

Public Places Directorate

# CCTV Annual Report

2022/23

## 1. Introduction

CCTV plays an important role in the community safety function for Chelmsford City Council and the Safer Chelmsford Partnership. Whilst CCTV is not a statutory role, the City Council does have a statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to place issues of community safety at the centre of the delivery of local services. CCTV was introduced into Chelmsford in 1995 and the control centre now monitors over 500 cameras across the district including South Woodham Ferrers and Maldon District.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the provision of CCTV is to prevent and deter crime, and to ensure that residents, businesses, and visitors feel safe in the areas of coverage at any time of the day and thus boost public confidence and reduce the fear of crime.

The CCTV function works to the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership (Safer Chelmsford) which are agreed each year following a strategic assessment. This assessment is endorsed each year by the One Chelmsford Board. The current priorities for the partnership are:

- Tackling serious violent crime and reducing reoffending (gangs, drugs and county lines, knife crime, high harm offences, domestic abuse, and night-time economy disorder)
- Driving down anti-social behaviour in public places (youth nuisance, ASB associated with rough sleeping and improving communications with our residents)
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable people (emotional health and wellbeing, social isolation, violence against women and girls, suicide prevention, hate crime and a proactive approach to those at risk of exploitation)
- Tackling rural crime and environmental crime

Community Safety Officers and CCTV Officers are tasked fortnightly at Community Safety Hub Tasking where a police document is reviewed, and relevant actions are given to appropriate members of the partnership. This process is intelligence led and enables CCTV staff to focus on high harm and vulnerability across the city.

Chelmsford was initially awarded Purple Flag status in 2013 (accredited again in 2022), the effective use of CCTV always features as a positive resource together with other partnership initiatives.

### 3. Operation of the System

The system is operated and monitored 24/7, 365 days a year. The control room is always staffed by two members: one supervisor and one operator, with two part-time members of staff working evenings covering both CCTV and car parking functions. The current staffing structure consists of eight full time equivalents, two part-time and five casuals (who cover annual leave and sickness). A twelve-hour shift pattern: four on four off was introduced in 2016 which has delivered key benefits in terms of staff morale, performance, and retention.

Each member of staff is licensed with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) or working towards registration following successful training/probation, and accredited officers or working towards the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS).

The operational management of the team is by a Community Safety Lead Officer, Karen Buttress and the strategic management is overseen by the Public Protection Manager, Spencer Clarke, who is the single point of contact (SPOC). The Standard Operating Procedures and Code of Practice are reviewed on an annual basis.

The privacy impact assessments (PIAs) for each camera are also reviewed each year. All Freedom of Information requests (FOI) are dealt with centrally by the Information Governance Manager and DPO, and his team. This postholder is also the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for CCTV and is registered with the Surveillance Camera and Biometrics Commissioner.

The CCTV function was subject to an internal audit in 2018 and was given a moderate assurance rating. A follow up audit was completed in March 2020 and all outstanding actions were completed. Performance statistics are publicised annually on the Council's website and in City News or via the local press. Several visits are facilitated throughout the year to ensure that the public remain confident that the use of CCTV is both effective and proportionate.

## 4. Performance Statistics (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Daily statistics are recorded on a V-TAS database which enables the mapping of crime and use of the system (which supports annual PIAs). It is also a useful tool for performance management in relation to staff and as an audit to prevent improper use of surveillance. Key statistics for 2022/23 indicate that CCTV played a key role in:

- 9,984 incidents (Attention to 1,494, Public Order 1,179, Theft 700, Missing Persons 619, Concerns for Welfare 573, ASB 362, Drug Offences 217, Drink Drivers 118, and Offensive Weapons 121)
- 477 arrests with key CCTV involvement
- 1,131 media reviews/requests
- 1,829 out of hours calls

The annual net revenue cost of CCTV for the financial year was approximately £415,000 but includes the addition of the car parking service since its inception. Income received of approximately £45,000 for the CCTV function represents part of the annual running costs of the service. Income generation is from a variety of sources such as third-party contracts, radio commission, internal transfers (where CCTV has enabled efficiency savings elsewhere in the council). This income also includes a £10,000 grant from the Late-Night Levy which is received on an annual basis. The capital expenditure on CCTV from the city council was relatively low following the expenditure in the previous years and grant funding from Safer Streets Round 3 and GRIP funding for 2021/22. A successful bid was made in 2022/23 for GRIP funding for new CCTV and improved lighting at Chelmsford Rail Station and Chelmsford High Street to the value of £19,310.97 + VAT.

## 5. Achievements

The Chelmsford CCTV system continues to have a good reputation both regionally and nationally. Expenditure on system compares favourably with councils of similar size and demographic profile. The direction of travel in terms of ongoing capital support and system replacement is positive. There has been migration over to new technology which was driven by the installation of a FLIR video management system (VMS) in October 2016. This has enabled old analogue technology to be supported whilst new high-definition units have been introduced as units have failed or reached their operational lifespan. There has also been effective use of the legacy fibre optic network supplied by Virgin Media whereby new digital transmitters have been installed as cameras fail to achieve improved capacity at each site. Chelmsford was the first Council in Essex to pilot and migrate to the Essex Police digital transfer of data project (DAMS) in September 2023. This has provided significant improvements for both parties in terms of streamlining the data transfer process and reductions in risk.

CCTV now plays a key role in reducing vulnerability by using and sharing intelligence around criminal and sexual exploitation and adopting a hostile approach to tackling organised crime.

The use of surveillance has been used to gather evidence about gang nominals and local organised crime groups by working with the community policing team, local response teams and Raptor teams. There have been no RIPA requests for 2022/23 for directed surveillance. CCTV has supported the ongoing work around anti-social behaviour being associated with rough sleepers in the city centre, but also acts as a tool to safeguard our most vulnerable by keeping a watchful eye on those sleeping in the city centre.

CCTV has a strong record of achievement in ensuring that Chelmsford continues to have a safe night-time economy. It supports the licensing objectives of the council and works closely in partnership with well-established interventions such as street pastors, taxi marshals, Chelmsford SOS Project (Open Road), Best Bar None and Pubwatch.

Cameras were relocated to buildings following the Tindal Square public realm improvements, this included the addition of some new units to provide better coverage. New units were also added as part of the refurbishment of Chelmsford Theatre which was completed in January 2023. Delivery of the GRIP funding project was substantially completed in March 2023 for Chelmsford rail station and Chelmsford High Street. A new mobile unit was installed at Hawkswood Road to tackle irresponsible driving/street racing.

## 6. Key Priorities for 2023/24

- Complete a system asset management exercise on completion of the capital works with a full life cycle analysis
- Procurement of a comprehensive maintenance contract (4-year contract ends on 31 March 2024)
- Installation of replacement programme cameras and associated works (city centre underpasses)
- Replace existing CCTV signage within city centre
- Staff training to incorporate risk in the community, PREVENT and Martyn's Law
- Complete privacy impact assessments as necessary and return annual survey to the Surveillance Camera and Biometrics Commissioners Office
- Provide consultancy and project management to ensure that the CCTV element to major projects is delivered within agreed timescales (Capital Programme for Chelmsford City Council, Maldon District Council and Essex County Council)
- Expansion opportunities and future income generation (GRIP/Project Minerva)

**Spencer Clarke, Public Protection Manager**

Contact: [spencer.clarke@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:spencer.clarke@chelmsford.gov.uk) or 01245 606477