

**Decommissioning Part of the Public Realm CCTV Service**

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| <b>Final Decision-Maker</b>               | Communities, Housing and Environment                       |
| <b>Lead Head of Service/Lead Director</b> | John Littlemore – Head of Housing and Communities          |
| <b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>     | Matt Roberts – Community Partnerships & Resilience Manager |
| <b>Classification</b>                     | Public   |
| <b>Wards affected</b>                     | All  |

**Executive Summary**

This report provides members with an update on reducing the hours of monitoring to 84 hours per week and the consultation undertaken with MaidSafe and Kent Police on the impact of reducing the hours of monitoring, as agreed by the Committee on the 14 February 2017.

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Committee agrees that Option 3 as outlined in paragraph 5.3 is implemented by the Head of Housing & Community Services.

**Timetable**

| <b>Meeting</b>                               | <b>Date</b>      |
|--|------------------|
| Corporate Leadership Team                    | 17 October 2017  |
| Communities, Housing & Environment Committee | 14 November 2017 |

## **Decommissioning Part of the Public Realm CCTV Service**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Following the decision made by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on the 14 February 2017 the number of CCTV cameras was reduced to 33 in order to comply with the Surveillance Camera Commissioners' Code of Practice. This has resulted in the decommissioning of over 50 static CCTV cameras.

The Committee granted delegated authority to the Head of Housing & Communities to consult with Kent Police and MaidSafe in order to explore the impact reducing the hours of monitoring may have but with the aim of reducing the live monitoring to 84 hours per week in order to deliver the savings agreed by Members when setting the Medium Term Financial Strategy in March 2017.

### **1.2 DECOMMISSIONING STATIC CAMERAS**

- 1.3 Following the previous report the number of cameras which remain in operation and are being monitored by the Medway Control Group (MCG) has been reduced to 33. This number was achieved in consultation with key partners (e.g. Police) and is comprised of 28 static cameras which use fibre optics circuits to relay a video feed, 4 mobile cameras which use a wireless telemetry system and a single camera that utilises a wireless link.
- 1.4 The decommissioned cameras have not yet been physically removed as the quote received to carry out this work was in the region of £24,400 (£400 per unit). Removing all of the columns in this way is currently cost prohibitive and may not be the preferred solution. In order to comply with best practice it is proposed to use weather proof covers on each of the cameras whilst an alternative use of the columns (e.g. for use by mobile networks) is explored to ascertain whether a viable income could be generated.

### **2 CONSULTATION ON REDUCTION IN LIVE MONITORING HOURS**

- 2.1 During the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> February this Committee agreed to explore reducing the monitoring hours to 84 per week in order to achieve the savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and to consult with MaidSafe and Kent Police around the potential impact of this reduction.

#### **2.2 MaidSafe Radio Network**

MaidSafe provided the Council with the following information as being their main areas of concern (all of the other information provided has been included within Appendix 1);

- 2.2.1 Peak time for shop theft tends to be late mornings.
- 2.2.2 There is some petty crime after school hours.

- 2.2.3 Large groups of juveniles in the town centre between 15.00 and 17.00.
  - 2.2.4 Anti-social behaviour associated with street drinking tends to occur mid to late morning.
  - 2.2.5 There are fewer recorded incidents on a Sunday.
  - 2.2.6 Night time activity takes place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday between 22.00 and 05.00.
  - 2.2.7 Sunday activity increases on Bank Holiday weekends.
  - 2.2.8 Ideally the desk would be manned from 10.00-17.00 Monday to Saturday and 22.00 to 05.00 on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Some flexibility for additional coverage on Sundays on Bank Holiday weekends and key trading times and events such as Halloween and Christmas would be ideal in particular overnight hours.
  - 2.2.9 A reduction in manned hours beyond this would result in a need for the partnership to adapt to operating with a new Control desk; communication between members could continue but without the key Involvement of CCTV having the visual input this would negatively impact the scheme. We would anticipate that some members would be lost and with them useful intelligence for the businesses and Police. Essentially CCTV is seen as the lynch pin of the Maidsafe partnership.
- 2.3 Moving the 'control' function away from MCG and placing it within an alternative setting, such as The Mall's security office, would ensure that the businesses that use the radio would be answered, with any urgent calls being directed to CCTV to be monitored or the Police if it is an emergency. Otherwise business would be advised to call 101/999.

#### 2.4 Kent Police

Discussion has taken place with the local Chief Inspector and Inspector. Whilst they have raised general concerns about the reduction in live monitoring hours, specific comment could not be made about operational effectiveness until the detail of the proposal was known. The local Police Team are keen to continue to be engaged with development of proposals for the public realm CCTV.

#### 2.5 Conclusion

The reduction in monitored hours is a cause for concern for key partners, although the specific concern about the impact on criminality was unable to be evidenced through statistical data. Both sets of partners would prefer to see a reduced monitoring service than no service at all.

## **4. NEGOTIATIONS WITH MEDWAY CONTROL GROUP**

- 4.1 MCG were unable to provide a solution that would achieve the savings envisaged by the Council's MTFs. MCG's position is that the Local Authority Partnership that exists to provide the CCTV monitoring service from MCG's base is predicated on sharing management resources monitoring CCTV on a 24 hour basis. Should one of the partners decide to withdraw or reduce their monitoring requirement from the Partnership it would potentially put the Partnership's business model at risk.
  - 4.2 An alternative model was proposed by MCG that continues to provide 24 hour monitoring but through a shared desk arrangement. This would result in a reduced cost of £156,747, giving MBC annual savings of £75,688. However, to achieve this new operational model would require the Council to cover the cost of the new infrastructure, which is in the region of £25,000. This model does not achieve the £150,000 saving required over the next 3 years.
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## **5 AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Option 1. Retain the current 24 hour Maidstone-dedicated monitored service for the remaining static cameras – this option is not recommended, as the proposal is not affordable.
  - 5.2 Option 2. Accept MCG's proposal for a merged desk approach as outlined in section 4 above – this option is not recommended as the proposal would not achieve the required saving identified in the MTFs and requires a capital investment that may not be returned on an "invest to save" basis over the period of a rolling contract.
  - 5.3 Option 3. Retender for the CCTV Service for a new 5-year term, setting out as a requirement that the service be delivered within the agreed MTFs budget.
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## **6 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Option 3 is the preferred option, as this permits the Council to go out to the market and seek proposals that may enable other providers of a CCTV monitoring service to come forward with innovative solutions to providing a limited live-monitoring service for the remaining 33 cameras. During the tendering period negotiations will continue with MCG to identify whether an alternative delivery model could be provided through the existing partnership on new terms.

## **7 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 The previous 5 year contract expired on 31 March 2017 and a clause within the agreement to proceed with an annual rolling agreement was triggered by all of the Local Authority Partners. To enable the tendering of

a new service; and to allow discussions to continue with MCG, an extension to the current rolling agreement may be required for an additional period of between 6 and 12 months. This proposal will need to be communicated to our partners and MCG, together with a newly drafted agreement.

## 8 RISK

- 8.1 There is a risk that if the preferred recommendation in the report is not followed the saving identified in the MTFs will not be achieved.

## 9 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue                                 | Implications  | Sign-off                             |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b> | Impact on Corporate objectives were reviewed in the previous report and no empirical evidence exists to demonstrate that the reduction in monitoring hours would have a detrimental impact on keeping Maidstone a clean and safe place. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| <b>Risk Management</b>                | Included within the report  | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| <b>Financial</b>                      | £150,000 of savings are included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the CCTV service. The recommended option sets out a route for delivering these savings.  | Section 151 Officer                  |
| <b>Staffing</b>                       |   |                                      |
| <b>Legal</b>                          | A new agreement is required should the current agreement need to be extended  |                                      |
| <b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>    |   |                                      |
| <b>Equalities</b>                     |   | [Policy & Information Manager]       |

|                           |                             |                                      |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Crime and Disorder</b> | Contained within the report | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| <b>Procurement</b>        |                             |                                      |

## **10 REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: MaidSafe – Information provided as part of the consultation.

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## **11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Provision of a Public Realm CCTV Service – CHE Committee 14 Feb 2017