

Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Communities

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Wards affected: Abingdon Abbey North, Abingdon Caldecott,
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To: CABINET

Dates: 28 June 2024

Delivery of Public Space CCTV

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (a) Agree to the proposed approach for the delivery of public space CCTV in the Vale of White Horse
- (b) Authorise the Head of Communities to negotiate and agree the agreement with Thames Valley Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the future provision on public space CCTV making any minor changes they deem necessary, and undertaking and considering any consultation required.

Implications (further detail within the report)	Financial	Legal	Climate and Ecological	Equality and diversity
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Signing off officer	Maggie Xu	Ian Chisnell	Chloe Bunting	Abi Witting

Purpose of report

1. To seek a decision from Cabinet on the proposal to enter the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership and the creation of an Oxfordshire CCTV hub for the future provision of public space CCTV.

Corporate objectives

2. The proposal will help achieve the corporate objective of “Working in partnership”.

Background

3. Vale of White District Council provides public space CCTV across Abingdon and Wantage. This is monitored from a control room based in Abingdon police station which is shared with South Oxfordshire District Council. The district council owns the CCTV equipment and employs the staff who are shared with South Oxfordshire, and we receive an annual financial contribution from Thames Valley Police for providing the service.
4. We currently have five member of CCTV staff shared with South Oxfordshire District Council; one full time supervisor and 3.5 FTE operators. The supervisor role is split between operating the cameras, line management and other duties, so effectively there are four FTE operators. For the majority of the time, operators work alone monitoring all cameras, although at peak times such as Friday and Saturday nights shifts overlap so that two operators will be on duty monitoring all 87 cameras between them. The cameras record footage when the cameras are not being monitored.
5. Vale of White Horse District Council receives a financial contribution from the town councils where public space CCTV is operational. This equates to one third of the district council’s operational costs.
6. The revenue budget for the CCTV for the current year is below.

		2024/25
Expenditure		
	Control room staff salaries	58,516
	Maintenance	10,000
	Electricity	6,270
	BT fibre rental	36,500
Income		
	Town council contributions	-32,000
	TVP contribution	-23,500
Net		52,286

7. There are three other control rooms for public space CCTV for Oxfordshire. These are in Oxford, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, and are based in local police stations and staffed by Thames Valley Police employees. In these areas the cameras and associated monitoring equipment are owned by the local authorities who make an annual contribution to Thames Valley Police towards the operational costs.

The proposal

8. The proposal is to create a Thames Valley CCTV Partnership is to bring all four Oxfordshire control rooms into one with the aim of delivering efficiencies and providing a more resilient service. This will be based in our current location within Abingdon Police Station and will be used to monitor all 285 public space CCTV cameras in the county. Thames Valley Police will take on ownership and maintenance of the equipment and employ the staff. Local authorities will maintain responsibility for the electricity supply to the cameras and the fibre rental costs as well as any columns and assets on which the cameras are mounted. There will be one FTE supervisor and eight FTE operators working shifts and the control room will be open similar hours to our current one. Our CCTV staff will be transferred to Thames Valley Police under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). This process will be managed under the council's organisational change policy.
9. Bringing the current control rooms together will provide benefits to the councils and Thames Valley Police. Having a greater number of CCTV operators will help to provide a more resilient service covering all shifts without the risk of vacancies and absences impacting on service delivery. The proposed costs as outlined below will provide revenue savings for the council and a single maintenance contract that is managed by Thames Valley Police will also reduce the administrative burden on the council.
10. Joining the Partnership will require ongoing contributions from all partners, and it is proposed that the operational costs, excluding the local authority costs outlined in paragraph 8, will be split evenly between Thames Valley Police and the local authorities in the partnership. The local authority cost will be shared between each local authority based on the Community Safety Partnership funding formula for each authority (50%) and the percentage of cameras per authority (50%). The Community Safety Partnership funding formula is based on crime figures and population. The percentage split per local authority is shown in the table below. Slough and Milton Keynes are included in the table as they have already signed up to the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership and have a joint control room in Milton Keynes. Their cameras will not be monitored from Abingdon.

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

11. The partner contributions for the proposed Oxfordshire control room are based on all five city and district authorities in Oxfordshire signing up to the partnership. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is proposing to make additional contributions for 2024/25 and 2025/26 which will result in no financial contributions being required from local authorities for 2024/25, and reduced contributions for 2025/26.

12. The table below shows the total costs for the council under the proposal.

		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Expenditure					
	Hub contributions	0	31,381	45,082	46,279
	Electricity *	6,270	6,395	6,523	6,654
	Fibre rental **	36,500	36,500	36,500	36,500
Income					
	Town council contributions ***	-14,257	-24,759	-29,368	-29,811
	Developer contributions *	-3,500	-3,570	-3,641	-3,714
Net		25,013	45,947	55,096	55,908

* Inflation added at 2% per year

** Fibre rental costs are fixed until August 2027

*** Town council contributions have been calculated as one third of the expenditure

13. The partnership agreement will set out the agreed service that we will receive in return for our financial contribution.

14. Under the proposals a Board will be put in place to govern the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership. This will be chaired by the Police Crime Commissioner with attendance from both Thames Valley Police and Local Authorities and will ensure that all organisations in the partnership are represented.

15. Any partner will be able to request an increase in public space CCTV cameras. This will require agreement at the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership Board in which local feedback and crime statistics will be considered. The organisation making the request will be responsible for the capital cost of the cameras and their installation which will then be included within the local authority's overall total number of cameras.

16. Agreement will be sought with the town councils regarding the continuation of these contributions. As the level of service provided will remain the same, we do not anticipate any changes to the current agreements, other than the reduction in the level of contributions from each town council to reflect the lower cost of the service for the district council.

17. As Thames Valley Police will take ownership of the cameras, future capital costs for replacement cameras will not fall to the district council.

Options

18. One alternative option would be not sign up to the partnership and create our own CCTV control room. This would incur significant capital and revenue costs for the councils. Thames Valley Police have indicated not all five Oxfordshire authorities need to sign up to the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership for the hub to be created.

19. Alternatively, the council could cease to provide public space CCTV. Whilst this isn't a statutory service, provision of CCTV does demonstrate our commitment to our statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent and detect crime and disorder and therefore is not recommended.

Financial Implications

20. There are no capital costs associated with the proposal, and future capital costs for replacement cameras will be borne by Thames Valley Police. Any additional cameras requested by the council would require capital investment.
21. The proposal will provide annual revenue savings for the council as set out in the body of this report.

Legal Implications

22. The council has power under s1 of the Localism Act 2011 to enter into these arrangements.
23. Any arrangement which involves the transfer of staff will engage the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as mentioned below. The local authority is also bound by a directive from Central Government requiring that the pension rights for staff transferred are preserved. This may require the local authority giving a guarantee to the Police authority to ensure continued access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Consideration of that should be factored into any calculation of cost savings.
24. It is not clear who will act as Data Controller in respect of subject access requests or who will be responsible for monitoring data sharing but that can be dealt with in the agreement. Any information gathered could also be subject to Freedom of Information Access request so a mechanism needs to be included to deal with this.
25. If the CCTV is used for directed surveillance s28 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 will be engaged and the agreement needs to consider who will be the authorising authority.

Climate and ecological impact implications

26. Combining the four current controls rooms into one will mean that fewer pieces of equipment are required therefore energy consumption is likely to be reduced. As the council will remain responsible for the electricity to the cameras, we should be able to choose the future tariff (i.e. consider green tariffs) as there won't be any changes to the current arrangements for this.

Equalities implications

27. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and there are no implications identified.

Risks

28. If we do not sign up to the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership there is a risk that the council may not be able to deliver an efficient and resilient CCTV service and not be able to meet our obligations to help prevent crime and disorder under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Other Implications

29. As the staff are employed by the council the process of managing their transfer to Thames Valley Police will be managed following the councils' organisational change policy. The transfer process will take place under TUPE and will include transferring with their current terms and conditions. The proposal will lead to a reduction in the total number of CCTV staff currently working in the four Oxfordshire control rooms. Any restructure of resources will be managed by Thames Valley Police once the staff have transferred. Any redundancy costs will then be borne by Thames Valley Police unless there is an alternative arrangement made under the agreement. Continuity of service would be preserved under the transfer as they are transferring to an approved body under the modification order so any redundancy costs would be calculated based on their full continuous service.
30. As part of the transfer consideration will need to be given to the pension rights of transferring staff and whether or not admitted body status will need to be applied for so the pension contributions can continue into the LGPS. As part of the agreement with Thames Valley Police clarity needs to be sought whether the employer contributions TVP are willing to pay are in line with the current terms of the LGPS otherwise there will be an ongoing obligation for the council to make up the shortfall.

Conclusion

31. In addition to delivering ongoing revenue and future capital financial savings, the proposal for the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership and delivery model for public space CCTV in Oxfordshire will provide a resilient service to help the council meet the statutory responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.