

Report to:	TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Mr John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser (Scrutiny)
Date of Meeting:	6 October 2021

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF CCTV

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update on the work undertaken by scrutiny members on the review of Blackpool's CCTV Infrastructure.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the update, the recommendations made and identify any further work to be undertaken on the CCTV.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of ongoing work.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 On 27 July 2021, Members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities (TEC) Scrutiny Committee held a Review Panel meeting to consider the future of CCTV in Blackpool.

- 6.12 To support the new digital CCTV cameras being purchased as part of the improvements to the network infrastructure, fibre cable had been built into the masts on which the cameras were mounted.
- 6.13 The new cameras offered a significant improvement over the existing analogue versions currently in use across Blackpool. This included improvement in the quality of the image taken. The new cameras would also be supported by new Internet Protocol (IP) Technology that allowed greater information and timelier sharing with partners, including the Police.
- 6.14 It was also noted that greater use of CCTV would potentially generate risks in relation to personal data under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Therefore the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer had been involved throughout the development of the proposed improvements to ensure that they were GDPR compliant.
- 6.15 CCTV Services and Development
- 6.16 In September 2021 the Executive would be asked to consider the decision relating to the improvement of CCTV infrastructure. At present the core network in Blackpool Town Centre consisted of 53 columns with 56 analogue cameras, the proposals to be considered would increase this to 59 columns with an increase in cameras to 289, all of which would be digital. This would give each column multiple cameras allowing a 360 degree coverage on the area surrounding them.
- 6.17 It was also proposed that the number of public information speakers, attached to columns, be increased from the 32 currently installed to 105. These would allow the broadcast of information to the public in the event of an emergency incident and would assist in the deterrence of crime and disorder.
- 6.18 Blackpool Council also had a number of cameras at its office buildings and depots and work had begun to identify which of these should be upgraded to digital.
- 6.19 Going forward Mr Blackledge informed the Review Panel that following the upgrade of core CCTV infrastructure there would be a need for a borough wide review to consider where the remaining existing analogue cameras were located and where new cameras needed to be installed.
- 6.20 The installation of new CCTV in Staley Park was also highlighted, but it was noted that this was not included in the proposals being submitted to the Executive. Instead it had been paid for through grant funding applications.

6.21 Future Working – Integrated Approach

6.22 The new digital recording of CCTV in Blackpool was supported by Lancashire Constabulary as it would support their move to a Digital Evidence System.

6.23 Under current arrangement analogue CCTV images could only be shared via DVD, which had to be downloaded and physically delivered to the Police. This could lead to delays in the sharing of information. Digital CCTV infrastructure would remove the need for physical copies of CCTV images to be produced and speed up the sharing of such information allowing the Police to investigate incidents faster.

6.24 The Council's Public Protection (PP) team would also make use of the new infrastructure to monitor anti-social behavior and problematic activities such as professional begging. The Committee was also informed that the PP team had also used CCTV evidence to prevent child abuse and monitor the behavior of licensed premises. This emphasized that the new equipment would allow the collection of higher quality evidence to support PP work.

6.25 As a result of this all PP staff would be trained in the use of the new digital system to allow 24 hour coverage of the town centre.

6.26 It was also planned that the Council would seek to acquire a CCTV van to be deployed as needed at events or in areas where issues had been reported. Under current arrangements the Council was reliant on the use of a Police vehicle and therefore dependent on its availability for Blackpool. A Council owned and operated vehicle would allow improved public safety at events and contribute to reducing crime and disorder.

6.27 Future Working - Counter-Terrorism

6.28 The impact of the Manchester Arena Bombing had highlighted the important role that CCTV can play in counter-terrorism. In response to the report published following the inquiry into the bombing, Blackpool Council had undertaken a workshop with partners to identify the blind spots in its network and identified a need to expand the training offered for use of the CCTV system. Additional learning had also been gained from an exercise with the Police on how to respond to a terrorist incident. Action identified had included building links with shops and pub watch networks to ensure they were involved in counter-terrorism planning.

6.29 The installation of additional speakers on CCTV columns will also allow for better provision of information and warnings to the public in the event of an incident. An improved partnership response could also be provided by the establishment of the Command Centre at the Town Hall as part of the CCTV control room. The command centre would further be supported its proximity to the Council's IT infrastructure and

the presence of Police and other partners based in the Town Hall.

- 6.30 The Council was also working to implement the protect duty established by “Martyn’s Law” whereby it has responsibility to ensure that reasonable counter terrorism and safety procedures were in place in public spaces.
- 6.31 Future Working – Large Scale Events
- 6.32 When Large Scale Events are held it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that they are conducted in a safe and secure manner.
- 6.33 The current analogue CCTV system coverage is insufficient for all the public spaces in central Blackpool, and limited staffing resources within the events team presents challenges when covering large outdoor events. The proposed digital system would allow greater coverage of all the areas where large scale events take place. This included the ability to use Blackpool Tower to provide a birds-eye view of events, giving CCTV operators the ability to respond quicker to incidents and provide detailed information to Council staff on the ground.
- 6.34 The new system would also assist in the monitoring of protests that take place, some of which can include a large number of people. During these there is a potential risk to Police and Council staff from protestors. The new system will therefore allow real-time monitoring of events taking place and allow CCTV operators to direct resources to where they are needed.
- 6.35 The Review Panel queried if the new system would be integrated with partners CCTV during large scale events, such as that on Blackpool Transport Services (BTS) buses and trams. In response it was explained by Mr Pope that ‘Martyn’s Law’ would impact all those involved in supporting an event and that a whole-town holistic view was needed. It was added that work was underway to engage more partners, such as BTS, in Blackpool’s Counter Terrorism Group.
- 6.36 It was also asked if any consideration had been given to the use of drones to provide CCTV at events, removing the need for reliance on columns and the Tower. Mr Pope replied that restrictions on the civilian use of drones and their limited flight time made their use impractical for monitoring events. However it was added that the Police and Fire Service had drone capabilities that could be used in an emergency and would share their data with the Control Centre.
- 6.37 Future Working - Safer Streets and Volunteer Development
- 6.38 The Review Panel was informed that Blackpool had progressed to round three of the Safer Streets funding. The application for this funding had been undertaken through the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and would support safer routes to and from

car parks, improved public safety, protecting businesses, suicide prevention and women's safety.

6.39 As part of this the Council was working with Women's Aid to have volunteers support the work in the CCTV Control Room and monitoring of green spaces in Blackpool.

6.40 Funding

6.41 Mr Blackledge reported that discussions had taken place with the Director of Resources and revenue funding to support the services involved in CCTV work had been identified and would be monitored going forward. In addition to this, £1.2 million in capital funding was expected. Money generated from Town Centre development would also be sought to contribute towards CCTV infrastructure.

6.42 Review Panel Comments

6.43 The Review Panel welcomed the information provided and raised a number of queries regarding CCTV.

6.44 The need for a communications strategy to support improvements to CCTV was raised by the Review Panel. Mr Blackledge responded that work was underway to agree a plan that supported and improved public understanding of the system in Blackpool and its role in public safety.

6.45 Members also highlighted that there was an opportunity for Blackpool to lead on CCTV improvements along the Fylde Coast, including commercial opportunities to promote the new infrastructure to the private sector. It was asked that this be taken into consideration when future CCTV work was undertaken.

6.46 The ongoing maintenance cost of the new infrastructure was queried by the Review Panel. Mr Blackledge replied that the ongoing maintenance cost was initially expected to be £100k, however this was expected to increase as improvements were made across Blackpool. He added that this would be monitored going forward. It was therefore further queried if the Police and Business Improvement District (BID) could provide funding to support the new infrastructure. In response it was explained that the BID had already provided some funding, but that it was difficult of the Police to release their capital funding. Therefore funding had been sought from the PCC.

6.47 The ability of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) to use the system was also queried. Chief Inspector Hannon replied that a discussion had taken place regarding the integration of PCSOs with the system and that he had reviewed the Council's CCTV proposals and supported them.

- 6.48 Members of the Review Panel also discussed whether 24 hour operation of the CCTV Control Room would be introduced. Mr Brown replied that 24 hour operation was not intended as it was not practical as it was primarily operated by volunteers, although it was planned coverage would be increased going forward. Mr Blackledge added that staffing levels were also determined on a basis of need to ensure it operated at peak times, such as during events.
- 6.49 The Panel however noted that despite the presence of existing CCTV cameras on central drive, prostitution remained an issue, and asked how more cameras would improve this situation. Mr Hannon replied that the issue was how partners used the information provided by CCTV and that more data would influence the approach taken, noting different approaches could be undertaken.
- 6.50 It was also queried if the cost and number of cameras to be installed had been set. Mr Blackledge responded that the numbers outlined had been an estimate and that they could change as a result of the procurement process, but that 360 degree coverage would be sought for each column. It was further asked if cameras at other Council owned property such as the sports centre would be installed. Mr Blackledge explained in response that CCTV outside of the core network in the Town Centre would be reviewed after the infrastructure had been improved. As part of the review, existing coverage and the potential of new sightings would be considered. He added that this would include a risk and impact assessment for any new locations.
- 6.51 Mr Blackledge also confirmed that Scrutiny involvement would be sought as the upgrades to CCTV across Blackpool progressed.
- 6.52 The Review Panel made the following comments regarding the proposals for the core network and future CCTV infrastructure in Blackpool;
- That the TEC Scrutiny Committee feed into the review of the wider CCTV Infrastructure in Blackpool.
 - That the Council ensures that CCTV assets are integrated into the wider fibre network across Blackpool.
 - That commercial opportunities be explored for the CCTV to sell services to the private sector.
- 6.53 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

7.2 Financial considerations:

7.3 The Review Panel was informed that the cost of the replacement of CCTV Infrastructure in central Blackpool and the establishment of a new CCTV Control Room would be approximately £2m.

7.4 The cost of new CCTV Infrastructure across Blackpool would not become clear until the review of existing and new equipment was complete.

8.0 Legal considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Risk management considerations:

9.1 GDPR Risk is discussed at section 6.14 of the report.

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

11.1 There were no sustainability, climate change or environmental considerations raised at the review panel meeting.

12.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.