



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(d)**

**CABINET: 15 March 2016**

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**Report of: Director of Leisure and Wellbeing**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kevin Wright**

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**SUBJECT: CCTV CERTIFICATION SCHEME**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the Council to apply for Full Certification within the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's CCTV certification scheme.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Director of Leisure and Wellbeing be authorised to apply for Full Certification within the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's CCTV certification scheme.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 introduced the regulation of public space surveillance (CCTV) cameras in England and Wales. As a result the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice was issued by the Secretary of State under Section 30 of the Act to ensure that the use of cameras in public places is regulated and they are only used in pursuit of a specified purpose. The Code aims to balance the need for cameras in public places with individual's right to privacy. The Code applies to the use of surveillance camera systems that operate in public places in England and Wales, regardless of whether or not there is any live viewing, or recording of images or information or associated data. The West Lancashire Borough Council scheme is operated in relation to the prevention of disorder or crime and the reduction of the fear of crime. Additionally, it may be used in relation to public safety.

- 3.2 The Code states that a relevant authority (which includes a Borough Council), must have regard to the guidance in the Code when exercising any of its functions to which the Code relates. This includes the consideration of future deployment or continued deployment of surveillance camera systems to observe public places, the operation or use of any such surveillance camera systems, or the use or processing of images or other information obtained through the system.
- 3.3 As part of the Commissioner's role to raise standards, he has produced a self-assessment tool which enables organisations to find out how well they comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. Following on from that is the newly developed certification process that will enable organisations to be audited against the Code by a third party with the view to receiving a certification mark and a certificate issued by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner. This process will help to raise standards in the industry and enable organisations to demonstrate their compliance with the Code.
- 3.4 Any organisation that successfully achieves certification will be awarded a certificate of compliance from the Surveillance Camera Commissioner and will be able to make use of the Commissioner's certification mark on their website and other communications to indicate they comply with the Code. This will go a long way to reassure members of the public and other organisations that the organisation is complying with the Code and use surveillance camera systems and information gathered from them in the appropriate manner. In addition a list of organisations achieving certification will be published on the Commissioner's website. This Certification will therefore add further to the public confidence in our systems credibility and benefit for the West Lancashire community.
- 3.5 Compliance with the Certification scheme is not yet compulsory, but it is likely to become so or at least expected, as the Surveillance Camera Commissioner tries to improve standards.

#### **4.0 ISSUES**

- 4.1 There are two ways of applying for certification. One of these involves a desk top exercise and should result in a certification that lasts 12 months, following which full certification must be applied for, effectively giving 12 months to complete any necessary works.
- 4.2 The second method is to apply for full certification straight away, which may still result in an action plan for any minor non-compliance(s), but should result in a 5 year certification, as long as the standards are met.
- 4.3 Prior to January 2016, the self-assessment tool was completed for the Council's system and shows a good level of compliance with the relevant Code of Practice. As such, this second method is more appropriate for the Council.
- 4.4 If Members are minded to support the recommendation, officers will be required to formally apply to one of the accredited certification bodies, provide the relevant paperwork and assist with an on-site audit. This should result in the

Council being fully certificated for the next 5 years. The only requirement in this time is for officers to process an annual review.

- 4.5 The only other implication would arise if either the initial audit or the subsequent annual reviews identified that one or more cameras were not necessary. This would result in some work and possible expenditure to remove cameras (which could be used as spares). Removal of columns and associated electrical work, would be even more expensive, but would not necessarily be needed as long as the camera itself had been removed. If this issue arose it would be reported to Members accordingly.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 Effective surveillance using compliant overt CCTV systems is likely to reduce crime and/or the fear that is derived from criminal behaviours.
- 5.2 CCTV has a direct link to the Community Strategy in relation to improving safety.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Whilst there is an application fee for the initial certification and an annual fee for the review, the amounts involved are relatively small (approximately £700 to apply and approximately £400 annually), and they can be met from existing resources.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The Council must comply with or have regard to various pieces of legislation or guidance relevant to CCTV. Compliance with the Certification scheme is not compulsory, but would assist in demonstrating to residents that the scheme is used appropriately.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix 2 to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

1. Equality Impact Assessment