The Council did not hold information on how many properties were managed by agents and how many were managed by the landlord directly, but if a property was managed by an agent, they would be the first point of contact if a complaint was received. Some agents had authority to spend up to a certain amount on behalf of the landlord, so sometimes could resolve issues without reference to the landlord.

In response to a question, it was noted that there currently were not any Leicester-based landlords on the national rogue landlords' register. The database of rogue landlords had only been established for about 12 months and names associated with historical offences could not be added retrospectively. Having two civil penalties lodged against a landlord could be one of the criteria for that landlord being included in the register

AGREED:

- 1) That the Executive be asked to take the comments of the Commission recorded above and the Equalities Implications set out in the report in to account when considering the proposal to adopt civil penalties for non-compliant landlords; and
- 2) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to provide Members with information on how the Private Sector Housing Team can be contacted.

67. SELECTIVE LICENSING IN HIGH DENSITY AREAS OF LEICESTER

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report setting out the aim to use enabling Housing legislation for a Selective Licensing Scheme to help improve the Private Rented Sector in Leicester.

The Head of Regulatory Service and the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services introduced the report, noting that:

- Anyone letting property privately in the designated areas would be required to register with the Council;
- It was hoped, (subject to a full and appropriate consultation), that a selective licensing area could be in operation towards the end of 2020. Full Council would be required to give final approval to the adoption of these proposals;

- To be able to introduce selective licensing, a need for it had to be shown. Views currently were being sought on the idea and potential areas that could be involved, whilst noting that further consultation work and other evidence gathering would take place;
- The areas currently identified as high density for the purpose of selective licensing, and therefore potentially to be included in the Scheme, had been determined using 2011 census data; and
- Work being undertaken at the moment was shaping the Scheme, so the next stage would include speaking to partners, such as Ward Councillors, the emergency services and landlords for more specific information. The Scheme had to be problem-led, so the Council needed to identify what problems existed and what was causing them.

Members welcomed the proposal and endorsed the areas identified as possible locations for the introduction of the Scheme.

It was asked whether it would be possible to introduce a Scheme any earlier than September 2020. In reply, the Head of Regulatory Service explained that work therefore was started on a selective Scheme, as that could be brought in sooner than a city-wide one. A city-wide Scheme needed government approval, but the Council could introduce one for 20% or less of the municipal area or 20% or less of the size of the Private Rented Sector without such approval. However, although indications previously had been received from the government that city-wide Schemes possibly were not favoured, as they were not felt to be selective, it now appeared that some city-wide Schemes were being approved, such as one in Nottingham.

The target date for a decision by full Council on selective licensing was May 2020. Once this decision had been taken, a three-month statutory standstill applied to the Scheme, while a 10-week consultation was undertaken. This would achieve the start date of towards the end of 2020. If the process was not followed correctly, there was a danger that the Council could be subject to judicial review of the process used, as had happened to other authorities. It therefore was felt that the time scales proposed were realistic and achievable.

It was noted that the amount of private sector housing in the wards identified for the Scheme totalled more than 20% of the size of the city's Private Rented Sector. More specific proposals would be drawn up based on issues identified through research currently being undertaken, so that at the final stage of the Scheme streets to be included or omitted were identified. It therefore was suggested that the current on-line consultation should ask what parts of wards should be included, rather than which whole wards, but it was noted that this was an informal survey, so was not the full one, which was still to come.

Some concern was expressed that the licence fees would not cover the cost of the Scheme. In reply, the Head of Regulatory Service advised the Commission that the Scheme had to be self-financing, so decisions would have to be made about what would be covered, (for example, whether the cost of inspections

would be included).

In response to a concern that the Scheme as proposed appeared to be bureaucratic, the Head of Regulatory Service noted that there was a need to ensure that what was included and asked of landlords met the objectives of the Scheme. Care therefore was being taken to ensure that things of no or little value to the Scheme were not included. External consultation would provide external challenge on this. It therefore was too early for things such as Key Performance Indicators to have been established.

Councillor Connelly, Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for Housing, thanked the Commission for inviting him to participate in the scrutiny of this item and expressed the hope that the Scheme would receive sufficient support to enable it to be implemented.

AGREED:

That the proposals for a Selective Licensing Scheme under the Housing Act 2004 be endorsed, subject to the comments recorded above and in particular the introduction of appropriate Key Performance Indicators and officers making efforts to avoid the Scheme becoming overly bureaucratic.

68. REPORT OF VISIT BY MEMBERS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION TO THE LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL CCTV CONTROL CENTRE

The Chair presented a report of a recent visit by members of the Commission to the Leicester City Council CCTV control centre.

The Head of Standards and Development (Neighbourhood and Environmental Services) gave a presentation about on-street CCTV provision in the city, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

During the presentation, the Head of Standards and Development drew particular attention to the following points:

- Open protocols meant that the CCTV system was a “plug and play” system;
- The identification of crime rates for each area of the city was done by examining reported crime for the 2016/17 financial year. From this, it was found that some areas with cameras had low numbers of crimes, but those crimes could be quite serious;
- The camera and infrastructure upgrade had been funded from various sources, including Ward Community Budget funds and grants from the Safer LeicesterShire Partnership; and
- Operators were needed for the cameras to ensure that the cameras with automatic tracking were tracking appropriate things.

Councillor Sood, Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for Communities and Equalities, welcomed the assistance the new camera infrastructure gave to those working to reduce and resolve crime and thanked all involved in the provision and operation of the cameras for their work.

It was queried whether the cameras could be used to resolve issues in some areas caused by with paan spitting, but it was noted that this would be difficult to do. The cameras would have to be left at a wide angle, to respect the rights of innocent people, so the evidential quality of pictures obtained could be compromised.

People could legally put a CCTV camera on their own property, but just putting a sign in the window to say there was a camera there could e a deterrent. If a CCTV camera covered the public highway outside of the property boundary, images obtained from it would fall within the General Data Protection Regulation. The data handler therefore would need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Commission:
 - a) Endorses the strategy of upgrading and streamlining the CCTV systems run by Leicester City Council on behalf of the communities of Leicester;
 - b) Notes the extensive use to which the Police put the CCTV systems to deter and detect crime, and use images and information from the system to support criminal prosecutions;
 - c) Urges Leicestershire Police to make a greater financial contribution to the operation of the CCTV system to better reflect its value and importance to Police operations; and
 - d) Requests the Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for Neighbourhood Services to pursue further contributions from Leicestershire Police; and
- 2) That the presentation be circulated to all members of this Commission for information.

69. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission's work programme was received and noted.

70. VOTE OF THANKS

The Chair thanked all Members and officers for their assistance with the work of the Commission.

In reply, Councillor Waddington and the Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for his contribution to the work of the Commission.

71. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.11 pm

On-street CCTV provision Leicester City

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement
Scrutiny Commission

March 2019

Why review?

- Outdated infrastructure; ageing technology
- Organic growth
- Separate systems (Tango Bravo, Tango Victor)
- Repair costs high
- Parochial approach to demand and use

Aims and objectives

- To define the purpose of CCTV
- Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1988

'... a general duty on each local authority to take account of the community safety dimension in all of its work. All policies, strategies, plans and budgets will need to be considered from the standpoint of their potential contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder'.

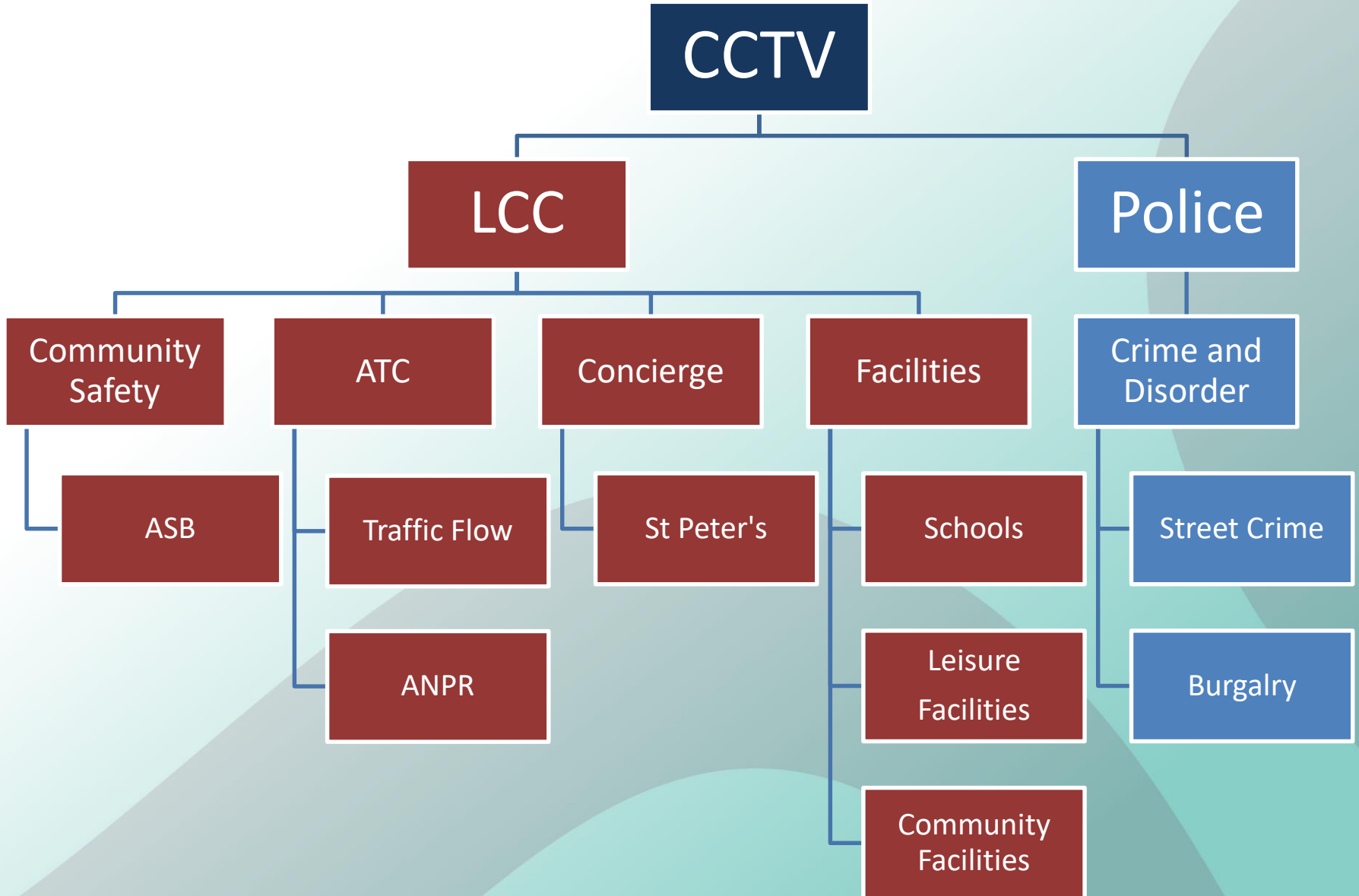
(Home Office Guidance)

- To provide a resilient and future proofed service
- To provide a service that is fit for purpose
- To provide a service that is cost effective
- Develop a programme of improvement

Governance arrangements



Linkages / partnerships

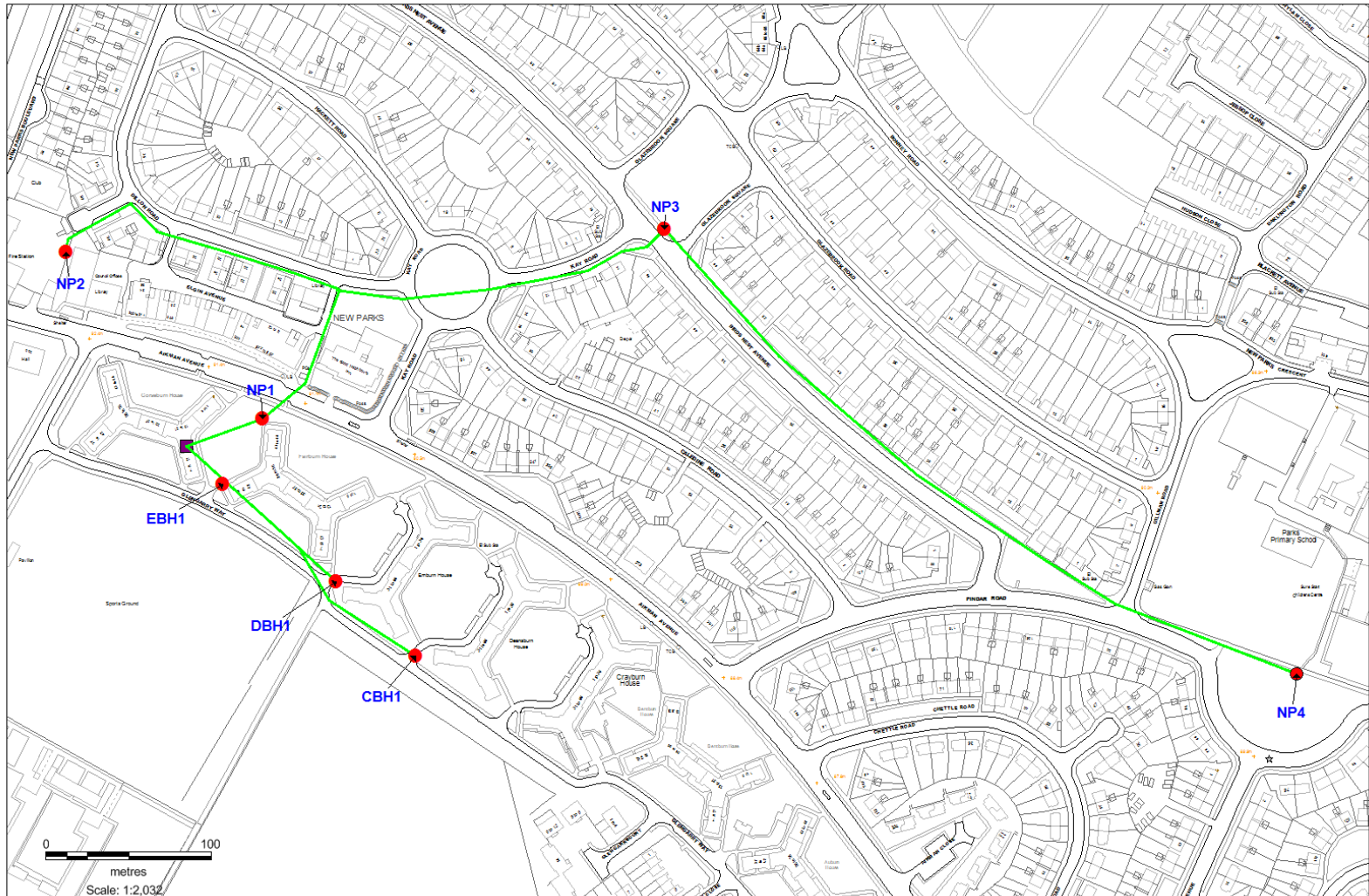


Understanding the service

- Identify location, number and rationale
- Review requirement
- Review capability of system
- Review capacity of system
- Review deployables / pod cameras

- Move to open protocols
- Use of analytics / intelligent software

Understanding the infrastructure

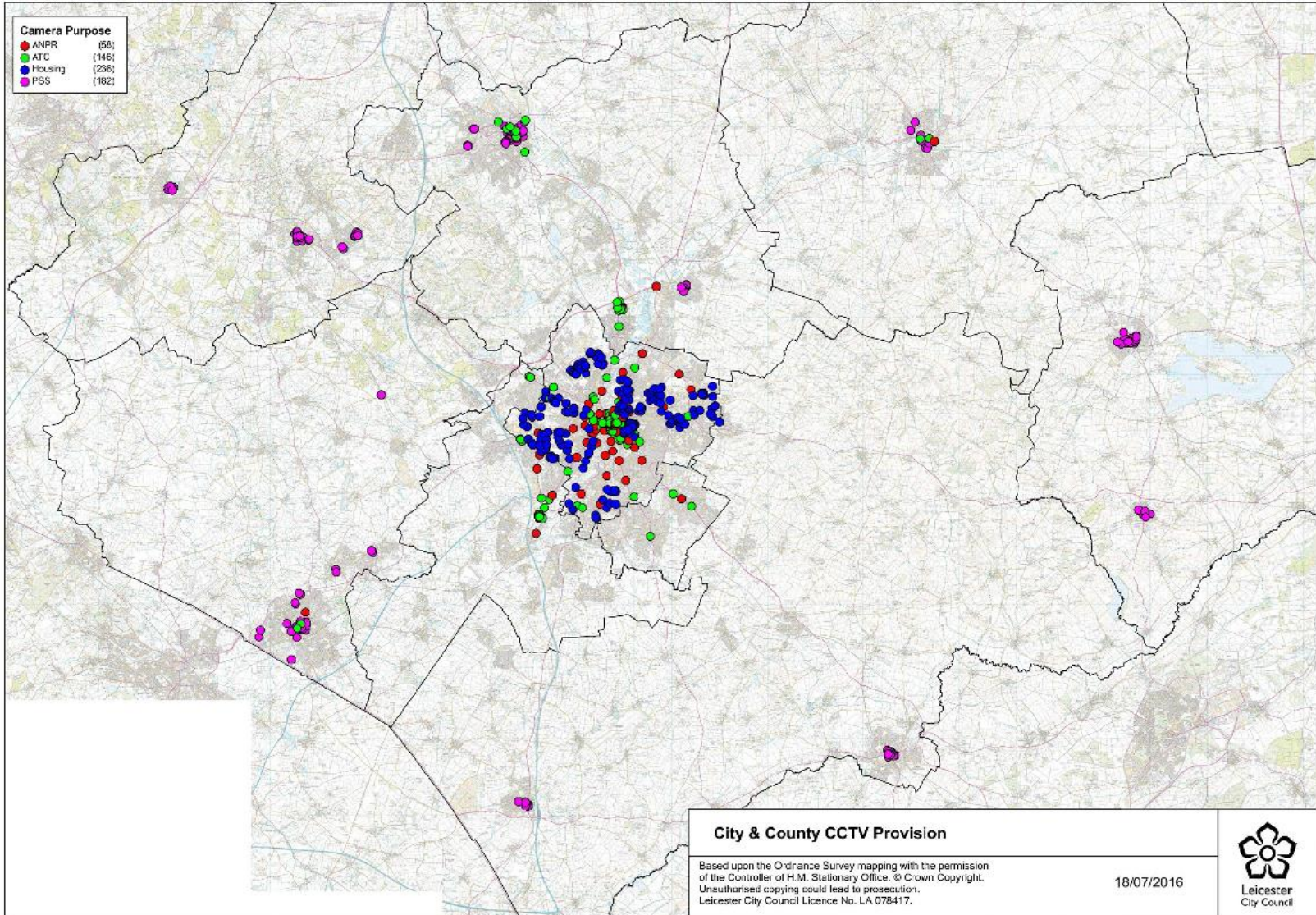


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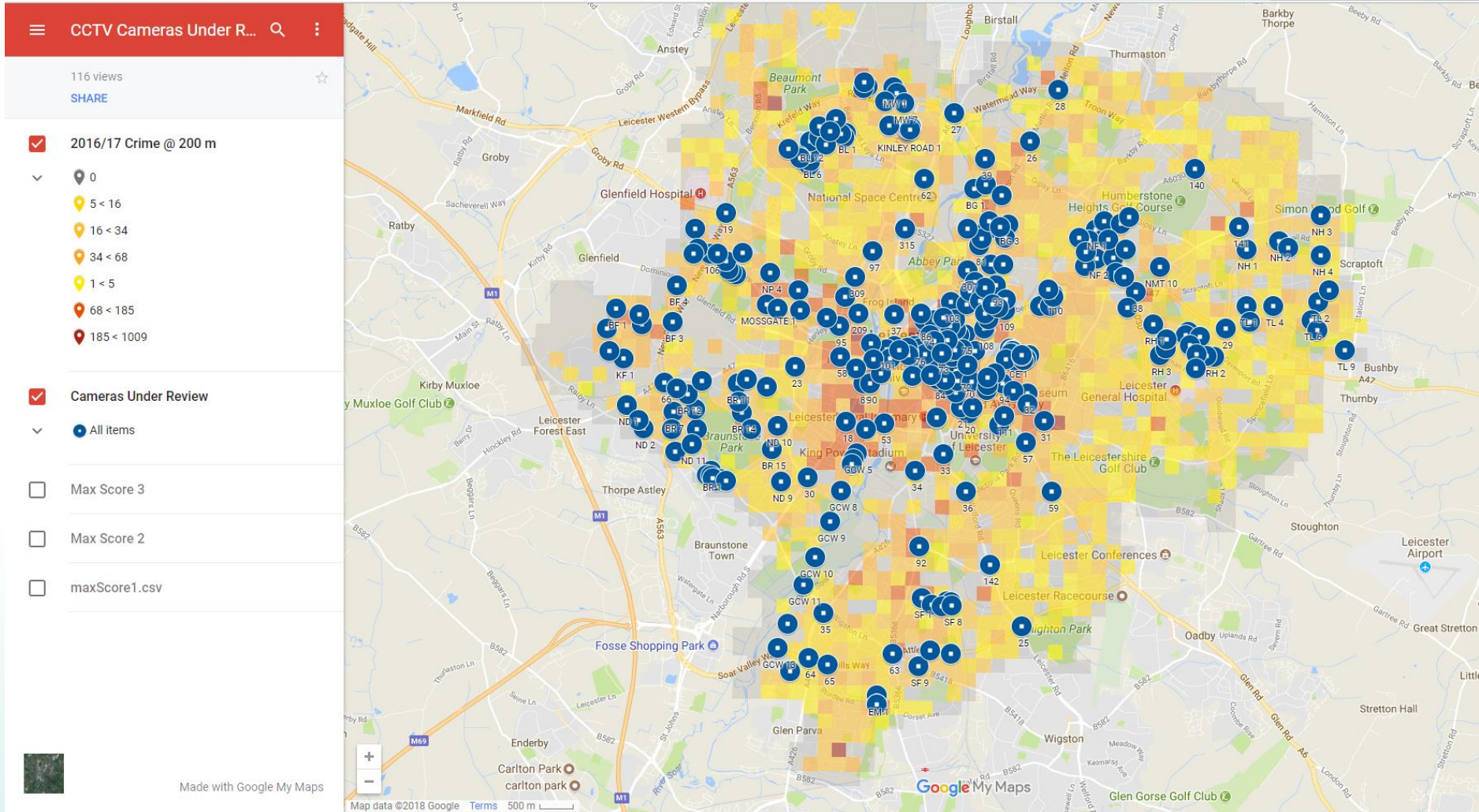
New Parks & New Found Pool

KEY: Node  Cable Run  Camera 

Understanding the infrastructure



Determining the need



Reviewing cameras



Upgraded operations room

- £280k capital investment
- Move from analogue to digital
- More resilience
- One operations room providing 24/7 cover



Camera and infrastructure upgrades

- £800k capital investment
- Maximise use of the Council's 'dark fibre'
- Resilience for node points
- Improved data flow
- Future proof cameras



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Features

- Long Range IR Illumination up to 200 Meters
- 30x Optical Zoom FHD Continuous Auto-Focus Lens
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- Multi-Stream Adaptive Streaming
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- Gyro-Based EIS
- Servo Feedback for Better Preset Precision
- Included Analytics:
 - Tamper Detection
 - Multi-zone VMD
- Privacy Masking
- Bi-directional audio
- PoE+, 24 VAC, and 12VDC Power Options
- Web interface for viewing control
- Storage on the Edge

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Camera and infrastructure upgrades

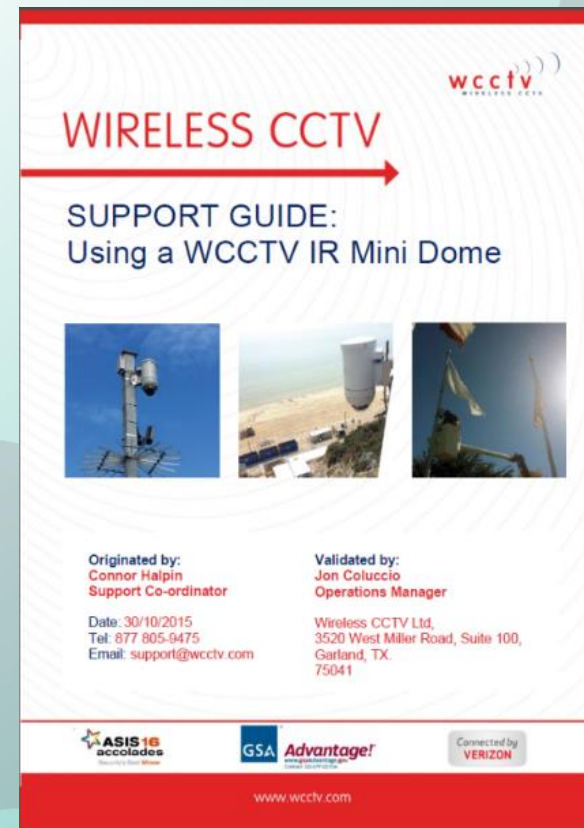


Camera and infrastructure upgrades



Camera and infrastructure upgrades

- £90k investment
- Greater flexibility




The image shows the cover of a support guide titled "WIRELESS CCTV SUPPORT GUIDE: Using a WCCTV IR Mini Dome". The cover features the WCCTV logo in the top right corner, which includes the text "wccctv" and "WIRELESS CCTV" with three curved lines above it. Below the title, there are three small photographs: the first shows a camera mounted on a tall metal pole against a blue sky; the second shows a camera mounted on a structure in an outdoor, possibly industrial or military, setting; the third shows a camera mounted on a structure with a flag in the background. At the bottom of the cover, there is contact information for the originator and validator, along with the date and email address. Logos for ASIS 16, GSA Advantage!, and Verizon are also present at the bottom, along with the website address www.wccctv.com.

wccctv
WIRELESS CCTV

WIRELESS CCTV

SUPPORT GUIDE:
Using a WCCTV IR Mini Dome



Originated by:
Connor Halpin
Support Co-ordinator

Validated by:
Jon Coluccio
Operations Manager

Date: 30/10/2015
Tel: 877 805-9475
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Camera and infrastructure upgrades



Any Questions?

