



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire District Council

Name and date of Committee	Emergency decision by the Chief Executive
Subject	Replacement of CCTV monitoring control room equipment
Wards affected	All Carterton and Witney Central and Witney South
Accountable member	Cllr Geoff Saul, Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Welfare Email: geoff.saul@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andy Barge, Group Manager - Communities Email: andy.barge@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report seeks approval to spend £44,364.94 from the capital programme budget in order to replace the CCTV monitoring control room equipment.
Annexes	Annex A - Crime density maps
Recommendation(s)	<i>It is recommended to approve £44,364.94 from the capital programme for replacement of CCTV monitoring control room equipment.</i>
Corporate priorities (currently subject to consultation and review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong Local Communities• Healthy Towns and Villages• A Vibrant District Economy
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thames Valley Police• Other Oxfordshire districts• Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance and Cabinet Member Housing and Social Welfare• Chief Finance Officer and Council Solicitor

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) owns and operates a public open space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system in the district, consisting of 61 cameras - 57 in Witney and four in Carterton. The town centre public space CCTV scheme was introduced in the town 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.
- I.2** 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.
- I.3** 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:
 - a. In general, the WODC CCTV scheme provides good coverage of the areas being monitored with overlapping camera coverage;
 - b. But, the current system control room and recording technology is old and, in the main, obsolete and there is a significant amount of repeated camera maintenance issues to be addressed;
 - c. The implementation of a digital transmission network utilising the existing private fibre network within Witney town centre is relatively straightforward, cost effective and most importantly can be done on a camera-by-camera basis as required – providing the monitoring control room technologies are compatible
- I.4** In setting the 2019/20 budget, Council earmarked £300,000 capital for investment in CCTV, subject to business case, to upgrade the cameras and replace the monitoring control room equipment.
- I.5** On 20 October 2022 a critical failure of the monitoring, recording and control equipment occurred. Despite the best efforts of the appointed maintenance contractor and the current supplier a permanent repair could not be made due to the obsolescence of hardware and non-supported software version. A temporary work around has been put in place, but with limited functionality. In reality, even if they were able to undertake a successful repair, it would be a matter of weeks / months before another critical failure would occur.
- I.6** As the various component parts of the system interact to form 'one' integrated system, it is not possible to replace one or two parts and get the system up and running. Unfortunately we are at a stage where the major elements of the control room equipment need to be replaced.

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 between 2018 and 2020 has been for stalking and public order offences. Annex A shows crime density maps for the most common offences.
- 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** The 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 and therefore replace the monitoring control room equipment.

3. A SHARED MONITORING CONTROL HUB

- 3.1** 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 TVP hub with the same monitoring equipment in Buckinghamshire.
- 3.2** Progress towards a shared hub has been hampered by a number of reasons, but in the last six months a CCTV partnership board has been established and TVP has employed a CCTV Operations Manager to gain greater traction.
- 3.3** At the CCTV Partnership Board meeting on 24 October the preferred location for the Oxfordshire monitoring hub was confirmed (with the potential to become a hub for the whole Thames Valley Police region). Investing in new equipment will therefore be a step towards this and not an interim measure.
- 3.4** Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Councils have already installed new Genetec equipment in readiness for this, with a view to using a ‘lift and shift’ approach. The Buckinghamshire hub also uses Genetec and this would be the fail over business continuity solution for an Oxfordshire hub, and vice versa.
- 3.5** To ensure future compatibility for the shared hub it is proposed to purchase the minimum amount of Genetec equipment required to provide a basic system to meet our needs, until such a time as the system is enhanced when the shared hub is implemented (envisaged to be from April 2024).
- 3.6** A contract waiver has been approved by the Chief Finance Officer and the Council’s Solicitor for this and a quotation of £44,364.94 received to supply and install the required equipment. Lead time is four to six weeks.

4. NEED FOR AN EMERGENCY DECISION

- 4.1** The £300,000 capital investment in CCTV to upgrade the cameras and replace the monitoring control room equipment was subject to business case. The outline business case will, however, not be available until later in December 2022. To place an order for the works to be completed at the earliest opportunity an emergency decision is needed to approve the funding.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** As detailed in the report, approval is needed for £44,364.94 to upgrade the monitoring control room equipment and reinstate a functional system. This will be funded through the budgeted revenue contribution to the capital programme for 2022/23.
- 5.2** This will be a digital system and will require all of the existing analogue cameras to be upgraded to digital to gain optimum use of the new control room kit. A separate business case will be required for this.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Save from the legal implications stated in the report there are no further legal implications arising directly from the report.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 If the monitoring control room equipment is not replaced then a further critical system failure is extremely likely. Having no public open space CCTV means our duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 may not be met. It could also lead to an increase in the fear of crime, or actual crime.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report as replacing the equipment facilitates a continuation of a current service in the same form

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 New equipment will be more energy efficient leading to a small reduction in electricity consumption.

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 10.1 The decision could be taken to not replace the monitoring control room equipment and cease CCTV provision.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None identified.

(END)