

**CABINET
13 DECEMBER 2022**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: CCTV CAMERA LOCATIONS AND INVESTMENT

REPORT OF: *Service Director: Resources*

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Community Engagement and *Finance and IT*

COUNCIL PRIORITY: A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council currently has the following CCTV cameras:

- 43 town centre cameras, that are monitored on a proactive basis
- 16 cameras in the Council's two multi-storey car parks (in Letchworth and Hitchin), which are monitored on a reactive basis
- 5 cameras covering green space and Council buildings, which are monitored on a reactive basis
- 5 mobile cameras which can be used to target locations with crime issues, which are monitored on a reactive basis

The Council's cameras are monitored by a control room based in Stevenage, through the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership. The Partnership is made up of East Herts Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, North Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council.

This work has been undertaken (with the Council's Community Safety team, Police and the CCTV Control Room Managers) to review the location of CCTV cameras, and make recommendations as to where cameras should be retained, removed or added.

This review also considered the impact of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation seeking to withdraw from funding of CCTV cameras in Letchworth Town Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet notes that Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation are looking to withdraw from the funding of CCTV cameras in Letchworth. That Cabinet agree in principle to the taking on of Letchworth cameras (and the costs involved), but seek a continuing contribution from the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.
- 2.2. That Cabinet agrees to the retention, removal and addition of CCTV cameras as set out in Table 1 of this report.
- 2.3. That Cabinet delegates to the Service Director: Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT, a decision on the number of new mobile CCTV

cameras that can be afforded within the existing overall revenue budget (making an allowance for monitoring costs and the costs of moving cameras).

- 2.4. That Cabinet notes that additional capital investment in CCTV cameras will be needed and that this will be added to the capital budget for 2023/24 (subject to agreement by Full Council in February)

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. *The Council has chosen to provide CCTV cameras to help make the District a safer place to live and work. It also supports the Council's Community Safety role, although the primary role sits with the police. This report therefore considers the optimum location for CCTV cameras based on evidence and professional knowledge.*

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. *The cameras could all be retained in their current locations, but the balance of evidence is that there are certain cameras that could be better located.*
- 4.2. *The Council could choose to stop all provision of CCTV cameras, as the primary users of the cameras are the police. This is discounted as the Council does have a role in relation to community safety and has historically funded the cameras.*
- 4.3. The Council could choose not to take on any of the cameras that the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation are looking to stop funding. This is rejected as it would leave a large gap in provision in Letchworth that would not be consistent with the other towns.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The police and the CCTV control room managers have been heavily involved in constructive discussions on where cameras can be removed (due to low usage and low incidences on crime) or where there is a recommendation that a new camera should be installed. These discussions made use of crime discussions, CCTV camera activations and also local knowledge and experience.
- 5.2. Following that initial work the proposals were discussed with those North Herts Members that make up the CCTV Joint Executive. They listened to the evidence from the discussions and determined which proposals should be taken forward.
- 5.3. For the proposal in relation to Knebworth, the two Ward Members were e-mailed to ask their views. Cllr Nash responded to confirm that the proposal made sense.
- 5.4. For the proposals that relate to car parks, the Executive Member (and Deputy) covering parking were consulted. The Executive Member confirmed that they were content with the proposals.
- 5.5. For all the other proposals, the Area Committees were consulted via the Chair of each Committee. For Baldock and District (where there is no Chair) all members of the Committee were written to directly by the Service Director: Resources.

- 5.6. One Baldock member asked if the coverage of Pepper Court could be improved. There is not a way to use existing locations to get better coverage, although both ends of the road are covered. From a community safety perspective there are not many issues in that area, but this will be kept under review and could look at mobile camera deployment.
- 5.7. One Hitchin member suggested that there should be an increased number of cameras in Woodside Car Park. They also reported some concerns from residents about safety in Biggin Lane and Portmill car parks. They noted that this could be achieved through use of mobile cameras to provide a targeted response.
- 5.8. Royston Committee supported the addition of a camera at Priory Memorial Gardens. They also made suggestions of where mobile cameras could be deployed. These will be reviewed by the community safety team.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 6th September 2022.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The Council currently has the following CCTV cameras:
 - 43 town centre cameras, that are monitored on a proactive basis
 - 16 cameras in the Council's two multi-storey car parks (in Letchworth and Hitchin), which are monitored on a reactive basis
 - 5 cameras covering green space and Council buildings, which would be monitored on a reactive basis
 - 5 mobile cameras which can be used to target locations with crime issues, which are monitored on a reactive basis
- 7.2 The Council's cameras are monitored by a control room based in Stevenage, through the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership. The Partnership is made up of East Herts Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, North Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council.
- 7.3 This project was first identified as part of a budget review process which noted the amount that was spent on CCTV, and wanted assurance that this money was being well spent in ensuring that the level of coverage was right.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. This work has involved input from the Council's Community Safety team, Police and the CCTV Control Room Managers. It has made use of various data sources including police crime data, camera incident logs maintained by the CCTV control room and locations mentioned in the VAWG (Violence against Women and Girls) Personal Safety Survey. It also made use of local knowledge from those involved. A detailed meeting was held to compare the data sources with current camera locations (which can be found on the CCTV partnership website <https://www.hertfordshirecctv.co.uk/public-space-cctv-coverage/>). The review only considered cameras that are funded by the Council. So it excludes the cameras along Coombes Hole in Royston which are funded by the County Council. It also initially excluded the cameras in Letchworth that are funded by the Heritage Foundation.

- 8.2. At a meeting in October, the Chief Executive of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation informed us that they were planning to cease their investment in CCTV cameras in Letchworth town centre. The Heritage Foundation's income had been considerably affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and they need to identify ways to reduce their costs. They did not feel that investment in CCTV was aligned to their core objectives, does not provide them with value for money, that they already provide town centre funding via Letchworth BID and they feel that the cameras would be funded by the Council in other towns (i.e. there is no additionality). The CCTV cameras had originally been linked to capital funding provided by Hertfordshire County Council to improve Letchworth town centre. When the Heritage Foundation approached the County Council, they agreed that the passage of time since that funding was provided, meant that any previous obligation around CCTV could be brought to an end. Hertfordshire County Council said that the Heritage Foundation should consult with us (District Council) and the police. The meeting in October formed the start of that consultation, and a subsequent meeting was arranged with the police to form the consultation with them. It was stated that Heritage Foundation intend to end/ reduce their funding from June 2023. The initial Officer response was to ask if the Heritage Foundation would be willing to continue some form of ongoing contribution. The response was that this would be considered.
- 8.3. The Letchworth Heritage Foundation currently fund 12 cameras in the centre of Letchworth. These are generally the cameras that are on inside the area bordered by Station Road, Norton Way South, Gernon Road and Broadway. The exceptions to this are:
- The camera at the north end of Broadway Gardens (District Council funded camera)
 - The camera at the junction of Gernon Road and Gernon Walk (District Council funded camera)
 - The camera on Norton Way South, overlooking Howard Park (taken on by District Council, previously funded by Heritage Foundation)
 - The camera at the junction of Station Road and The Wynd (being decommissioned, previously funded by Heritage Foundation)
 - The cameras in the multi-storey car park (District Council funded cameras)
- 8.4. The table below (table 1) summarise the proposals from the officer discussions, that have been confirmed by the Members of the CCTV Joint Executive as being appropriate to be considered by Cabinet. Each camera (and locations where there was not currently a camera) was discussed in the context of police data, CCTV control room camera activation data and local knowledge. In general cameras were found to be in the right locations, so these summaries only cover cameras where a decision is sought. Where a camera is proposed to be removed it is because the data and intelligence does not support their being a camera in that location. In some cases this is because the camera was covering a building (e.g. a public house) that is no longer used for the same purpose. For the proposed camera removals in car parks it reflects that theft from parking machines (as they hold less cash due to changes in payment methods) and from cars, are much less likely.
- 8.5. Data from the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) survey was also considered. This helped influence a number of decisions about retaining cameras (e.g. Hitchin Train Station, Baldock Train Station and Ransoms Recreation Ground, Hitchin) and the addition of a new camera (Windmill Hill, Hitchin). For the other key areas identified by

the survey it was considered that CCTV cameras would not provide a practical solution. This was the case for:

- Greenway, Letchworth- impractical to cover the whole Greenway due to size and most of it is rural (no power for a CCTV Camera and no lighting).
- Jackmans Estate, Letchworth- based on police information the areas where there would be concerns would be the areas that are unlit, so would be a much bigger project involving the County Council.
- Norton Common, Letchworth- impractical to cover the whole area due to size and due to it being open space (generally no power for a CCTV Camera and no lighting).

8.6. The review has also considered that the majority of our cameras are relatively old. This means that better technology (including the move to digital cameras) is now available, which generally means better picture quality from further away. For example, it might be possible to get similar coverage from one camera, instead of the existing two cameras. The other advancement in technology is how the cameras are linked back to the control room. For our current cameras they each have an individual data link to send the pictures to the control room (and allow the control room to move the camera). Modern cameras that are sited close together can send pictures wirelessly and use fewer data links. As detailed in section 10, data links are fairly expensive so this can generate savings.

Table 1

Proposal detail	Reason	Likely Impact on camera numbers
New camera on Windmill Hill, Hitchin	Identified in VAWG survey. Congregation point for protests.	+1
Removal of camera at Portmill Lane car park	Reduction in crime in car parks	-1
Removal of camera at Biggin Lane car park	Reduction in crime in car parks	-1
Removal of camera on Bancroft near Orford Lodge surgery, Hitchin	Sufficient coverage from other cameras in the area	-1
Woodside Car Park, Hitchin	Initial conversations were that (in line with the proposals on other car parks) the current camera would not be justified, based on crime and CCTV activation data. However proposal is to retain based on concerns that have been raised with Councillors. However there is not a justification to add another camera.	0
Removal of camera at south end of Broadway Gardens, Letchworth	Events on Broadway Gardens take place at the north end (where there also a camera)	-1
Removal of camera on Gernon Road, Letchworth	Used to cover a pub that is no longer there	-1
Confirm taking on of camera covering Howard Park, Letchworth	This was a camera that the Heritage Foundation (prior to current proposal to stop all CCTV funding) determined was not necessary. The Council took it on as a temporary measure as it provides some coverage of Howard Park, and it is a known	0 (as already included in camera numbers)

	location for anti-social behaviour. Proposal is that this camera is taken on permanently but to look at moving it to provide better coverage of the park area.	
Removal of camera at Hillshott car park, Letchworth	Reduction in crime in car parks	-1
Removal of camera on Radburn Way, Letchworth	Used to cover a pub that is no longer there	-1
Additional camera on Letchworth Road (near pubs), Baldock	Police felt that due to pubs in the area, there are a number of incidents and no current coverage. From a community safety perspective there are not many issues. To further review coverage from existing cameras prior to installing.	Possibly +1
Removal of camera at Twitchell Car Park, Baldock	Reduction in crime in car parks	-1
Look at options for one camera (rather than 2) to cover the middle of the High Street, Baldock	There are currently two cameras at the southern end of the High Street (one by the library and one by Mansfield Road). To see if can get sufficient coverage from one camera rather than two. This reflects the lower number of incidents at this end of the High Street. Feasibility will depend on whether trees block the view.	Possibly -1
Additional camera in Priory Memorial Gardens, Royston	Identified as a location where there are incidents and anti-social behaviour	+1
Remove both cameras in Knebworth	Based on crime and other data, there is not justification for the cameras to be there. The provision is inconsistent with other villages. Depending on total costs, would allow an increased investment in mobile cameras. These would then be used to target issues across the District, including in Knebworth (if/ when they arose). A mobile camera (if/ when needed) could be sited where the current fixed cameras are located.	-2
Remove camera at Baldock Bowls Club, Baldock	Not justified to retain based on crime and other data	-1 (reactive camera)
Remove camera at Grange pavilion, Letchworth	Not justified to retain based on crime and other data	-1 (reactive camera)
Ransoms Recreation Ground, Hitchin	As this is used as a walkthrough, there is justification to retain. Camera would need replacing ASAP, as it can't currently be controlled by the control room..	0
Hitchin Rugby Club/ King George V Recreation Ground, Hitchin	To retain cameras in the area to provide coverage of the green space. To stop providing coverage of the buildings which are the responsibility of the	Assume 0 financial impact

	Rugby club. To work with the Rugby Club to get the best arrangement for bot of us.	
Adopt Letchworth Heritage Foundation cameras	Take on the funding of the Letchworth cameras when the Heritage Foundation ceases funding them. Seek an ongoing contribution from the Heritage Foundation. Rationale for taking them on is that otherwise coverage would be inconsistent with other towns. The locations of the cameras is generally consistent with assessed need based on crime data, CCTV camera activations and other local knowledge. The exact locations will be reviewed to see if more modern cameras would allow equivalent coverage with fewer cameras. As per paragraph 8.6 this is likely to be an area where savings can be made on the number of data links.	Up to +12
Additional mobile cameras	In principle want to have additional mobile cameras, but the number will depend on affordability (see below).	TBC (up to 5)

8.7. The above table totals a cumulative impact on camera numbers as follows (noting some uncertainty in relation to some of the removals/ additions):

Table 2

	Proactively monitored cameras	Reactively monitored fixed cameras	Mobile cameras
Current numbers	43	21	5
Additions	15	0	TBC
Removals	-11	-2	0
Revised numbers	47	19	TBC

8.8. Subject to Cabinet agreeing to the proposals above, the next stage would be to have more detailed conversations with the CCTV Control Room managers. This would allow us to determine the following:

- The exact location of any new cameras, and the capital costs of those new cameras
- As we would then have confirmation of which cameras are being retained, a plan (including capital costs) for the upgrading of those cameras to ensure they remain fit for purpose. This would initially focus on those cameras where there could be ongoing cost benefits from making changes (e.g. by reducing number of cameras through more efficient coverage or by reducing numbers of communications links). Initial reviews have found that 6 cameras in Hitchin have line of sight between them, which could mean a reduction of 5 data links (at £600 each). Similarly in Letchworth there are two sets of cameras (assuming adoption of Heritage Foundation cameras) that seem to have line of sight links. The approach for existing Heritage Foundation cameras will be considered but will not be fully implemented until the time when the Heritage Foundation stop funding those cameras.
- Overall it should be expected that all the cameras will need replacing (capital cost) within in the next couple of years, and this will be added to

the capital programme as soon as the costs are known. The capital programme will be subject to approval by Council (as part of the Investment Strategy report) in February.

- 8.9. Following the work above it will then be possible to determine the ongoing cost of CCTV provision to the Council (see section 10 for details of how costs are calculated). This will then determine if there is any available remaining revenue budget for the provision of additional mobile cameras. Note that these will also have a capital cost.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet's terms of reference at 5.6.4 include "[t]o exercise the Authority's duty in Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to reduce crime and disorder". The provision of, and in turn the placement of, CCTV cameras contributes to that aim.
- 9.2 There is no direct statutory duty requiring the provision and management of CCTV by local Councils. However, the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 requires each authority to exercise its functions to prevent crime and disorder; and the Council has, in part fulfilment of this, operated a CCTV service through the Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council has a revenue budget of £164k in relation to the provision of CCTV cameras. The main components of the revenue costs of the cameras are the data links (typically £600 per camera per year) and the monitoring and maintenance costs.
- 10.2 The monitoring and maintenance costs are paid to Stevenage Borough Council as they host the CCTV control room on behalf of the CCTV Partnership. The total costs of the CCTV control room are shared between Herts CCTV Partnership Ltd (a company to allow the sale of CCTV services to third parties) and the partners. In very broad terms the costs are shared between the various parties based on number of cameras. However there is a difference depending on whether the cameras are proactively or reactively monitored. The CCTV Joint Executive Committee makes decisions on how charges are calculated.
- 10.3 A proportion of the costs of the control room are fixed, so growth in camera numbers generally means that the cost per camera decreases. Due to growth in camera numbers from other Councils, it is estimated that it may be possible to manage costs within the existing budget, including the possibility of being able to afford some additional mobile cameras. This will be affected by the results of the discussions detailed in paragraph 8.8. It will also be affected by negotiations with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation over what they can continue to contribute to the cost of CCTV cameras. Recommendation 2.3 therefore allows this work to take place and then provide delegated authority as to the number of new mobile cameras that can be afforded.
- 10.4 The Council's CCTV cameras have not been replaced for a number of years, and a number of them are getting towards the end of their life. The replacement of cameras has been paused whilst this review has been taking place, as there would be no point ending up replacing a camera to then find out it was not needed. A replacement programme will now be worked out (see paragraph 8.8) and this will be used to add relevant amounts to the capital programme. Modern permanent cameras cost around

£2.5k each, whilst an additional mobile camera would cost around £6k. Replacing all the (proposed) proactively monitored cameras would cost around £120k.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. The effectiveness of CCTV cameras in preventing crime is unclear. It does have a clearer role in detecting and prosecuting crimes. This work has used various data sources to try and ensure that the provision and location of cameras is most effective within the available budget. There is the option of deploying mobile cameras, especially to address any short-term issues.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report, although paragraph 8.5 notes that VAWG survey data was used in considering the location of CCTV cameras.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no direct HR implications on Council staff arising from this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 *None.*

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 *None*