

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

Southwark CCTV Strategy

This Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment identifies the main issues for the CCTV Strategy in relation to equality, diversity and community cohesion. This is a new strategy; no previous assessment has been carried out on a CCTV Strategy.

Theme: A Safer Southwark

'CCTV in areas most affected by crime supported by relocatable cameras to tackle changing patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour'

Crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime do not affect people equally. People of different ethnicity, faith, age, sexual orientation, gender, and disability have different experiences. There is a correlation between areas of deprivation and higher crime rates. Crime analysis in Southwark indicates that crime disproportionately impacts on young people, both as victims and perpetrators. The residents' survey shows that although fear of crime has reduced, it varies across the community Council areas and impacts most on vulnerable groups such as older people, ethnic minorities groups and single women.

CCTV is most effective when it is part of a co-ordinated approach to a defined problem. Integrating Southwark's CCTV system with the Safer Southwark Partnership will ensure it is one of the tools available to tackle and reduce crime as part of a co-ordinated approach involving enforcement, prevention, and wider community action to engage communities in crime prevention and community safety. Incorporating CCTV into the Safer Southwark Partnership's annual strategic assessment process will provide a more rigorous process for future priority setting based on analysis and consultation. The 2009/10 Safer Southwark Partnership Priorities are:

- Serious violent Crime
- Preventing Youth Crime
- Anti-social behaviour
- Drugs and alcohol
- Reducing re-offending
- Communities and communications

Formally stating that Southwark's CCTV system will be used to support Safer Southwark priorities provides clarity about how priorities for the system are set.

The introduction of clear criteria will provide transparency for installation of new cameras. Developing more flexible relocatable CCTV system helps provide more flexible tool to tackle changing patterns of crime anti-social behaviour and fear of crime to support priorities identified through the Safer Southwark Partnership's annual strategic assessment process.

Theme: Equipment and Infra-structure

'A well maintained system and investment in appropriate technology to make it more effective and minimise costs.'

A well-maintained system is important to ensure the Council meets its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act to ensure that any personal information stored is fit for purpose and handled appropriately.

If cameras are to be removed it is important that this is communicated to local communities and this needs to include vulnerable and hard to reach groups. This will need to include information to allay fears of increased crime and anti-social behaviour following the removal of a camera. This might include details of how a problem has been dealt with so the camera is no longer required, or information about alternative measures to tackle local issues.

Theme: Proportionate

'use of CCTV by Southwark Council will be proportionate and in line with the Council's CCTV Code of Practice'

The Council is aware that although there is a strong public demand for CCTV, not everyone supports it and some people have concerns about appropriate use, invasion of privacy and growth of a surveillance culture. The Council's CCTV Code of Practice governs the use of the CCTV system to ensure it meets legal requirements under legislation such as the Data Protection Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. The CCTV Code of Practice is designed to ensure the system is only used appropriately, supported by documented procedures and audit trails. Public perception and confidence is essential for the effective operation of the system therefore the CCTV Strategy also needs to communicate to address this and work through the Community Safety Communications strategy to involve vulnerable groups and groups who could consider themselves inappropriately targeted.

The establishment of the independent visitors' scheme will assist public confidence. This will include a volunteer recruitment plan outlining what action the scheme will take to recruit a diverse group of visitors. Becoming an independent auditor will require a level of commitment that not everyone is able to make, so this should be augmented by inviting vulnerable groups to visit the monitoring suite and talks to community groups.

The Council's CCTV Code of Practice will be published on the Council's website. Information about individual's rights to access images of themselves ('personal data') is already available on the Council's website. This will be reviewed to assess if it needs to be provided in any other ways such as other languages in line with corporate guidelines.

Theme: Working in Partnership

'we will work with residents, businesses and other organisations to make best use of all CCTV in Southwark'

The Safer Southwark partnership falls under the umbrella of Southwark's Local Strategic Partnership, which will help provide a network of organisations and consultation mechanisms to ensure vulnerable and hard to reach groups are involved.

Theme: Communication

'we will promote the CCTV system and its results to reassure the public and reduce fear of crime'

Communication is essential for CCTV to be effective. The CCTV communications approach needs to build on the experience of the Safer Southwark Partnership communications work to reach vulnerable and hard to reach groups. This underpins the whole of the CCTV strategy if it is to be successful in reducing people's fear of crime and helping to create more cohesive communities.