

Committee: **Places Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **16th January 2024**

Report Subject: **Overview Position of Blaenau Gwent Town Centre CCTV Zones 2023/24**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Andrew Parker, Service Manager: Policy & Partnerships**

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Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	21 Dec 23	08.01.24			16 Jan 23	21.02.24		

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide an overview position on the CCTV for overt surveillance within town centres zones for 2023/24 covering:

- The compliance journey with the relevant legislation and guidance.
- Summary of operating arrangements via the 23/24 Service Level Agreement with Caerphilly Council.
- An overview of performance for CCTV incidents and requests for the first six months of the financial year 2023/24.

This report does not include how the council uses CCTV in other areas i.e. individual buildings/premises, CCTV cameras for services e.g. deployable units, in-vehicle etc.

2. Scope and Background

Our Compliance Journey

- 2.1 In response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its amending legislation, the Council is a lead responsible authority for Community Safety. As such we are required to work in partnership with other key public services to do all we reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.
- 2.2 The provision and use of CCTV is not a statutory service provision but does support us in meeting our role as a responsible authority. In Blaenau Gwent, the Council became the 'system owner' of CCTV in the early 2000's.
- 2.3 The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (POFA) introduced the regulation of public space surveillance cameras, and a commissioner was appointed. The Council must have due regard to the 'Surveillance Camera Code of Practice', developed with the Information Commissioner's Office, which aims to balance the need for cameras in public places with individual's right to privacy.
- 2.4 To help us in doing this, we operate our own local area focused Code of Practice, [Appendix 1]. This has been updated for 2023/24 taking into

consideration relevant changes as we have moved into a new operating arrangement with Caerphilly Council via a Service Level Agreement (SLA). It also reflects our related requirements of the Data Protection Act/General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018.

- 2.5 To support these overarching requirements, we also carry out an annual Data Protection Impact Assessment Process (DPIA), whereby consideration is given to the pressing need for the use of CCTV. This process considers our existing infrastructure, and in 2023/24 has been further strengthened to engage key stakeholders i.e. elected members (sessions held on 30 Nov 2023) and local policing colleagues (6 Dec 2023).
- 2.6 The findings of the DPIA process are captured in six zone DPIAs documents, which are considered and agreed, and where appropriate actioned, via the CCTV SIRO quarterly meeting, which is chaired by the Chief Finance Officer, as the Senior Information Risk Owner. This process is typically concluded in the 4th quarter of a financial year with any action taken thereafter, should any changes or improvements be identified.

Summary of operating arrangements for CCTV

- 2.7 Since the summer of 2023 the Council's day-to-day operating arrangements for CCTV has moved to Caerphilly Council via a two-year Service Level Agreement [Appendix 2].
- 2.8 To support the successful implementation of this agreement, there was also substantial improvement to the internet communication from 10mb to 100mb PSBA connections for transferring images from each of the six CCTV zones in the area to the CCTV Control Room in Tir-y-berth, Caerphilly.
- 2.9 The system operates 55 fixed cameras at six CCTVs zones:
- **Sirhowy:** 12 cameras Tredegar Town Centre Zone (recorder at library)
 - **Ebbw Fawr:** 13 cameras Ebbw Vale Town Centre Zone (recorder at library) and 3 cameras Cwm village centre Zone (recorder at library)
 - **Ebbw Fach North:** 6 cameras Brynmawr Town Centre Zone (recorder at library) and 2 cameras Blaina Town Centre Zone (recorder at library)
 - **Ebbw Fach South:** 19 cameras Abertillery Town Centre Zone (recorder at Anvil Court).
- 2.10 The new operating arrangements also brings daily remote maintenance checks for identifying faults and issues. When any are found they are reported immediately to our CCTV maintenance contractor, IDS. Our contract with IDS has also been strengthened for 2023/24 (at an additional costs) to facilitate engineer availability 24/7, 365 days of the year, four planned maintenance visits, and free call outs for faults and issues - with only replacement parts chargeable.
- 2.11 The arrangement also covers:
- Caerphilly Council providing information in response to retrospective requests from Gwent Police and us as responsible authorities, and also non-direct provisions e.g. request via Freedom of Information, Insurers, Subject Access Requests (facilitated via our Policy Team to Caerphilly).

- The digital uploading of evidence from our system by Caerphilly Council to an online portal for viewing by Gwent Police for CCTV requests. *
 - Facilitating 'live' CCTV feeds to Gwent Police to enable real-time collaboration with our system to respond to incidents. *
 - Provision of operational data and information to support statutory/ non-statutory performance monitoring and reporting, i.e. Annual Reporting.
- * Operated via a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Gwent Police, Caerphilly Council and Blaenau Gwent Council [Appendix 3].

2.12 The Policy and Partnerships Team, via the Service Manager and the Policy Officer: CCTV continue to oversee the wider CCTV portfolio which includes:

- All statutory policy development and implementation requirements.
- Corporate reporting for professional and democratic processes.
- Financial and budget monitoring and oversight.
- Contract management for the SLA with Caerphilly Council (quarterly) and CCTV maintenance agreement with IDS (monthly).
- Oversight of council owned CCTV infrastructure and responsibility for supporting infrastructure (e.g. power, columns, buildings).
- Forward planning, and sustainability assessments.
- Liaison internally with Council officers, elected members and partnership interaction externally on related issues.
- Project management of improvements to infrastructure/system.

2.13 **Reporting on performance 2023/24**

Generally, performance reporting is carried out via a CCTV Annual Report. The intention is for our Blaenau Gwent Annual Report from 23/24 to fall into the same cycle as our SLA partner, Caerphilly Council, which will see the report covering a financial year period (April 2023 to March 2024). The report will be produced and available for consideration by the end of the first quarter of the next financial year (end of June 2024) allowing data to be available.

2.14 Even so, provided in Section 6 of this report, under the Supporting Evidence section, is a summary of performance covering the initial six-month period of this year (April 2023 to September 2023).

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 There are three recommendations for the committee to consider:

Recommendation 1:

Option 1: That the Place Scrutiny Committee considers the updated Codes of Practice for 2023/24 and recommend endorsement by the Cabinet;

Option 2: That the Place Scrutiny Committee considers the updated Codes of Practice for 2023/24 and makes specific recommendations to Cabinet prior to endorsement;

Recommendation 2:

That the Committee notes the current operating practices and arrangements with Caerphilly Council and IDS; and

Recommendation 3:

That the Committee agrees to consider the Annual Report 2023/24 as part of the committees forward work programme for 2024/25.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The provision of a CCTV service is non-statutory function and not required under legislation, however the CCTV system is an important tool used with our partners to tackle crime and disorder, in-line with the Community Safety requirements.

Utilising CCTV to help tackle crime and disorder contributes to the Gwent Well-being Plan step to '*enable and support people, neighbourhoods, and communities to be resilient, connected, thriving and safe*', and our Corporate Plan 2022/27 objective for '*empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient*'.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct implications on budget for this report. For context the overall budget for CCTV for 2023/24 is £208,680. Below is a broad overview of how the budget is used to fund key activities, with figures estimated using projections for annual spend from six monthly budget reporting:

Service Level Agreement with Caerphilly Council	= £66,000
<i>Estimated Costs for requests outside agreement</i>	= £5,500
BT costs for PSBA Internet Communication	= £18,500
Power Costs (recharged internally to street lighting)	= £ 32,200
BGCBC internal Staffing Costs	= £47,500
CCTV Maintenance Contract	= £16,000
On-going Maintenance/System Costs	= £5,000

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There are no notable risks associated to this report, other than those associated with non-compliance of good practice guidance provided by the Surveillance Commissioners and GDPR requirements. This risk is mitigated by the appropriate agreements and policies being in place, such as Service Level Agreements, Codes of Practice, DPIAs etc.

5.3 ***Legal***

See overview provided within the background to this report which outlines a summary of the legislative position associated to operating overt CCTV public space surveillance.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resource implications or risks associated to this report. In 2023/24 the Policy Team is effectively resourced to operate the existing system and associated implications, and supporting staffing provision is covered through the relevant agreements and contracts.

5.5 **Health and Safety**

There are no Health and Safety implications associated to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Below is a summary of performance reporting covering the initial six-month period of this year (April 2023 to September 2023). Please note that the operating arrangements for CCTV changed during this financial year, whereby from August 2023 we entered the SLA with Caerphilly Council.

Between 1st April 2023 to 31st July 2023 (four-month period), there were 14 Actioned Request to Gwent Police from the Policy Team*:

- Abertillery, 5 actioned requests
- Blaina, 1 actioned request
- Brynmawr, 0 actioned requests
- Cwm, 0 actioned requests
- Ebbw Vale, 3 actioned requests
- Tredegar, 5 actioned requests.

** CCTV not live monitored requests considered and where footage available provision downloaded to disc and collected by Gwent Police Officers.*

Between 1st August 2023 to 30th September 2023 (two-month period), following change of operating arrangements to Caerphilly Council:

August Summary 2023. Overall, 11 combined incidents:

- 2 incidents monitored by CCT not requiring contact with Gwent Police (1 Tredegar & 1 Brynmawr)
- 4 requests from Gwent Police with help in incidents, not always requiring police attendance (2 Tredegar 1 Abertillery & 1 Brynmawr)
- 5 requested for footage, viewed, not reported or monitored live.

Furthermore, CCTV supplied to Police via Nice Portal (Digital Transfer) 7 incidents.

September Summary 2023. Overall, 26 combined incidents:

- 4 incidents monitored by CCT not requiring contact with Gwent Police (2 Ebbw Vale, 1 Tredegar & 1 Brynmawr)
- 7 requests from Gwent Police with help in incidents, not always requiring police attendance (1 Ebbw Vale, 2 Tredegar, 3 Abertillery & 1 Brynmawr)
- 15 requested for footage, viewed, not reported or monitored live.

Furthermore, CCTV supplied to Police via Nice Portal (Digital Transfer) 10 incidents, and CCTV supplied via DVD (large volume of data) 6 incidents.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The provision of CCTV is in place to assist with the prevention and detection of crime and disorder. The DPIA process described above ensures that appropriate consideration is given to the pressing need for surveillance to ensure that we lawfully breaching people's rights under relevant legislation such as human rights and data protection.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The annual DPIA process provides involvement opportunities for key stakeholders to help consider the pressing need for operating the CCTV.

There has been an elected member briefing on CCTV in September 2023, which provided an update position on the CCTV arrangements for Blaenau Gwent, as well as outlining the next steps on our compliance journey with the relevant legislation and guidance.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The CCTV system utilises up-to-date hi-tech equipment and software which will provide a long-term CCTV solution, if there is appropriate investment in the running, upkeep and maintenance of the overall system. The annual review process will support this process and allow for forward planning and technological advancement to be regularly considered.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The CCTV system is focused on reactively providing evidence to police in relation to crime and disorder which will have already occurred.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Partnership working is key to the delivery of the CCTV portfolio, with regular interactions with appropriate partners, particularly Gwent Police.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

There is regular engagement with data controllers from other CCTV providers across service areas, this includes the Policy Team providing advice and guidance on compliance. Furthermore, where service areas are defined as responsible authorities CCTV requests can be legitimately facilitated via the Policy Team to Caerphilly Council.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

There are no climate change considerations associated to this report.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

There is no requirement to carry out an Integrated Impact Assessment in relation to this report.

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

7.1 Monitoring is carried out via the quarterly CCTV SIRO meeting, and there is regular monitoring arrangements agreed with Caerphilly Council to oversee the SLA (quarterly) and also the CCTV maintenance contract (monthly).

Furthermore, annual reporting is recommended to be taken through democratic processes for 2023/24.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1: Public Space CCTV System: Code of Practice 23/24*
- *Appendix 2: Service Level Agreement CCBC & BGCBC*
- *Appendix 3: Memorandum of Understanding - Access to the CCBC Control Room at Tir-y-berth and Images recorded by Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Councils Public Open Space CCTV Systems.*