Committee: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Wednesday 24 April

Wards: All

Subject: Safer Merton CCTV Service

Lead officer: Neil Thurlow

Lead member: Cllr Edith Macauley MBE

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Recommendations:

1. The Commission is asked to discuss and comment on the report and to note the offer for elected members to visit the CCTV control room at a time convenient to themselves

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The purpose of the report is *"to provide an update on Merton Councils CCTV service subsequent to its return to Safer Merton, as well as providing the results of the Merton and the London wide reviews of CCTV".*

1.2. The report will also seek to inform members in regard CCTVs role in addressing residents' fear of crime - the role of CCTV as an enabler to reducing fear of crime - as well as informing members of the operational costs for the service for consideration in future budget setting and the setting of saving targets.

1.3. There are no decisions to be made within this report at this time.

1.4. Instead of requesting decision(s) from members there is an offer from the service. This offer is for all elected members to visit the CCTV control room at a time and date convenient to yourselves. Visiting the control room you will be able to see the work of the service and understand the contextual nature of CCTV coverage in Merton.

2   DETAILS

2.1. **The current offer – staffing, performance, service offer, service cost**

2.2. The councils CCTV service is based within the E&R directorate under the Public Protection division and Safer Merton service

2.3. Located in the Civic Centre the service operates 24 hours a day every day of the year.

2.4. The service was introduced in 1994 with a mere four cameras and one operator. The service was operational 14 hours a day.

2.5. In 2019 we now have some 207 static cameras and 13 deployable cameras within the service – all of which are constantly in use. All of our cameras are overt as the service has no covert asset within it.

2.6. Whilst the CCTV service has no overt capacity of its own, by working with colleagues within our environmental enforcement team the council does have

access to redeployable cameras that can be used covertly with the appropriate authority. The service can, and will monitor these cameras and may also undertake directed surveillance on behalf of partners when appropriate authorisation is provided.

2.7. The services cameras are monitored by eight staff whom are supported by a newly created CCTV Manager post. All operators work shifts to ensure that the service is maintained as both elected members and the residents require – i.e. 24/7, 365.

2.8. The service has grown over the last few years as CCTV provision has increased, technology been enhanced and the work demands of CCTV expanded.

2.9. The service, and our operators, have been stretched and challenged with some major incidents and events over the last few years ranging from the London riots in 2011, the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 as well as the terror attacks and Grenfell fire atrocities in 2017 – all of these impacted on CCTV both within Merton, across London and the country.

2.10. In 2016 the service purchased a number of deployable CCTV cameras (13 in total) which now allow the council to deploy cameras into hotspot areas for crime and ASB within a short period of time.

2.11. Operating the CCTV suite is a complex process. The operators can view between 48 and 96 cameras at any one time on the monitor wall as well as an additional nine on their desk based monitors.

2.12. Each camera is constantly recording footage onto council servers where imagery is stored for 31 days before being written over. Images are sent to the Civic Centre via two modes of communication – broadband cable and 4G wireless technology

2.13. CCTV currently has a direct expenditure budget of c£482k pa (2018/19). This budget includes provision for staffing, fix and fail repairs and funds our contracts with the broadband and 4G data providers. It also has budgeted income expectations of £123k, increasing to £223k in 2019/20. Based on Period 10 (Jan) forecasts, the service is forecasting a net overspend of c£79k.

2.14. The service does not have a replacement budget for cameras built into it

2.15. The service is currently delivering service via two externally awarded contracts. These contracts, which see the service monitor and maintain CCTV provision for partners, via a charged for service, is a model which we will seek to expand further over the coming years.

2.15.1 **Areas requiring service development and investment.**

2.15.2 Following the transition back to Safer Merton, in summer 2018, a range of factors, which all impact on service delivery, have been identified as needing improvement.

2.15.3 In order to assist in addressing some of these challenges a range of work has been undertaken including a small restructure which allowed the deletion of two team manager posts and the creation of a new, permanent CCTV Manager.

2.15.4 The CCTV manager will work to ensure that the following areas of business are considered in the coming months:

(i) Staffing – staff are suitably supported, trained and managed to ensure that Merton's CCTV offering is one which members can continue to be proud of

(ii) Commissioning and infrastructure - the CCTV manager will explore how the council may procure a range of functions affecting business need. These include, but are not exclusive to, broadband provision, 4G provision, and a CCTV camera replacement schedule

(iii) An appropriate charging schedule for externally won contracts

2.15.5 **Aspirations for service development included in the TOM.**

2.15.6 Safer Merton's Target Operating Model (TOM) sets out the aspirations of the service for the coming four year period. For CCTV the TOM lists the following areas of focus:

Layer(s)	Proposed timeline	Lead officer	Detail
SERVICE	Year one and two	HoS	Delivery of a greater enforcement offer within Safer Merton and start to develop wider enforcement linkages and alignments within E&R
CUSTOMERS & SERVICE	Duration of the TOM	HoS	Increased offer within Safer Merton – CCTV transfer, explore wider enforcement alignments across E&R
SERVICE	Year one	Business improvement	Fundamental service review of Public Realm CCTV provision, with the business continuity team
PEOPLE	Duration of TOM	Safer Merton management team	Developed and more confident staff – officers understand wider work parameters and opportunities to engage and/or enforce across work boundaries
PROCESSES	Years two and four	Business improvement team	Undertake regular LEAN reviews on a two yearly cycle to ensure that service delivery is efficient, effective, evolving and meeting service user needs
CUSTOMERS, SERVICE & INFORMATION	Year one and two	Communities lead	Developed and enhanced Neighbourhood Watch offer with strong links with place c/o street champions, SNT panels, CCTV etc. and with BCU links

2.15.7   By undertaking the work identified within the TOM it will aid the service as we seek to make the offer more commercial in nature and we also plan to enhance the functionality and reliability of CCTV across the partnership further enhancing relationships with all partners, especially those working in enforcement

2.15.8   Work with Neighbourhood Watch and other key community groups is also essential to increase engagement and awareness of CCTV within our communities as we know that CCTV presence can assist in providing reassurance and decreasing fear of crime

2.15.9   **Community reassurance and links to CCTV**

2.15.10 Merton is the fourth safest borough in the capital according to official Metropolitan Police figures sitting behind Richmond, Kingston and Sutton. The South West BCU as a whole hosts three out of four of these boroughs and is currently the lowest crime Borough Command Unit cluster.

2.15.11 Despite these facts Merton's residents state that fear of crime is a key concern and, as a service, we receive numerous requests a year for new, permanent installations or temporary CCTV installations in the public realm.

2.15.12 CCTV is only part of any crime solution. CCTV does not always capture incidents – the cameras within Merton's assets do not have a full 360 visualisation and CCTV alone is not the utopia some consider it to be.

2.15.13 CCTV is one tool in the crime prevention toolbox. Residents can be reassured that our camera locations are based on evidence of most need and our static stock is based primarily in the areas of most footfall – predominantly the town centres of Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon.

2.15.14 The services deployable asset (13 cameras) may be "bid" for by partners and elected members. These cameras are available for a finite period of time to address specific issues – predominantly focused on ASB hotspots requiring partnership intervention.

2.15.15 Members can make requests for these cameras on behalf of constituents should they wish. Where installations are requested the chairs of a partnership meeting will consider the request using a framework of data to make an informed, evidence lead, decision. Where a camera request is upheld against the framework criteria an installation can occur for a specific period of time – these are not permanent cameras.

2.15.16 Camera requests should be made via safermerton@merton.gov.uk and a bidding template will be provided.

2.15.17 Each deployable camera installation costs the local authority circa £1000 – this is based on the end to end cost and is an unavoidable charge.

2.15.18 Residents have also been asking the service about the legalities of installing their own CCTV. There are legal parameters which sit around this as included in the ICO CCTV Code of Practice but, as a very basic rule, any private CCTV can only look at land owned by the occupier i.e. the CCTV cannot look onto public highway, into neighbour's gardens, parks etc.

2.15.19 The council does not offer any support on this nor make recommendations as to which system(s) the residents may seek to use. Private camera systems

are exempt from the requirements of GDPR 2018, as long as they do not encroach on public land. Therefore the owner of such system is not required to do a privacy impact assessment prior to installing.

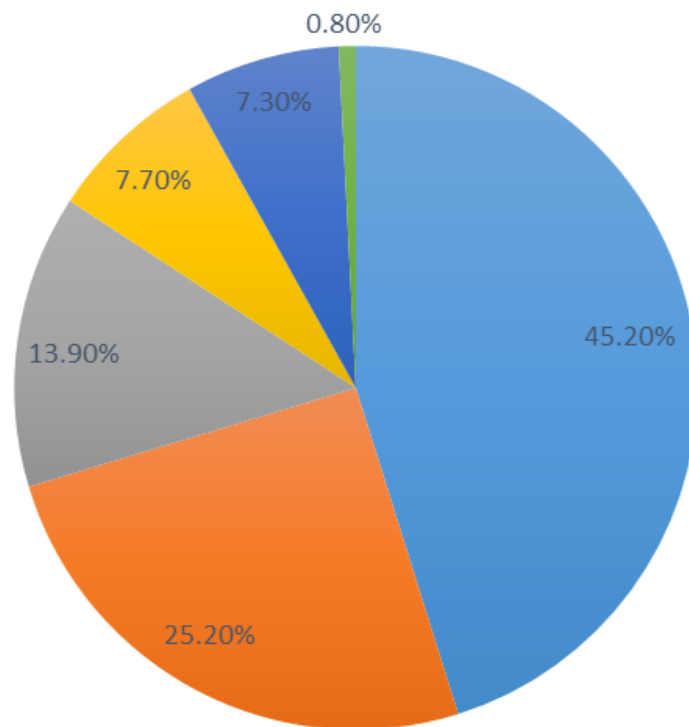2.15.20 **Recent successes and key performance information**

2.15.21 The CCTV service outcomes are monitored via a very complex case management system – Synergy 3

2.15.22 Members are reminded to refer to recent Safer Merton updates for more details on successes however recent work from the control room has resulted in, or contributed to, drug dealers being arrested, a brothel being closed, shop lifters being pursued with arrests made (stock was recovered) as well as supporting police to address poor behaviour in, and around, licensed premises.

2.15.23 Members are asked to consider the below as examples of some performance information which we use to ensure that the service operates as required and that officers, managers and partners constantly and consistently evolve the use of CCTV to improve outcomes:

2.15.24 The Synergy 3 CCTV system allows us to closely monitor the types of incidents, by day, time, location, operator etc. All of these options allow us to determine where to deploy the cameras in the most efficient manner. Below chart shows what percentage of incidents from 2018-19 happened in which part of the borough.

% of incidents

Legend					
Wimbledon	Mitcham	Morden	All areas	Colliers Wood	Raynes Park

The most common incidents reported on the CCTV system in 2018-19 were:

Fly tipping	534
Disturbance	503
Road traffic accident	316
Begging	278
Suspicious behaviour	264
Alcohol related	242
ASB	174
Assault	172
Fighting	139
Missing Person	133
Drugs	121
Domestic	106
Burglary	65

Knife crime	47

2.16. Headlines from the London wide (Capita – MOPAC) CCTV review

2.16.1 In summer 2017 Westminster council announced that they were to review their CCTV investment and operational use, across the borough as the running cost(s) were prohibitive to the local authority. This announcement was of concern to the Mayor of London.

2.16.2 As a result of this announcement the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) commissioned work to better understand what London's CCTV provision was and they commissioned a review to map service capacity, camera numbers, contract arrangements and staffing levels – to name a few areas – to provide a conclusive regional perspective.

2.16.3 The report also sought, at the outset, to explore opportunities for more collaborative working and to ask whether London could and/or should seek to duplicate the New York City approach to CCTV where all cameras within the capital could be viewed from one central place.

2.16.4 This work commenced in late autumn 2017 and Capita concluded their work in summer 2018 with MOPAC then publishing a full report in November of that year.

2.16.5 The report's findings were varied with MOPAC reporting that across London a range of operational practices were in place:

(i) Not all councils provide funding for and monitoring of, CCTV on a 24/7 basis. Indeed a couple offer no physical monitoring at all

(ii) The numbers of CCTV operators varied – there was no "formal ratio" of cameras to operators

(iii) Many councils face significant challenges in upgrading and/or maintaining current CCTV infrastructure

(iv) Only two councils shared a CCTV service

2.16.6 The report found that a London wide offer, co-ordinated and/or managed by MOPAC or the Metropolitan Police centrally was not viable and, whilst suggesting that BCU level exploration should be undertaken, no funding was allocated from MOPAC to further explore that work either on a regional or more local level.

2.16.7 Following the conclusion of the work MOPAC confirmed their position and next steps stating: *"There are no next steps as such for MOPAC as the CCTV technical Assessment project has now been closed"*

2.16.8 As MOPAC are not investing any further work on this report we are working with colleagues in the BCU to enhance the CCTV offer across the boroughs albeit via a more informal approach as opposed anything regimented and directed by this review.

2.16.9 This work is at an early stage and as such there are no considerations or options to bring to members at this time

2.17. Wider aspirations for Merton's CCTV service

2.17.1   It is essential that Merton's CCTV service continues to evolve and improve. In addition to the aspirations listed above, c/o the TOM and service managers work, the other key areas of focus in the coming year will be:

(i)   To see Merton Councils CCTV service accredited via the British National Standard in CCTV. Should we achieve this accreditation we will be one of a small number of local authorities in London with this award.

(ii)   To expand our reach, and use by partners. We will expand our collaborative approach across departments both within the council and outside to benefit the wider community e.g. working to support environmental enforcement teams in their pursuit of fly-tippers, working with Business Improvement Districts to protect shoppers and working with Police teams both within and beyond the BCU to tackle broader criminality.

2.16   **The Borough Command Unit (BCU) and its impact on CCTV provision**.

2.16.1 Members will recall in May 2018 the Police implemented the Borough Command Unit (BCU) rollout for the South West area combining the boroughs of Merton, Kingston, Richmond and Wandsworth into one police grouping. The BCU being managed by Chief Superintendent Sally Benatar

2.16.2 The experiences and impact of the BCU on CCTV have been mixed with several challenges overcome and some remaining. These challenges have been felt by both the Police and local authority as we work to ensure that CCTV is utilised in the most efficient and effective manner in tackling crime and ASB

2.16.3 The BCU alignment has seen the four local authorities work very closely together, the relationships are positive and this is helping us all to develop our CCTV services in a more collegiate manner.

2.16.4 What have the opportunities and improvements been as a result of the BCU?

2.16.4.1   Closer working with the additional three boroughs.

2.16.4.2   The CCTV service managers have been able to share best practice and ideas which has seen Merton implement processes quicker than we would have been able had we done this alone.

2.16.4.3   We have also shared our work with colleagues in surrounding boroughs and they too have implemented changes in their work.

2.16.5 Improved relationships with the police call handlers and the superintendent for response.

2.16.5.1   As the BCU was implemented CCTV noticed a drop in detail from the Met call handlers in Hendon – partly caused, it is believed, by the merging of Wandsworth and Merton onto one radio channel, and the duplication of road names in the two boroughs. Through close working with Superintendent Debbie Brown these concerns were heard and solutions worked through

2.16.6 What challenges which have been overcome as a result of the BCU?

2.16.6.1   Initial impact was felt as Police response officers were paired with one Wandsworth officer and one Merton officer. The communication between police and CCTV (in both directions) waivered for a while as new working practices were embedded but now the flow of information with response is as it was previously

2.16.6.2 Clear tasking provision being provided to CCTV dropped as the BCU was embedded. Officer knowledge changed and CCTV were not being directed by Police as previously happened. This has improved greatly over recent months.

2.16.7 What challenges remain as a result of the BCU?

2.16.7.1 Information sharing – prior to both the BCU and GDPR the CCTV suite was garnered with information, and imagery, of key personnel whom were of interest to the police. This information sharing has been halted due to GDPR and CCTV across the BCU is affected

2.16.7.2 Non collection of evidence bundles have increased. Response officers, in the main, request DVD footage of incidents and would come to collect for prosecutions etc.

2.16.8 Forthcoming changes and opportunities

2.16.9 On Monday 01 April Wandsworth and Richmond opened a joint 24hr control room increasing their operational hours. We would expect that as a result of these changes a closer relationship between CCTV control room operators will develop as both Wandsworth and Merton will be operational working 24/7 supporting the officers covering these two boroughs

2.16.10 Chief Superintendent Benatar has been very supportive in working to address the information sharing challenges and we think a solution is agreed. If this is the case we should see information flow return to previous levels in reasonable quick time

2.17 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.17.1 N/A this is an update report only

2.18 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

2.18.1 N/A this is an update report only

2.19 TIMETABLE

2.19.1 N/A this is an update report only

2.20 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

2.20.1 Should the council seek to replace all permanent CCTV in the borough a capital fund of circa £600-700k would be required

2.20.2 As part of the service planning process the service seeks to increase externally awarded contracts by one each year for the next four years to offer greater coverage of CCTV in Merton whilst reducing financial demands on the local authority

2.21 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

2.21.1 All cameras are subject to Privacy Impact Assessments and Operational Requirements which are required under the Information Commissioners legislation, which deals with data protection and GDPR

2.21.2 All direct employees of Merton's CCTV service have the SIA qualification, as required following Private Security ACT of 2001

2.21.3 The CCTV operations are guided by a number of legal acts, the main of which are:

- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) which includes the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Code of Practice

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000)

- Human Rights Act (1998)

- Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act (1996)

- General Data Protection Regulation (2018)

2.22 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

2.22.1 CCTV operations are bound by the Human Rights Act 1998. Specifically

- Article 5: Right to liberty and Security

- Article 6: Right to a fair trial

- Article 8: Respect for private family life, home and correspondence

- Article 14: Protection from discrimination

2.23 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

2.23.1 It is the statutory duty of the crime and disorder act which governs the work of Safer Merton and the service discharges the Community Safety Partnerships responsibilities around this.

2.23.2 There are no specific crime and disorder implications for the contents of this report which members require sighting on

2.24 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

2.24.1 N/A this is an update report only

2.25 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

11.1   None

2.26 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1   MOPAC CCTV PHASE 2 REPORT