

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Housing Services Cabinet Committee

Date: 6 September 2021

Reporting officer: Nicole Arthur, Service Manager (Housing Operations)

Subject: Provision of closed circuit television (CCTV) system on Council managed estates.

Purpose and summary of report:

To update Housing Cabinet Committee on the current provision of closed circuit television (CCTV) systems on council managed housing estates and to update them on future plans

Recommendations:

1. For Housing Cabinet Committee to note the contents of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2021, the adoption of an Estate Management Policy was agreed. This policy ensures that standards on council managed estates are more focused and transparent whilst ensuring that the environment around our properties and communal areas are managed effectively.
- 1.2 In order to meet the objectives of the policy, the council made a commitment to three areas; estate would be clean and cared for, safe and secure and in a good state of repair.
- 1.3 In order to achieve these commitments, the 'Make My Estate Great' survey was launched at the end of March 2021 which sought resident's views in regards to their estate which was based on the key themes outlined in section 2.2 of this report. Responses received to date confirm that individuals responding did not feel safe or secure in their property due to a variety of reasons such anti-social behaviour, drug-taking, criminal damage and vandalism.
- 1.4 A tenant engagement exercise with the residents of Wallis Park in 2019/2020 also highlighted similar themes and in particular a need to increase and upgrade to the current CCTV provision.
- 1.5 The use of CCTV cameras on the estates also ensures compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, specifically:
 - 1.5.1 Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work

in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

- 1.5.2 Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic well-being in the areas where they own properties.
- 1.5.3 Registered providers shall work with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

2. Current CCTV Provision

- 2.1 Gravesham Borough Council operates a number of closed circuit television (CCTV) systems on its council managed housing estates within the Borough to promote the safety and security of users of its buildings and to protect the asset value of those buildings it owns and controls.
- 2.2 There are currently 130 CCTV cameras across 10 sites. All units operate and record 24 hours / 7 days a week, but they are not actively monitored and data is only obtained by request when there is a legitimate reason to do so or requested by Kent Police.
- 2.3 The operation of CCTV cameras on the estates does meet its legal requirements in relation to the following legislation or relevant guidance, and good practice produced by the Information Commissioners Office:
 - 2.3.1 The Data Protection Act 2018
 - 2.3.2 The Freedom of Information Act 1998
 - 2.3.3 The Human Rights Act 2000
 - 2.3.4 The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - 2.3.5 ICO CCTV Code of Practice
 - 2.3.6 Surveillance Camera Code of Practice- in particular the 12 guiding principles.
- 2.4 All of the CCTV units used by the council are 'overt' and clearly visible at all times. Where the council does have cameras, appropriate signage is in place with a regular schedule to ensure the signage is still in situ.
- 2.5 Since taking on responsibility for the Caretaking Service, the Service Manager (Housing Operations) has identified a range of issues which has highlighted a number of operational difficulties and shortcomings in relation to CCTV which are outlined below:
 - 2.5.1 There has been no investment in the equipment and a number of cameras were not fully operational and the quality of the footage was poor on many that did work.
 - 2.5.2 There is no maintenance contract in place or inspection regime to identify potential faults.

- 2.5.3 Any requests for footage from Kent Police results in the Estate Services Manager spending hours trawling through and downloading the relevant footage. This has a consequential impact on the service and takes him away from essential caretaking duties.
- 2.5.4 There is a lack of prosecutions due to the individual committing the crime being a minor. The majority of these crimes were linked to vandalism with £5,000 of damage on lifts alone in the last 12 months. If the cameras had been monitored the act of vandalism may have been stopped at an earlier stage.
- 2.5.5 There has been some extremely serious incidents, such as violent attacks on some of the estates which may have had a different outcome if the cameras had been monitored. These generally also happen outside of the working day when there was no council presence on site.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 In order to deal with the issues outlined in section 2.5 and to meet the requirements for the Regulatory framework of Social Housing outlined in 1.6 the Council will be entering in to a contract with an external provider, Kindy, to provide an 'observational and retrieval function' of the CCTV cameras on the housing estates. This will allow operators to view real time footage via a central control room with the ability to retrieve any archived footage.
- 3.2 As part of the agreement this will also include an upgrade of equipment and infrastructure as well as on-going maintenance and upkeep.
- 3.3 By entering in to this agreement, the Council will:
 - 3.3.1 Promote the health, safety and security of residents, staff and other users of buildings, communal areas and open spaces where the council has a controlling interest (including systems that ensure passenger safety in lifts).
 - 3.3.2 Help to maintain the asset value of properties and equipment owned by the council by deterring/ preventing vandalism or theft.
 - 3.3.3 Promote early intervention actions that would save further damage to persons or properties and in turn reduce repairs/ maintenance spend.
 - 3.3.4 Assist in the prevention of crime, anti-social behaviour, public order offences and other statutory enforcement issues and in any subsequent apprehension and prosecution of those found to be responsible for these actions.
- 3.4 The improvement of the provision and monitoring will also help the service meet our commitments as a landlord under The Charter for Social Housing Residents- Social Housing White Paper by providing a good quality neighbourhood to live in as well as listening to and responding to what is important to our tenants.
- 3.5 The new provision will be widely publicised amongst residents and in the wider community, one to act as a deterrent for any potential future incidents but to also reinforce to residents that their voice matters and we are listening to their requests.

- 3.6 Discussions have also been had with Kindy in regards to longer term aspirations of introducing a concierge service to some of the buildings, particularly in our high-rise stock. Many other authorities and Housing Associations have introduced this successfully and report that they now spend more time assisting tenants than they do monitoring their behaviour.
- 3.7 The improvement of the CCTV provision will not be a stand-alone project in order to combat some of the issues on our estates, this will be complemented by the upgrading of lighting, both internally and externally as well as widening the door entry systems to restrict unauthorised access to the landing areas of our buildings.
- 3.8 The CCTV provision will be kept under regular review to ensure it meets the ICO CCTV Code of Practice to ensure that the need is justifiable.

4. Background Papers

- 4.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	<p>The following legislation and guidance applies to the provision of CCTV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Data Protection Act 2018 • The Freedom of Information Act 1998 • The Human Rights Act 2000 • The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 • ICO CCTV Code of Practice • Surveillance Camera Code of Practice- in particular the 12 guiding principles.
Finance and Value for Money	
Risk Assessment	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? Updated DPIA to follow</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk.</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No.</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No.</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Corporate Plan	<p># 1 People</p> <p>Create Stronger Neighbourhoods: work with Kent Police on the prevention, detection and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, and the safeguarding of local residents</p> <p>Actively Enforce Environmental Standards: use available powers to pursue anyone committing environmental crime or damaging the local neighbourhood.</p>

	<p>Safeguard Residents: put in place a package of housing measures and creative interventions that support the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Put Our Customers First: Implement a suite of quality and effective front line service</p>
Climate Change	N/A
Crime and Disorder	The introduction of a monitored provision is likely to reduce crime and disorder by acting as a deterrent and potential increased prosecutions.
Digital and website implications	The website will be updated to ensure there is clear information regarding the DPIA and CCTV provision
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	By reducing crime and disorder on the estates it will help safeguard children and vulnerable adults.