



SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 21 NOVEMBER 2022

CCTV in Surrey

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the '5-year Surrey public place CCTV strategy' which was set out in 2018, current CCTV provision across the county and Surrey Police's position on the future of public place CCTV.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Public place CCTV is overt surveillance and is required to have a legitimate aim such as to prevent disorder or crime and to maximise public safety. Each camera installation needs to be shown to be necessary, proportionate and lawful, with the relevant safeguards and reviews. All CCTV operations should follow the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice as defined in the National Surveillance Camera Strategy (2017) for England and Wales.
- 2.2 The strategy outlines that whilst it is reasonable for the public to have a right to expect surveillance camera systems as one measure to help keep them safe, it is only possible where "systems are fit for purpose, operated effectively, transparently and in compliance with any relevant legal obligations." The strategy also describes the challenge regarding public place CCTV with local authority funding having been in decline for some time, with a report in 2016 (Big Brother Watch) showing a 46% decrease in funding spent on the installation, maintenance and monitoring of CCTV by local authorities across the country since 2012.
- 2.3 In September 2017 a CCTV Summit was held between Surrey Police and the 11 boroughs and districts as a first step in exploring the possibility of having a county-wide public CCTV operation as seen in other counties such as Sussex. Due to differing priorities, finance and starting positions no joint consensus could be reached on a future Surrey-wide CCTV roadmap, with each borough/district having already worked independently to purchase and implement their own systems over many years.
- 2.4 Following the Summit, and in order to bring about a level of consistency across Surrey, a 5-year CCTV Strategy was set out (2018-2022 inclusive) which would see the three remaining police CCTV monitoring suites (Woking, Guildford and Reigate) transition to being monitored by staff from the relevant borough/district council, with Surrey Police contributing to the cost of CCTV provision using a defined funding formula.

- 2.5 Since the launch of the strategy a better level of consistency has since been achieved in terms of the financial contribution made by Surrey Police, but the strategy has not yet been met in full, with not all the above principles implemented.
- 2.6 There are also wider complexities. Not all 11 borough and districts in Surrey own or operate public place CCTV equipment and some of the equipment currently owned is end of life (analogue) and will need significant investment to upgrade or replace.
- 2.7 The way that public place CCTV in residential areas is accredited means that new cameras can only be added where there is an evidential case brought by a neighbourhood problem. Many of the Surrey local authority cameras require reviews of their accreditation, and it is anticipated that some will need to be decommissioned in the coming few years when this has been completed.

3 BOROUGH & DISTRICT VARIATIONS:

East Surrey

- Reigate and Banstead have recently taken a decision to decommission their public place CCTV (other than unmonitored CCTV in their car parks and 6 amenity parks) on the basis of cost of replacement. Mole Valley, who have 53 cameras and Epsom and Ewell, who have 20, are unlikely to meet the relevant levels of accreditation at their next review. Both Mole Valley and Epsom and Ewell continue to review their options in respect of CCTV provision which includes considerations about scoping a new joint strategy with other local authorities working together in the procurement of equipment and monitoring of public place CCTV.
- Tandridge does not have any monitored public place CCTV.
- Surrey Police CCTV staff remain at Reigate police station and monitor the cameras for Reigate and Banstead, Mole Valley and Epsom and Ewell and have access to Airwave. When the cameras are decommissioned in Reigate and Banstead they will only remain monitoring the cameras of the other two boroughs reducing their workload significantly.

West Surrey

- Woking has well-established public place CCTV provision with Surrey Police staff having been Tupe'd across to the local authority in 2020 with the existing monitoring equipment in Woking Police Station decommissioned. Woking Borough Council staff have access to Airwave and therefore can communicate with officers and staff. Woking also monitors the CCTV cameras for Surrey Heath and Surrey Police provide a financial contribution based on the funding formula.
- Guildford, with its busy night-time economy, has 64 cameras (Guildford Town and Ash) with many of these having tangible law enforcement outcomes. Guildford CCTV is monitored by Surrey Police staff from a dedicated suite in Guildford Police Station who also have access to Airwave along with access to the town link radio system which connects businesses (retail) within the town. With a small team operating the

cameras, staffing has been very challenging over the past couple of years (in part due to the pandemic) which has meant there has been inconsistent monitoring of CCTV in Guildford.

- Godalming Town CCTV ceased operating in September 2018 with no clear evidence of impact on crime levels.

North Surrey

- Runnymede has a long-established public place CCTV monitoring system (Safer Runnymede) with local authority staff also responsible for monitoring the cameras in Spelthorne. They have access to Airwave radio and like Elmbridge (below) Surrey Police contributes funding according to the formula.
- Elmbridge outsource their CCTV monitoring to a private company in Luton and therefore do not have access to Airwave.

4.0 THE CASE FOR CCTV

- 4.1 As can be seen from the summary of provision across the county, there are differing approaches in each borough with some areas investing heavily in public place CCTV and others less so.
- 4.2 It is recognised that public place CCTV can provide a feeling of public safety, but research has shown that this is hard to quantify. Analysis last updated in October 2021 by the College of Policing (examining the results of more than 75 CCTV reviews in the UK, USA and elsewhere in the world), suggests that there is some evidence to show CCTV in car parks does deter some vehicle crime but is less effective in deterring impulsive crimes of violence. CCTV was found to be more effective when used alongside other complementary interventions such as improved lighting or fencing. When implemented without these it was found to not result in a significant reduction in crime.
- 4.3 It is also the case that due to the widespread availability of modern technology – mobile cameras, body worn video, “Ring” doorbell footage, dash cameras etc, there is less reliance on public place CCTV in efforts to prevent and detect crime. That said, in respect of areas with vibrant town centres and a night time economy, the case for public place CCTV can be argued, particularly where volunteers such as Street Angels support efforts to keep the area and its visitors safe.

5.0 BOROUGH / DISTRICT POSITION

- 5.1 Recognising the above complexities, Runnymede hosted a CCTV Summit on Tuesday 14th June 2022, inviting all Community Safety practitioners across Surrey to attend and share their views in order to identify an appropriate way forward.
- 5.2 The outcomes of this Summit were included as part of a report to the Surrey Leaders Group. At the time of writing no agreement appears to have been reached by the Surrey Leaders Group, and Panel members may wish to make enquiries within their respective Councils as to whether there is an emerging consensus.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Police and Crime Panel is requested to note the update.

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