
ANNUAL CCTV INSPECTORS REPORT

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Chris McEwan,
Community Protection Portfolio**

Responsible Director(s) - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To introduce the first annual report from the Independent Inspectors of CCTV and to consider formalising the existing pilot arrangements making independent inspection an integral part of the overall service provision.

Information and Analysis

2. The concept of using independent inspection to look at the provision of CCTV services was introduced and approved by Cabinet on 14th May, 2002 (Minute ref. C325/May/02). As the result of a number of data protection and human rights issues being raised, the scheme itself did not commence until February 2003.
3. From March 2003 Independent Inspectors working in pairs began regular unannounced inspections of the methods of operation within the CCTV Control Room.
4. The brief requires the inspectors to look only at the CCTV element of operation and does not include any of the other multi tasks carried out within that environment.
5. The setting up of an inspection team followed existing examples from other CCTV operations and was/is in line with developing national standards which include having an Independent Inspection Team as a basic performance standard. The major reasons for instigating an Independent Inspection Team were to improve contact with the general public and further increase public confidence in both the installation and use of CCTV in public areas, paying particular attention to the requirements of the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Acts, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and the Council's own CCTV Code of Practice.
6. Despite the early resignation of two of the inspection team, the remaining six inspectors have diligently attended the Control Room on a regular basis (**Appendix 4** of the Inspectors report) and held regular meetings to which the General Manager and CCTV Co-ordinator have been invited. Excellent working relationships have been established between the Inspectors and all of the staff, with mutual respect for each side's abilities, which has led to ongoing debate and a frank exchange of views and opinions.

7. The Inspectors full report is **appended** to this report. Overall, it is very positive and supportive of the CCTV service and how it is run. They have raised one or two concerns about specific elements of operation and one relating to changes brought about by the restructuring of Police areas by Durham Constabulary.
8. At paragraph 4.3 of the Inspectors report, they raise a concern about the relocation of the Police communications facility to Bishop Auckland. Whilst acknowledging their concern, it was explained to the Inspectors that there was nothing further that could be done to change this situation and that the General Manager and CCTV Co-ordinator were actively working with Durham Constabulary to minimise any negative effects whilst reviewing existing and implementing new procedures in order to make sure that there was continuous and efficient communications and monitoring of services, as they have asked for in their recommendation 5.6.
9. At paragraph 4.4 a concern was raised about a lack of privacy zones in some areas. This was a technical issue that, at the time, prevented the Control Room from blocking out views of upper floor windows where, in normal panning of the camera, those windows came into view. That issue has now been resolved and the procedures strengthened to ensure that something similar does not happen again.
10. From conversations at the collective meetings, the biggest concern appears to relate to the multi disciplinary role of the Control Room and the demands that can make upon the staff on occasion. The Inspectors felt that this was potentially problematic when one of the pool staff was working with an experienced supervisor as opposed to two permanent and experienced staff. Whilst acknowledging the concern and accepting that the pool staff may not be as proficient as a long serving permanent member of staff, they are none the less given full training before they are put into that situation, which includes initially working as a third person with an experienced member of staff. Additionally, all staff have a regular competency check against the whole range of activities that they are expected to perform, the results of which are recorded and inspected by the CCTV Co-ordinator and gaps dealt with. The CCTV Co-ordinator has since been tasked with strengthening this element by taking on board the on-going training and supervising of pool staff, freeing up the CCTV Team Leaders to focus more on the job to hand.
11. Across the board, all CCTV staff are currently undergoing external accredited training which will further enhance the current high levels of efficiency and professionalism and increase everyone's ability to deal with any situation.
12. The agreeing of a contract with Wear Valley to monitor their CCTV system will also bring in additional funds that have been allocated for additional staffing resource as required. Additional staffing resource, coupled with the above measures, should help alleviate the concerns raised by the Independent Inspectors. It is important to point out that despite the concerns raised by the Inspectors, there is no evidence that standards have slipped or that crime levels have risen.

Outcome of Consultation

13. The original consultation related to setting up the Inspectors Team. In the context of this report the only consultation has been between the CCTV Managers and the team on general

matters only, it being vital that the group remain independent at all times.

Legal Implications

14. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

15. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

16. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

17. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) That Cabinet accepts the attached report by the Independent Inspectors.
 - (b) That the pilot exercise is accepted as being successful and the Independent Inspection Team become a permanent feature of CCTV evaluation.

Reasons

19. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) The report overall is positive and supportive of the CCTV service and in that context will achieve its aim of providing further reassurance to the public which in turn allows stronger bonds to be made with the public in general.
 - (b) The concerns raised by the Inspectors provide a valuable insight re the perception the public have of the service. Whilst the issues they have raised are being addressed and do not in themselves represent a serious problem for the overall operation, they are none the less very valuable as barometers of public opinion and fine tuners of service provision.

- (c) Establishment of the Independent Inspection Team as a permanent feature of CCTV evaluation will further enhance the status of the service and allow it to meet accepted national and external accreditation standards.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 14th May, 2002. Minute reference C325/May/02.

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