

Title of Report

Item 9

Protocol for the application and use of re-deployable 3G CCTV

Report for:

Councillor Chris Poulter, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

20 July 2010

Scrutiny Management Commission

21 Sept 2010

Background

Crime and anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods can affect perceptions and feelings of safety for our communities. As part of a suite of measures to tackle these issues, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has invested in mobile overt CCTV technology that is re-deployable and allows remote monitoring over the Internet via the 3G network.

Application for the use and deployment of these cameras can be made by any of the statutory and voluntary partners through a process managed by the CSP's Crime Prevention Team (CPT). All camera applications are then presented monthly before the Partnership Operations Group (POG), for a collaborative decision to be made by the partners based on crime levels, risk and threat, and availability.

The CSP has taken delivery of a number of new cameras from capital under-spends in 2009/10 to compliment those already purchased, following competitive tender, in March 2009.

There is a now a growing need to outline the process for application and management of the equipment so that all partners, including councillors, are aware of the protocol. This will ensure that it is a transparent, equitable and objective process and that there is a clear policy that all parties understand.

Current Resources

The statutory partners in Derby control through the CSP, 10 x wireless (2 of these are specifically for Normanton Ward to replace other mobile cameras, which are now defunct), 3G, Internet accessible, CCTV cameras and the associated hard and software. There are 2 x laptops and 2 x 3G Internet 'dongles' to allow more than one camera to be accessed in an area at any one time. As previously mentioned, these are managed by the CSP's Crime Prevention Team at Cotton Lane police station and deployment decisions are made through the POG. The cameras are deployed within neighbourhoods on a priority basis, and installed onto existing street lighting. This is after consideration of the crime and anti-social behaviour statistics for each area, following a completed Camera Request Form.

A contract exists up to March 2013 for the installation and removal of cameras across the city. There are 72 camera moves per year included within the contract. Also included is 4 years airtime for the Orange 3G network to allow remote operation of the cameras over the

Internet and also 4 years maintenance costs to keep the cameras working to and optimum.

There has been a gradual programme of installing suitable columns and power supplies in usual 'hot spot' crime and anti-social behaviour areas over the years that will take mobile CCTV cameras. Approximately, 80 such columns exist so there is the chance that a request will require no further funding and can proceed quickly should a column and power supply already exist in the required location.

Technical considerations

The installation of a camera will be subject to a technical feasibility survey and consideration given to other factors, such as the built environment and lighting levels, to assess suitability.

The design and size of the column is paramount to an effective installation. A column height of a minimum of 8 metres is required and a suitable power supply will have to be fitted if one does not exist. Typically, this will be an additional cost, which may have to be met by the associated Neighbourhood Board. **NOTE:** No other CSP budget is available to support any installations requiring additional work over and above using columns and power supplies already in situ, as above.

Other considerations are the sight lines available and the risk potentially posed to the equipment. For example, if it is an area within a public park that is surrounded by trees, then the camera may be at greater risk from damage or theft and the risks, therefore, may outweigh the potential benefits. In examples such as this, other crime prevention measures may have to be considered before any CCTV installation will be granted.

Method of applying

The method of applying will be through the completion of the 3G Mobile CCTV Camera Request Form (attached) and this will normally be done by a CSP Community Safety Officer (CSO) or a relevant Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Police officer, or equivalent.

Applications can also be made by any other statutory partnership agency; however, this should still be done in consultation with the appropriate CSO and/or SNT so that crime figures and further evidence can be accumulated to strengthen the case for a camera. This then ensures that each application is considered objectively, along with consideration of other possible interventions, to achieve the best possible result.

Any Request Form for a camera will have been accompanied by a separate Terms & Conditions document. The applying officer will have signed the completed Request Form as well as acknowledging they have read and understood the Terms & Conditions.

Completed applications will be passed to the CPT office for processing at least a week prior to the next POG meeting, wherever possible, so that a decision on the application can be made at the meeting.

Operating protocol

The cameras are controlled via a laptop using a 3G USB Internet access 'dongle'. The laptop and associated equipment is retained at Cotton Lane Police station under the control of the CPT Supervisor. Any requests to access footage should be made to the CPT Supervisor via the CSO for the area where the camera is located.

Footage can usually be accessed for a period not exceeding 15 days as this will be stored within the hard-drive located in the camera housing. After this period the recordings are re-written, starting with the first footage recorded, on a rolling basis. The amount of storage is affected by other circumstances such as the activity and lighting levels being recorded. For this reason it should not be assumed that 15 days will always be available and it is recommended that footage is recovered as soon as it becomes known it may be required.

The officer applying for the camera will normally be responsible for accessing and downloading footage either at Cotton Lane or on a laptop, as agreed with the CPT Supervisor.

It is important for every deployment of a camera that it has been used as effectively as possible to gather evidence and that the recorded footage has been accessed. This will normally be done by the applying officer as part of the agreement of having a camera for the set period.

When a camera subsequently comes up for review (see below), one of the criteria, along with the crime and disorder statistics, will be the amount of use the recorded footage has been subjected to. It is expected that the camera and its recordings will be used throughout the period of deployment when there is potentially evidence of crime and disorder being committed.

Review period

The cameras will normally be installed for a period not less than 28 days from the date of installation. Should there be a need to deploy a camera for an extended period then the person requesting MUST justify its continued deployment by liaising with the Crime Prevention Team Supervisor at least a week in advance of the next monthly POG meeting, providing clear evidence of use and need.

It will be expected during the review of the cameras by the POG that other considerations beyond CCTV have been made and **that use of the cameras is combined with a range of measures to tackle crime and disorder.**

To enable the POG to make reasoned decisions based on crime levels, risk and threat, the applying officer MUST provide evidence with dates and times of incidents together with any other relevant information.

Camera coverage

The coverage area of each camera must be assessed and agreed by the applying officer and through liaison with the CPT Supervisor. There is the option to set each camera on a 'tour' around several locations and this can be discussed at the same time.

The cameras are remotely positioned over the Internet and this can be altered at any time with the full agreement of all parties concerned with the deployment of each camera.

Privacy settings

It is possible to set privacy settings to prevent unauthorised viewing of a certain area. As an example, a bedroom of a house can simply be blocked out remotely through the

programming phase above. It is the responsibility of the applying officer to assess whether or not privacy zones are required and this should be clearly explained to the CPT Supervisor to avoid any claims arising from Data Protection Act or Human Rights Act breaches.

Method and timescales for removal

The method of removal will be as follows:

- The CPT Supervisor will send an email to all interested parties for each camera location, including the applying officer and appropriate CSO, Police SNT Sergeant, Neighbourhood Manager and councillors so that comments relating to its continued deployment can be made. It will be expected that feedback will also be provided swiftly by the same parties should a camera no longer be required. This is an essential part of the process so that the cameras can be used all over the city and their benefit shared as equitably amongst neighbourhoods as possible.
- Following receipt of all correspondence from the interested parties, the CPT Supervisor will forward all replies to the POG for consideration
- Following decisions being reached at the POG, the cameras will either be left in situ or moved according to priority to any other new locations requested through the outlined and agreed process
- Any cameras that are to be relocated will normally be moved within one week of the POG meeting date. This will give sufficient time for the interested parties to liaise with their communities and inform them of the planned move. One of the most difficult issues with re-deployable CCTV is managing the expectations of residents. This is why it is so important for all partners and councillors to be working in partnership to avoid any potential backlash from removing a camera and the adverse publicity this may cause.

Local engagement

It is the responsibility of the applying officer and all other interested parties to liaise with their ward councillors and residents to explain the process surrounding the cameras and their deployment. It is vital that it is explained that they are a TEMPORARY solution and should not be seen as a permanent fixture in a neighbourhood. The very essence of rapid deployment, mobile CCTV is that it is just that, redeployable. There is the risk that some residents will perceive the camera as belonging to their neighbourhood and this should be managed from the outset.

Experience has shown that a lack of public and councillor engagement can cause problems and lessons learned should reflect that communication relating to installation and extraction should be done as early as possible in the process for an agreeable outcome to be met.

This protocol sets out the obligations by each party in the process and it is hoped that by working in partnership, the risks and threats posed by mobile CCTV in relation to public perceptions can be lessened through open and transparent communication channels.