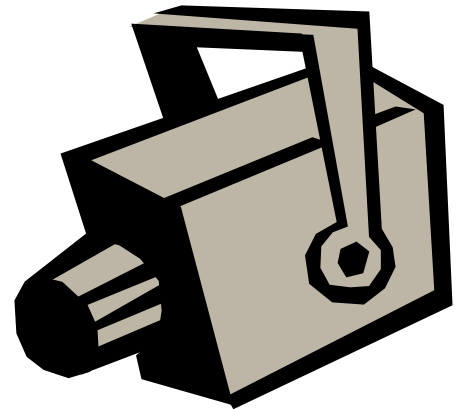


# **FEEDBACK OF THE Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) SCRUTINY PROJECT PANEL**

**Councillors Gosling, Meiszner, Wright and  
Graham Sinclair, Chair of Police Community Consultative  
Group  
20 November 2002**



## COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 December 2002

### Scrutiny Project Panel Feedback: Consultant's Evaluation Report on CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) in Waltham Forest

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**Classification:**

**For the Committee's approval**

## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its last meeting on 3 October 2002, it was agreed that Councillors Gosling, Meiszner and Wright together with Graham Sinclair (Chair of Waltham Forest Police Community Consultative Group) form a Project Panel to look in close detail at a consultant's report on how crime had been affected by the installation of CCTV in Waltham Forest.
- 1.2 On 13 November 2002 the Project Panel met with the consultant to discuss how his work was progressing and to participate in the final drafting of his CCTV Evaluation Report in a more detailed manner than was possible at a full committee meeting.

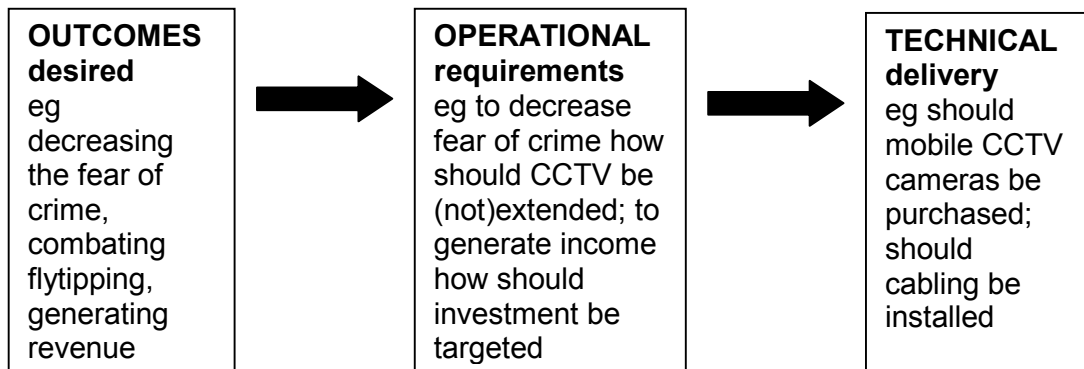
## 2 PROJECT PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS ON THE CCTV EVALUATION REPORT

- 2.1. The consultant who prepared the CCTV Evaluation Report was Dr Michael Pollak from Call Consultants. The Head of Community Safety had hired Dr Pollak, an independent consultant, to assess how CCTV was working currently, assess options to extend coverage of the scheme (eg in Leytonstone) and to seek ways of reducing costs (eg could savings be achieved by relocating the CCTV Control Room).
- 2.2. The Project Panel welcomed the Consultant's Evaluation Report. **The Project Panel requested additional information on the number of cameras per ward and that the Report should compare crime statistics on a seasonal as well as quarterly basis because there are seasonal fluctuations in crime so comparing January-June with July-December is not robust.**
- 2.3. Dr Pollak explained that CCTV had been installed in many town centres because of a Home Office drive in the mid-90s to tackle community safety. At that time CCTV was seen as an ideal crime deterrent and detection strategy, so funding sources had been created to enable local authorities to install CCTV. At the time there had been no specialist research carried out on the efficacy of CCTV to deal with crime. **The Project Panel concluded that installation of CCTV, across the country,**

**had been reactive, rather than strategically planned to meet explicit outcomes (eg reducing fear of crime, combating flytipping, streetcrime, etc).**

- 2.4. In the intervening years since the widespread introduction of CCTV, there had been growing expertise and research on the proper use and limitations of CCTV. In summary, CCTV was most effective when it was one element of a pre-planned, comprehensive crime deterrence and detection strategy, which took into account the characteristics (eg types of crime, street layout, resources available, degree of linkage to police and other partners) and priorities (eg a community's fear of crime, political priorities) of the targeted geographic area. **The Project Panel concluded that a CCTV Strategy was required to ensure that CCTV provision in Waltham Forest was planned and therefore effective. In particular, a CCTV Strategy was essential to guide decisions on extending the CCTV scheme.**
- 2.5. **The Project Panel believed that the CCTV Strategy should be based on a set of agreed outcomes (eg decreasing the fear of crime, combating flytipping, generating revenue such as buslane monitoring or keyholding). The agreed outcomes would then define the necessary operational requirements (eg to decrease fear of crime how should CCTV be ideally extended or not extended, to generate income where should the investment be targeted). Finally the operational requirements would in turn ensure correct decisions were made on the technical requirements for the system (eg should mobile CCTV cameras be purchased, should cabling be installed).**

**CCTV Strategy:**



- 2.6. Nationally speaking, the Evaluation Report stated that CCTV seemed most effective in reducing crime in car parks or tightly defined town centres, but had little effect in large cities/urban areas. The Evaluation Report also gave estimates of total numbers of persons taken into custody through the assistance of Waltham Forest CCTV. However custody did not necessarily mean a judicial punishment – it could mean a night spent ‘cooling-off’ in jail. For example, Dr Pollak advised that police often sought to maintain order rather than make arrests as the types of actions occurring at such disturbances were not always appropriate for prosecution.
- 2.7. The public generally favoured CCTV (eg in the Evaluation Report, a survey of Waltham Forest’s Residents Panel in November 2000 acknowledged definite benefits derived from the presence of CCTV). The Project Panel discussed how everyone experienced the fear of crime, for example in attending the meeting tonight the Project Panel had parked their cars to the front of the Town Hall or had arranged to drive home after the meeting rather than walk. These were examples of the small, almost unconscious, adjustments the public makes in order to ensure the safety of themselves and their property. Yet, no matter how small the adjustment it

was an expression of the fear of crime – and CCTV was one tool, which, the public generally felt, helped to reduce fear of crime. **The Project Panel concluded that reducing the fear of crime had to be an essential objective of a CCTV Strategy, as it would improve the public's perceived quality of life.**

- 2.8. The Project Panel discussed how a CCTV Strategy could define Objectives, which equitably tackled the psychological, not necessarily empiric, fear of crime as well as the documented hotspots of reported crime. In simple terms, this meant a CCTV Strategy must have Objectives that dealt not only with reported crime (eg documented, above average number of burglaries in Ward A) but the Strategy must also have Objectives which tackled the fear of crime (eg Ward B has a well-below average burglary rating but its residents have a fear of crime which they perceive to be as damaging to their quality of life as the situation in Ward A). **The Project Panel concluded that a CCTV Strategy must seek to equitably address the psychological as well as physical effects of crime.**
- 2.9. The Project Panel discussed issues of displacement. Dr Pollak advised there was no evidence that CCTV caused extensive crime displacement, he also pointed out that some crimes were peculiar to a given area and timeframe. For example, CCTV in Walthamstow Market was appropriate and apt given the nature of crimes that took place in that area – such crimes were unlikely to be displaced as they were characteristic to that area.
- 2.10. The meeting discussed the effectiveness of CCTV. The Project Panel acknowledged that CCTV could not be the be all and end all of crime deterrence. It certainly did not reduce the incidence of violent crimes and there was insufficient detail about its impact on other crimes, cost effectiveness etc. At the same time to the general public, CCTV gave the perception of safety so fear of crime was reduced. **The Project Panel concluded that the CCTV Strategy should not support the use of dummy cameras as this would undermine the effectiveness of one of the key benefits of CCTV cameras, ie reducing the fear of crime. The public would assume there was a working camera in place and adjust their behaviour, their reaction to the Council would be very negative if they realised the camera was a dummy.**
- 2.11. The Project Panel considered the Evaluation Report's options on reducing costs. The Project Panel discussed how to plan CCTV and so potentially save costs by operating CCTV, where appropriate, during times of need or greatest public traffic. The Project Panel also considered that rather than cutting costs, options for revenue generation should be sought. Revenue generation was particularly important as over time Government funding sources for CCTV decreases because its focus shifts to other strategies. For example, the Council's legal department should check what scope there was for CCTV to enforce parking on double yellow lines and flytipping, or whether the Council could sell keyholding facilities. **The Project Panel concluded that a CCTV Strategy should consider cost effective deployment of CCTV, as well as identify options for revenue generation so that CCTV provision could be partially self-financing.**
- 2.12. The meeting discussed the option of relocating the Control Room as the current facility would be demolished. Enfield Council were looking for external partners to buy into their newly built CCTV Control Centre. The Project Panel felt that a partnership with Enfield may not sufficiently focus on Waltham Forest's needs. Dr Pollak advised that an Enfield partnership could run the risk of not getting what Waltham Forest wanted but this could be combated by ensuring a strong client role.

The Project Panel felt a partnership with Enfield could feel like loss of control and giving up CCTV just when Waltham Forest CCTV was getting larger. Additionally the Project Panel felt that local residents and the Borough's police would not view a move to Enfield positively. **The Project Panel favoured requesting the Metropolitan Police Service to host the Waltham Forest CCTV Control Room – this would be reassuring for the Council and the public, as well as being an effective partnering to tackle crime in the Borough.**

- 2.13. The meeting discussed the deployment of mobile cameras. Mobile cameras had come about as a result of technical progress rather than through any evaluation of their effectiveness. Mobile cameras were useful for dealing with crime hotspots and changing patterns of offending plus over a period of time, their deployment could be linked to changing priorities of a CCTV Strategy. Fixed cameras on the other hand were best deployed in areas of high crime or other problems eg Walthamstow Market. **The Project Panel supported investment in mobile cameras and suggested that extending CCTV coverage in the south of the Borough may not be the best next step, particularly in the absence of a CCTV Strategy which detailed the expected outcomes of such expansion.**
- 2.14. The meeting was advised that the Waltham Forest CCTV Control Room was well managed and maintained. It was run in accordance with all the relevant legislation by capable staff. The only growth area in the work of the section would be to develop more innovative, joined-up thinking with other Council departments and external partners over issues such as enforcement and partnership initiatives. **The Project Panel concluded that innovative schemes such as Lambeth Council's secondment of police within their CCTV unit should be actively pursued.**

### **3 THE PROJECT PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1 **The Project Panel requested additional information on the number of cameras per ward and that the Report should compare crime statistics on a seasonal as well as quarterly basis because there are seasonal fluctuations in crime so comparing January-June with July-December is not robust.**
- 3.2 **The Project Panel concluded that installation of CCTV, across the country, had been reactive, rather than strategically planned to meet explicit outcomes (eg reducing fear of crime, combating flytipping, streetcrime, etc).**
- 3.3 **The Project Panel concluded that a CCTV Strategy was required to ensure that CCTV provision in Waltham Forest was planned and therefore effective. In particular, a CCTV Strategy was essential to guide decisions on extending the CCTV scheme.**
- 3.4 **The Project Panel believed that the CCTV Strategy should be based on a set of agreed outcomes (eg decreasing the fear of crime, combating flytipping, generating revenue such as buslane monitoring or keyholding). The agreed outcomes would then define the necessary operational requirements (eg to decrease fear of crime how should CCTV be ideally extended or not extended, to generate income where should the investment be targeted). Finally the operational requirements would in turn ensure correct decisions were made on the technical requirements for the system (eg should mobile CCTV cameras be purchased, should cabling be installed).**

- 3.5 The Project Panel concluded that reducing the fear of crime had to be an essential objective of a CCTV Strategy, as it would improve the public's perceived quality of life.**
- 3.6 The Project Panel concluded that a CCTV Strategy must seek to equitably address the psychological as well as physical effects of crime.**
- 3.7 The Project Panel concluded that the CCTV Strategy should not support the use of dummy cameras as this would undermine the effectiveness of one of the key benefits of CCTV cameras, ie reducing the fear of crime. The public would assume there was a working camera in place and adjust their behaviour, their reaction to the Council would be very negative if they realised the camera was a dummy.**
- 3.8 The Project Panel concluded that a CCTV Strategy should consider cost effective deployment of CCTV, as well as identify options for revenue generation so that CCTV provision could be partially self-financing.**
- 3.9 The Project Panel favoured requesting the Metropolitan Police Service to host the Waltham Forest CCTV Control Room – this would be reassuring for the Council and the public, as well as being an effective partnering to tackle crime in the Borough.**
- 3.10 The Project Panel supported investment in mobile cameras and suggested that extending CCTV coverage in the south of the Borough may not be the best next step, particularly in the absence of a CCTV Strategy which detailed the expected outcomes of such expansion.**
- 3.11 The Project Panel concluded that innovative schemes such as Lambeth Council's secondment of police within their CCTV unit should be actively pursued.**