

## **Public Space CCTV**

### **Policy Update**

Public space CCTV plays a significant role in enhancing public safety and reassurance across local communities in Scotland. However, CCTV has been mentioned as an area for disinvestment by local authorities due to ongoing financial pressures.

At this stage much of the CCTV equipment in place is rather dated and increasingly expensive to maintain. Despite being clearly a local matter COSLA is interested in knowing members' views about what they and COSLA should be doing to address the future provision of CCTV.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

This report provides members with an update on CCTV in light of recent media coverage of potential cuts to local CCTV services.

This paper invites members to:

- i. Comment on current local CCTV arrangements;
- ii. Provide views on how CCTV provision arrangements can be improved; and
- iii. Agree COSLA's next steps.

### **References**

Previous reports on topic:

- COSLA Community Wellbeing Executive Group – 16/02/2016

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## Public Space CCTV

### **Policy Update**

1. CCTV can play a significant role in enhancing public safety and confidence across local communities. It is used as a community safety tool by local authorities and the police to prevent and detect crime. CCTV is also used for crowd and traffic management as well as tracking down missing people.
2. With local authorities and Police Scotland working to increasingly tight budgets, CCTV is an area both partners are considering when trying to establish areas where savings can be made. Additional pressures are arising from the older equipment being used. Some being so dated that maintenance is costly, spare parts are hard to come by and they are difficult to manage when they are a mix between digital and analogue systems.
3. Recently the provision of local CCTV service has been subject to media coverage of proposed cuts due to severe budgetary pressures faced by local authorities. The picture being promoted is that the CCTV network is not being adequately resourced with the result that it will gradually close.

### **Current Position**

4. Maintenance and operation of public space CCTV across Scotland is funded predominantly by local authorities and Police Scotland. Across the country there is a great variation in the share of the financial burden between the two although the Police play a significantly smaller role. The management and governance of CCTV, has evolved in many different ways in as a result of the relationship between the various local authorities and the different Police Forces prior to the creation of the single police force.

### **What is Changing?**

5. There is a longstanding belief at a local authority officer level that a thorough modernisation programme is needed, and that a future proofed system would be cheaper to run, more flexible and of greater benefit to others. Modernised CCTV systems, because of their ability to include wireless cameras, can be used much more flexibly with cameras being placed where they are needed at minimal cost.
6. CCTV has two major effects, one of deterrence and the second of gathering evidence. The beneficiaries of deterrence include the NHS – with less violence, Scottish Prison Service – fewer prisoners, housing and town centre management and local businesses – with less vandalism and greater confidence from the public in the safety of their areas. The groups who benefit from its evidential role include; the police (who also benefit from needing less foot patrols), defence and prosecution lawyers, courts and again local businesses.
7. Real benefit though can only be realised if the data is available in digital format. Using analogue, or converting it to digital, is expensive. Also collective practice around data sharing between partners needs to be of a standard that complies with data handling, data sharing and human rights law.

## **Next Steps**

8. Members are invited to provide their views on the current challenges and opportunities they have locally over the provision of public space CCTV. We would also welcome views on the role they see their local authorities playing in the future delivery and governance of public space CCTV. It would also be helpful if members can say if COSLA should be active in any of this.
9. At an officer level COSLA has met with Police Scotland over what they feel we should do next. The Police would like to COSLA to convene a joint working group to address the future provision of CCTV across Scotland, which would inevitably need to cover its future funding and ways that ageing equipment can be replaced and 'future proofed'. The matter has also been marked up as one the Scottish Government would also like to discuss. It would be useful to obtain the views of members on this.
10. Over the next few weeks Cllr Parry, Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing, will meet Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, along with Annabelle Ewing, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs in November to discuss CCTV. Input from Board members would help prepare us on this matter and let us know the extent to which we might want to push the Scottish Government to support the renewal of local CCTV provision.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

11. The report provides members with a brief update on the provision of CCTV and its associated challenges and opportunities.
12. Members are invited to:
  - i. Comment on current local CCTV arrangements;
  - ii. Provide views on how CCTV provision arrangements can be improved; and
  - iii. Agree COSLA's next steps.

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