



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 12 JUNE 2024
Subject	APPROVAL FOR UPGRADING PUBLIC SPACE CCTV PROVISION AND NEW MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS
Wards Affected	Carterton North East, Carterton North West, Carterton South, Witney Central, Witney South, and Chipping Norton.
Accountable Member	Councillor Geoff Saul – Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare. Email: geoff.saul@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Andy Barge – Assistant Director, Communities. Email: andy.barge@publicagroup.uk
Report Author	Andy Barge – Assistant Director, Communities. Email: andy.barge@publicagroup.uk
Summary	This report recommends upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney to high definition digital, together with the installation of five new cameras in Chipping Norton. It further recommends the Council joins the Thames Valley CCTV partnership, with an associated transfer of CCTV assets and operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a ‘single owner’ model; and moving monitoring arrangements to a shared Oxfordshire hub.
Annexes	Annex A – Crime Data
Recommendations	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Endorse the continued need for public open space CCTV in Carterton and Witney and approve extending the scheme to Chipping Norton;2. Approve use of the £255,635 in the draft capital programme Council resolved to approve in February 2024 for upgrading CCTV;3. Note the potential funding shortfall of up to a further £55,000 and the opportunities for meeting this cost;4. Approve joining the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership, with an associated transfer of all CCTV assets and ongoing operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a ‘single owner’ model; and a shared Oxfordshire hub, based in Abingdon, as the new monitoring control room;

	<p>5. Delegate authority to the Interim Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to execute the formal agreements needed to join the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership;</p> <p>6. Approve the funding formula for the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership and delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Communities, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to agree a new funding formula with Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney town councils, and Marriotts Walk and Woolgate shopping centres.</p>
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultation	Engagement with Thames Valley Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the other Oxfordshire districts. Further consultation will take place with Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney town councils, along with Marriotts Walk and Woolgate shopping centres.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) owns and operates a public open space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system in the district, consisting of 63 cameras – 23 covering Witney town centre, 25 in Marriotts Walk shopping centre, 11 at Woolgate shopping centre and four in Carterton.
- 1.2.** The town centre public space CCTV scheme was introduced in Witney town centre in 2002 after the council successfully obtained a Home Office grant. The scheme was expanded to cover Carterton town centre in 2008; and the scheme was upgraded (digitised) and expanded to include Marriotts Walk in 2009.
- 1.3.** Monitoring of West Oxfordshire's cameras takes place at Witney Police station, with the staff employed by Thames Valley Police (TVP) and a service level agreement in place with the Council. Within Oxfordshire, monitoring control rooms are also located in Oxford City, Banbury and Abingdon.
- 1.4.** In late autumn 2018, WODC commissioned CDC Technical Services to undertake an independent review of the public space CCTV systems in Witney and Carterton town centres. This review concluded that, in general the WODC CCTV scheme provides good coverage of the areas being monitored; but the system was in the main, obsolete and there is a significant amount of repeated camera maintenance issues to be addressed. The review went on to suggest the implementation of a digital transmission network, providing the monitoring control room technologies are compatible.
- 1.5.** In setting the 2019/20 budget, Council approved £300,000 capital for investment in CCTV, subject to business case, to upgrade the cameras and replace the monitoring control room equipment.
- 1.6.** In March 2020, Cabinet approved a CCTV compliance policy, ensuring we meet the Surveillance Camera Commissioner Code of Practice.

2. IS THERE A CONTINUED NEED FOR CCTV?

- 2.1.** Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to do all they reasonably can to prevent:
 - a. Crime and disorder in their areas, including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment
 - b. The misuse of drugs, alcohol or other substances
 - c. Reoffending in their areas
- 2.2.** The use of a CCTV system to help meet this duty includes detection; deterrence; self-discipline – by potential victims and potential offenders; and acting as a capable guardian. Routine activity theory, which looks at crime from an offender's point of view, suggests that for a crime to be committed there must be a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian. Any act that prevents the convergence of these elements reduces the likelihood of crime.
- 2.3.** The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 introduced the regulation of public space surveillance cameras in England and Wales. As a result, the Secretary of State, under Section 30 of the Act, issued the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. The code of practice details that a CCTV system must always be for a specified purpose which is in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary to meet an identified pressing need, which might include:

- a. national security
- b. public safety
- c. the economic well-being of the country
- d. the prevention of disorder or crime
- e. the protection of health or morals
- f. the protection of the rights and freedoms of others

- 2.4. The [Strategic Intelligence Assessment \(SIA\)](#) for Oxfordshire shows that West Oxfordshire has the lowest total recorded crime in the county, but the greatest increase has been for stalking and public order offences. An overview of crime data is shown at Annex A.
- 2.5. At its October 2021 meeting, after considering a notice of motion on violence against women, Council resolved to do everything in its power to build a District free from harassment and violence against women and girls. Continued provision of public open space CCTV supports this.
- 2.6. Crime density maps, together with local knowledge, and when considered alongside the legitimate aims in the commissioner's code and our duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, provide the evidence base to support the continuation of a CCTV system. They further suggest an extension of the system to include Chipping Norton, as well as covering Carterton and Witney, could be beneficial – a view supported by Thames Valley Police.

3. CAMERA OPTIMISATION

- 3.1. Before starting a camera replacement programme and in line with the commissioner's code and our local policy, a review of all existing camera locations has taken place, for five reasons:
- a. To make sure the legitimate aim is still relevant and take account of any effect on individuals through privacy impact assessments
 - b. In addition to considering crime density maps, we can overlay reported crimes with existing camera locations and these 'heat maps' can help inform future camera placement
 - c. Technology and subsequent image quality has advanced significantly, meaning we may need fewer cameras to achieve the same, or better, coverage. This could reduce the ongoing costs, without compromising public safety
 - d. Changes in public realm and infrastructure may suggest alternative locations
 - e. A few deployable wireless CCTV cameras may be beneficial for addressing shorter-term needs.
- 3.2. This exercise was undertaken by an industry expert and provides a map of where and why (legitimate aim) for each proposed camera location, using the reasons listed below:
- To detect and prevent crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour
 - To deter theft and criminal damage
 - To help people feel safe and support the nighttime economy
 - To assist with vehicle recognition involved in crime

3.3. Details captured in the review's report include:

- a. An assessment of each of the existing camera locations within the current public open space CCTV scheme, along with recommendations for each location
- b. The mapping of existing and new camera locations in accordance with available crime statistics
- c. Recommendations for improvement of coverage – including the use of additional locations, the removal of locations and/or the relocation of camera locations
- d. Existing and future technology considerations, including:
 - i. the re-use of existing camera technology
 - ii. the requirements for upgrade of the existing transmission network
 - iii. the requirements for control room systems upgrade
 - iv. the different types of ANPR camera technology
 - v. the use of deployable cameras and considerations for using them
 - vi. the use of video analytics and the potential use of data gathered by cameras

3.4. All cameras have been mapped using the online mapping tool, Scribble Maps. This tool has allowed the field of view for each of the existing cameras to be mapped to allow for easy observation of the total coverage. An example is shown below:



3.5. The resultant recommendations of this coverage mapping suggest two cameras can be removed, six relocated and three new locations added in Witney.

3.6. The scope of the review also included investigating the requirements for the installation of public open space CCTV in Chipping Norton, with the general operational requirement to provide coverage to the main pedestrian and parking areas of the town as well as provide coverage of the main roads through the town.

3.7. A survey of the town was undertaken, supported by a TVP local police sergeant and identified five potential positions for new cameras that would achieve the main coverage requirements:

- Outside the front of the Town Hall at the A44 junction of New St,
- Outside the rear of the Town Hall at the junction with High St (Top Row),
- On High St (Top Row) outside WH Smith,
- On High St/A44 outside Crown & Cushion Hotel,
- On Market St (Bottom Row) outside 19 Market St

4. UPGRADING TO HIGH-DEFINITION DIGITAL CAMERAS

4.1. A comprehensive proposal has been obtained from the Council's appointed CCTV maintenance contractor for upgrading all existing cameras to high definition (HD) digital, with an upgraded transmission network, where necessary, and using wireless technology where possible. The hybrid solution makes use of some of the existing cameras, which already have HD technology and has been fully designed and costed.

4.2. It allows for three additional cameras in Witney, five new cameras for Chipping Norton and the relocations in Carterton, as identified in the camera optimisation exercise. The hardware specified includes a mix of static, multi-sensor and pan, tilt, zoom cameras and all are latest generation featuring full artificial intelligence capability.

4.3. All the cameras specified are fully compatible with the existing monitoring control room technology, which was upgraded to Genetec digital in October 2022 following a critical failure of the obsolete analogue equipment.

4.4. The headline cost summary for the proposed full upgrade to HD digital cameras is £287,969. Of this required capital expenditure, £229,549 would allow for all existing cameras to be upgraded and £58,420 would be needed for the proposed new cameras.

4.5. The Chipping Norton proposal makes no allowance for any civil works required, such as heavy-duty lighting columns for mounting some cameras, or a cabinet-based CCTV column. It is therefore suggested a contingency of around 10% be added to the total cost, bringing the budget required to upgrade to HD digital to £310,635.

4.6. Of the original £300,000 approved by Council in 2019/20 for capital investment in CCTV, £255,635 remains, after upgrading the control room in 2022. Executive is asked to approve the use of this balance, which formed part of the draft capital programme Council resolved to approve in February 2024.

4.7. Executive is further asked to note the potential funding shortfall of up to £55,000 and the steps that will be taken, in priority order, to address this:

- a. Undertake a value engineering exercise to reduce the capital expenditure needed
- b. Await the outcome of a bid to the Safer Streets Fund for £25,000, as part of a continuation of a project to reduce violence against women and girls. The outcome of this bid is unlikely to be known until November 2024.
- c. Seek a contribution from Thames Valley Police given the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner's vision for CCTV described at section 5.1.
- d. Seek contributions from the town councils where new cameras are proposed

- e. Offset some of the additional cost against the ongoing revenue savings that should be achieved by joining the Thames Valley Police CCTV partnership

4.8. Given the 'single owner' model described in the following section, combined with the complexities of a procurement in a niche, technological area, it is recommended the available budget required to implement the upgrade to HD digital is passed to Thames Valley Police, on a phased basis as the required works are completed.

5. SHARED MONITORING CONTROL HUB AND SINGLE OWNER MODEL

- 5.1. Under the current operating model, this Council retains direct responsibility for the public open space CCTV system and its ongoing maintenance. In early April 2022, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner tabled a report to the Police and Crime Panel outlining a new vision for CCTV. This vision recognised that CCTV exists primarily for the benefit of policing and the wider interests of community safety. Therefore, it is right that policing shoulders the lion share of the responsibility for providing the capability, under a 'single owner' model. This single owner model will help to consolidate technology, drive savings through economies of scale, improve integration with police systems and provide increased resilience.
- 5.2. Since 2016, there has been a collective desire between the five Oxfordshire districts and Thames Valley Police (TVP) for a shared Oxfordshire hub control room. Sharing will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring – with more 'real time' monitoring, no lone working, capital investment from TVP and resilience from fail over to another hub with the same monitoring equipment elsewhere within the Thames Valley Police geographic area.
- 5.3. The disadvantages of a shared hub are potential losses of local knowledge and local employment. Any loss of local knowledge at an operator level can be overcome by local viewing capability in Witney police station and in the first instance Witney based staff (already employed by TVP) should have the opportunity to transfer to Abingdon and be able to impart their knowledge on others.
- 5.4. Progress towards a shared hub has been hampered by numerous reasons, but since an Oxfordshire CCTV partnership board was established in 2022 and TVP has employed a CCTV Operations Manager to gain greater traction, the point has now been reached whereby an Oxfordshire monitoring control room, located in Abingdon, is proposed.
- 5.5. This would form part of a Thames Valley Police CCTV partnership, the first phase of which saw the transfer of ownership of CCTV from Milton Keynes City Council and Slough Borough Council to Thames Valley Police. The Abingdon CCTV command suite will be the second phase of the partnership and will bring all current cameras from the Banbury, Witney, and St Aldates control rooms into Abingdon. The suite would be open 7 days a week, with extended opening hours where appropriate e.g. Thursday to Sunday.
- 5.6. In terms of governance, a Board will be put in place to govern the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership, chaired by the Police Crime Commissioner and with attendance from both Thames Valley Police and local authorities.
- 5.7. Joining this partnership arrangement will require ongoing contributions from all partners and based on a partnership funding formula, with 50% of the total partnership costs being met by TVP and the other 50% met by the local authorities (LAs). Of the 50% met by LAs, relative

contributions will be arrived at by considering the percentage of the total cameras between each LA and the Community Safety Partnership Funding Formula between each LA.

Formula Percentages		
Location	% of Cameras	CSP %
Slough	29%	16%
Milton Keynes	13%	27%
Oxford City	12%	15%
South Oxfordshire	12%	10%
Vale of The White Horse	6%	11%
Cherwell	16%	13%
West Oxfordshire	12%	8%
Total	100%	100%

- 5.8. Under this ‘single owner’ model we will transfer all our CCTV assets to Thames Valley Police, and they will assume full operational responsibility for maintaining the assets and associated costs, such as:
- Staffing the shared monitoring hub
 - Maintenance contract for cameras and control room equipment
 - Hardware repairs and replacement – cameras, network infrastructure, control room equipment
 - Software licensing and updates to the video management system
- 5.9. Joining the Thames Valley Police CCTV partnership is contingent on transferring in high quality assets; hence this Council could not join if the cameras were not upgraded to HD digital.
- 5.10. By its nature, public space CCTV cameras are used to solve public space issues, which provide safety and reassurance to the public. Therefore, any partner can request an increase in public space CCTV cameras. This would require agreement at the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership Board in which local feedback and crime statistics would be considered. The requestor of the CCTV camera will bear the capital cost of camera and installation and then be included within the LA’s overall total number of cameras, with an associated uplift in LA contribution as per the funding formula described at 5.6.
- 5.11. This Council would retain responsibility for columns and assets on which the cameras are mounted, electricity to the cameras and any existing rented fibre costs – noting that the upgrade to HD digital will reduce these costs by using wireless transmission, where possible.

- 5.12. The high-level timeline suggests the shared monitoring hub at Abingdon would go live in Q4 2024/25. It is therefore suggested the revenue impact is built into the base budget from 2025-26. Based on figures supplied by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and our own historical spend the new funding arrangements for this Council are projected as:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
TVP CCTV partnership contribution	51,585	53,050	54,450
Electricity	3,500	3,700	4,000
Rented fibre	4,700	4,900	5,100
Repairs and maintenance	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total projected expenditure on CCTV	64,785	66,650	68,550

6. A NEW LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA

- 6.1. At a local level, the current total cost of public space CCTV and its associated monitoring is currently approaching £139,000. Financial contributions from Carterton and Witney town councils, and from Marriotts Walk and Woolgate shopping centres reduce this total and the 2024-25 revenue budget for net expenditure on CCTV to £98,700.
- 6.2. This welcomed support recognises the benefit CCTV brings to the towns and shopping centres, such as detecting and preventing crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour; deterring theft and criminal damage; and helping people feel safe to support the nighttime economy. There has, however, been no parity between the level of financial support provided and the number of cameras in each location. As an example, Carterton town council has contributed £10,000 per annum, with four camera coverage and Witney town council has contributed the same, but with 23 camera coverage.
- 6.3. A step towards addressing this inequity was made when Carterton town council set its 2024-25 precept, however, with any addition of cameras to Chipping Norton and an associated contribution from Chipping Norton town council, it is suggested clear objectivity needs to be brought to relative contributions.
- 6.4. This could be achieved by largely mirroring the Thames Valley Police CCTV partnership funding formula, with 50% of the total cost for West Oxfordshire being met by this Council and the remaining 50% apportioned based on the number of cameras in each location.

Location	Number of cameras	% contribution
Carterton	4	2.9%
Chipping Norton	5	3.6%
Marriotts Walk	25	18.1%
Witney	24	17.4%
Woolgate	11	8.0%
Totals	69	50%

6.5. Using the projected figures shown at 5.12 this translates as:

Contributor	% to pay	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
		61,785	63,650	65,550
West Oxfordshire District Council	50%	32,393	33,325	34,275
Carterton Town Council	2.9%	1,878	1,932	1,987
Chipping Norton Town Council	3.6%	2,347	2,415	2,484
Marriotts Walk Shopping Centre	18.1%	11,736	12,074	12,418
Witney Town Council	17.4%	11,267	11,591	11,922
Woolgate Shopping Centre	8.0%	5,164	5,313	5,464

6.6. Executive is asked to approve the principle of a new local funding formula as set out above and delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Communities, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to agree new funding contributions with Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney town councils, and Marriotts Walk and Woolgate shopping centres.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. Executive could choose to cease provision of this discretionary service, however the case for continued provision of public space CCTV is made at section 2 of this report.
- 7.2. Executive could choose to acknowledge the case for ongoing public space CCTV provision but negotiate a handing over of the service to town councils, with the costs of the new Thames Valley Police CCTV partnership model being met in full by local precepting.
- 7.3. Executive could choose to continue public space CCTV provision and meet in full the costs of the new Thames Valley Police CCTV partnership model.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The proposals in this report require £255,635 capital from the draft programme approved by Council in February 2024. In addition, a further amount up to £55,000 is required to undertake a full upgrade of all existing cameras to HD digital and to install three new cameras in Witney and five in Chipping Norton. The opportunities to address this shortfall are set out at section 4.7.
- 8.2. Accepting that joining the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership is subject to formal approval and signed agreements, the revenue expenditure for the single owner model, combined with a new local funding formula which is fair and transparent, suggests an annual revenue saving in the region of £60,000 could be achieved.
- 8.3. Joining the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership and achieving this revenue saving is contingent on transferring digital control room equipment and new HD digital cameras. The approved capital expenditure of £255,635 and any additional budget requirement therefore represents an invest to save initiative.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Joining the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership, with the associated transfer of assets and future liabilities from this Council to Thames Valley Police will be executed through a formal agreement.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1. Having no public open space CCTV means our duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 may not be met and could also lead to an increase in crime or fear of it.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 11.1. The report raises no specific implications for any particular group or individual. Any future changes to camera locations will be subject to the appropriate privacy impact assessments, compliant with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. The addition of cameras to Chipping Norton should bring a positive impact to public safety and a reduction in crime.

12. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. There are no specific implications arising directly from this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1. No background papers have been identified.

(END)