

Leicester City Council Scrutiny Report

Report of visit by members of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission to the Leicester City Council CCTV control centre.

A Report for the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

20 March 2019

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

Commission Members on site visit:

Councillor Inderjit Gugnani (Chair)
Councillor Aminur Thalukdar (Vice-chair)
Councillor Ratilal Govind
Councillor Elaine Halford
Councillor Sue Hunter
Councillor Sue Waddington

Apologies: Councillor Hanif Aqbany

1 Recommendations

The Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhood Services and the Executive are asked to consider the following recommendations and comments.

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission:

- 1.1 Endorses the strategy of upgrading and streamlining the CCTV systems run by Leicester City Council on behalf of the communities of Leicester
- 1.2 Notes the extensive use to which the police put the systems to deter and detect crime, and use images and information from the system to support criminal prosecutions;
- 1.3 Urges that Leicestershire Police make a greater financial contribution to the operation of the CCTV system to better reflect its value and importance to police operations; and
- 1.4 Urges the Executive Member to pursue further contributions from Leicestershire Police and to report back on the police response

2 Report

- 2.1 Members of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission were invited to visit the newly-established Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) centre.
- 2.2 The visit took place on 11 February 2019 and the following members took part: Cllrs Gugnani, Thalukdar, Waddington, Hunter, Halford and Govind. Also present were Bob Mullins, head of standards and development, and Dave Warren, CCTV Service and Change Manager.

- 2.3 Members who attended the wished to put on record their thanks to officers and staff who provide help and information during and after the visit.
- 2.4 Members were shown the newly established CCTV centre for operations in Leicester. The bank of more than 70 screens concentrated on three main areas:
- the city centre street scene
 - Entry to mainly high-rise blocks on the St Peter's estate
 - Street scene on the council's outer social housing estates
- 2.5 The CCTV centre represents an investment of more than £250k and effectively brings together two council-based systems which have not been compatible. This includes the ageing housing estates system whose existing infrastructure is being replaced with more modern digital cameras. This upgrade of cameras and infrastructure is a further investment of £800k.
- 2.6 That upgrade has been going on across the city, with replacement cameras being installed in places to fit in with other infrastructure work. In all there are around 1,000 CCTV cameras in the systems across the city. They record information which is accessible even if it is not shown on the monitors in the control room.
- 2.7 The upgrade across the city should be completed this financial year – to date 70% of the cameras have already been replaced. The £3k replacement cost for each camera should be placed in context; a replacement lens on the old pan, tilt and zoom cameras would cost as much to replace. Maintenance costs for the old cameras was not sustainable when new 'plug and play' equipment could be brought relatively cheaply.
- 2.8 There are 13 staff at the centre, which operates on a 24-hour a day, seven day a week basis. Three officers were monitoring the bank of screens and responding to queries.
- 2.9 There is a direct feed from the centre to the police county HQ at Enderby. Maintenance of the feed is paid for by Leicestershire Police. However the police make no contribution to the costs of running the council's scheme, although they call on its services frequently to gather information and evidence about an incident or to send resources to incidents which have the potential for causing disorder or criminal activity. Talks are continuing to see if this position can be changed.
- 2.10 The system runs separately from other CCTV networks with the city, although the CCTV Manager maintains links with the system managers. Other networks with the city include the two university systems. The Leicester University scheme monitors Victoria Park. The Area Traffic Control system is able to be utilised by the CCTV operators, who can take control of these cameras if the situation demands.
- 2.11 Hospitals such as Leicester Royal Infirmary have individual systems, as well as for example commercial operations such as the Highcross centre. It is also

of note that a system has been established within the city centre based on new free-standing phone booths and charging points. These are gathering data about the behaviour and movements of pedestrians within the city centre.

2.12 Routine operations at the centre include allowing vehicle access to otherwise restricted areas. The system monitors entry systems to the council's high-rise blocks, allowing access for visitors with legitimate reasons to be in the building; it also provides back-up for residents who have forgotten their entry passes.

2.13 Other council systems connected to the centre, if only via phone, include communications for teams such as city wardens and parking enforcement (who are also having a roll-out of body cams). The system has been used to identify fly-tipping incidents and offenders.

2.14 As well as fixed cameras the centre has around 30 mobile cameras which can be deployed when there is an expectation or fear of antisocial behaviour or to deter such behaviour.

3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications

Financial Implications

N/A

Legal Implications

N/A

Equality Implications

No observations

4 Officer to Contact

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Executive Response to Scrutiny

The executive will respond to the next scrutiny meeting after a review report has been presented with the table below updated as part of that response.

Introduction

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Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Decision	Progress/Action	Timescales