

CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION STRATEGY PROGRESS

1. Background

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Crime and Community Safety Partnership, members received a paper detailing the current opportunities for local partnerships to bid for Home Office funding for CCTV. The paper highlighted that the government has given the responsibility for the co-ordination and submission of bids under the programme to local crime reduction partnerships.
- 1.2 In addition to the Home Office funding opportunities the paper suggested that consideration also needed to be given to the existing Milton Keynes CCTV system. It suggested that the Crime and Community Safety Partnership needs to consider the future development of CCTV in more general terms.
- 1.3 It was agreed at the meeting that a CCTV strategy group be set up to consider how CCTV should be developed within Milton Keynes and that a draft strategy be presented to the next meeting of the Partnership.

2. Progress to Date

- 2.1 A CCTV strategy group was convened and the following people were invited to participate:

John Barnes and Alan Brooks (Thames Valley Police)

Dennis Boobier, Rob Callow, Trevor Dove (Milton Keynes Council)

Isabella Fraser (Campbell Park Parish Council)

Michael Geddes (Milton Keynes Economic Partnership)

- 2.2 There have been two meetings of the strategy group and substantial progress has been made. The group has mainly concentrated on developing a general framework outlining the criteria that needs to be met before new CCTV systems could be developed in Milton Keynes. It should be noted that the focus of the strategy is on **publicly owned CCTV systems**. The group felt that it would be difficult for the strategy to prescribe how private CCTV systems would be developed. Once in place the strategy however

should have some influence on privately managed CCTV systems particularly if Partnership support is being requested.

2.3 It is anticipated that a draft strategy document will be ready by the end of December 1999.

3. **Draft Strategy for Development of Publicly Managed CCTV in Milton Keynes**

3.1 It is intended that the strategy will focus on the following three broad strategic aims. If CCTV requests are to be considered by the Partnership then they will need to demonstrate how they fit with these aims.

Strategic Aims

(a) **Demonstrate how CCTV will help Deliver the Milton Keynes Crime Reduction Strategy**

It is important that any plans to develop CCTV are linked to the Milton Keynes Crime Reduction Strategy. The strategy outlines the approach being taken to reduce crime and disorder and bids need to demonstrate how CCTV would support the plan's strategic aims.

(b) **Demonstrate that CCTV is the Most Effective Measure to Address the Problem**

CCTV is only one measure in reducing crime. Requests for CCTV will be required to demonstrate that they have considered or tried other approaches before deciding that CCTV is the most cost-effective measure to take. A number of questions will need to be answered before bids will be considered by the Partnership. These questions will assist both those requesting bids and the Partnership to consider if CCTV is the right solution to addressing the problem.

CCTV will Monitor Public Open Spaces

Any publicly managed CCTV system should operate on the principle that it is installed for the benefit of the whole community and will therefore monitor public open spaces. By public open spaces are meant areas that everyone has access to.

4. **Addition Requirements for Development CCTV**

4.1 If it can be demonstrated that the 3 strategic aims can be satisfied then a more detailed appraisal of the proposal needs to be presented. This will probably form the bases of the questions outlined in Strategic Aim B: **‘Demonstrate that CCTV is the Most Effective Measure to Address the Problem’**.

4.2 Requests will need to show that they have:

(a) **Police Support**

Police support must be obtained before any new publicly owned CCTV system can be developed. They must agree that there is a significant crime or community safety issue and that they believe CCTV would help them take effective action.

(b) **Funding Arrangements**

There is a financial cost to both purchasing and installing CCTV systems and then funding the ongoing maintenance. Any new requests for new publicly owned CCTV systems should demonstrate some form of financial commitment such as how long term revenue costs will be provided. This may include agreements from the business community, parish councils, Milton Keynes Council, other statutory organisations or local partnership etc. to offer financial contributions in order to sustain the system.

(c) **Detailed Technical Specification**

It is important that CCTV systems should fulfil specific technical and quality standards. This is particularly important if they are to be connected to a police monitored system.

(d) **Code of Practice**

Any new CCTV system should have a code of practice that is approved by the Crime and Community Safety Partnership. There are many issues to consider when operating CCTV such as invasion of privacy, training of operators, storage of videos, access to the monitoring room etc. It is important that a code of practice is developed that ensures the system operates within a framework of accountability and integrity.

(d) **Demonstration of Public Consultation**

Requests should show what public consultation has been undertaken to obtain community views about the proposal for CCTV in the area. This may be consultation with residents, community groups, parish councils etc.

5. **Issues to be Considered at the next Crime and Community Safety Partnership Meeting**

5.1 Technical Support

The group raised the issue that future applications to the Home Office under the CCTV Initiative or developments to the current system will require initial technical advice. Currently the council and police employ the services of a consultant to undertake this work. Bids will require detailed descriptions of the technical specifications of the system, e.g. camera types, monitoring equipment, connection of cameras to monitors etc.

In order for bids to provide the information requested by the Home Office the Partnership will need to consider how such advice can be funded.

It is difficult at this stage to estimate the costs that may be incurred to pay for such a service. However the Partnership may like to consider making available a CCTV budget specifically for funding CCTV technical support and advice.

5.2 Inspection of Monitoring Room at CMK Police Station

The code of practice for the CMK CCTV system requires that “lay people” have access to the monitoring room in order to carry out independent inspections. It is important that this is carried out as it provides an opportunity to check that it is operating within a framework of accountability and integrity. It is important that any new publicly owned CCTV systems include this in their code of practice for the same reasons.

A request was submitted in the January meeting asking for advice from the Partnership about convening a group of lay visitors to undertake inspections of the monitoring room at the police station. Unfortunately this item was deferred.

It is suggested that the Partnership take the opportunity as part of the CCTV strategy discussions to agree a process for the nomination of “CCTV lay inspectors” that could be called upon to check not only the CMK system but also any future public owned CCTV systems.

Rob Callow
Community Safety Officer
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