

CM13.4. Public CCTV Biennial Report 2018-2020

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Purpose of Report

To provide Council with the Public Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) System Biennial Report July 2018 to June 2020 and to seek endorsement of the recommendation.

Background

On 22 June 2015 Council endorsed the establishment of a public CCTV System in the Albury Central Business District (CBD) which became operational in December 2017. There were 52 cameras installed to provide surveillance coverage of Dean Street, the Volt Lane Carpark and QEII Square. This project was jointly funded between AlburyCity and the Federal Government under a Safer Streets Program grant, at a cost of \$729,905.

On 24 July 2017, Council endorsed a suite of documents that provides guidance on the management of the CCTV System, including the CCTV Policy framework and the CCTV Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedure (Code).

To ensure that the CCTV System complied with the adopted Code, there was a requirement that an annual evaluation report be developed to assess how the CCTV System performed against identified parameters. As part of these requirements, the first evaluation report was presented to the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) on 15 August 2018.

Subsequently, on 27 August 2018 Council endorsed the first *Public CCTV Annual Evaluation Report* that assessed the system's performance from December 2017 to June 2018. The report identified the system as compliant with the Code and successfully meeting the expectations of stakeholders. The community reported improved perceptions of safety and it supported the operations of the NSW Police in responding to crime in the Albury CBD.

In consideration of the *Public CCTV Annual Evaluation Report 2017-2018*, Council endorsed at the 27 August 2018 Council Meeting the following:

- a. The Public CCTV Evaluation Report 2018 be received and noted;
- b. CCTV operations be subject to a 2 yearly audit process with the inclusion of CCTV as an item for the internal audit plan to be presented to the ARIC at the October 2018 meeting;

- c. The impact of the management of the CCTV System on specific Council staff positions be reviewed and evaluated as a whole by the CCTV Working Party and presented for consideration by Council's Management Executive as part of the organisational restructure;
- d. The use of ongoing surveys to understand trends in the community's perception of safety;
- e. The continued promotion of the benefits of the CCTV System in collaboration with the NSW Police in an effort to improve safety perceptions within the community;
- f. Further investigation of the need for CCTV in the Lavington CBD Precinct with a subsequent report to Council and a further report outlining the feasibility of placing mobile CCTV cameras at roundabouts in Lavington and North Albury in order to deter hoon driving;
- g. An application for Round 3 of the Safer Streets Programme be submitted; and
- h. Further consideration of the deployment of portable CCTV cameras as a deterrent.

These above actions have now been implemented or are in the process of being finalised. Accordingly, the evaluation of CCTV operations is now produced biennially, commencing from the 2018-2019 financial year.

It is important to note this current evaluation only relates to the Public CCTV surveillance system that is monitored by the NSW Police Force and installed throughout the Albury CBD. AlburyCity operates other internal CCTV surveillance systems installed within publicly accessed buildings and facilities such as the Albury Library Museum, Monument Hill War Memorial and Council's Administration Building. The operation of these internal systems is not part of the biennial review.

The Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 has been developed to review whether the CCTV System was functioning within the established objectives and parameters as outlined in the Code from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020. The overall goal of the review is to provide Council with feedback on its performance and whether the service is being well received, and to give future direction as to where performance and management of the system can be improved.

Issues

The 2018-2020 biennial review of the Public CCTV System in the Albury CBD reports on the independent Audit outcomes, assesses the performance of public CCTV to ensure compliance against Council's adopted Code, sought community, business, and police feedback about its operations, and makes recommendations for system management and operational improvements.

Biennial Audit

During the current reporting period, in March and April 2019 the first internal audit of the CCTV System was undertaken by the Centium Group as part of Council's approved 2018-19 Internal Audit Plan. The focus of the audit was on Privacy and Records Management mechanisms. The System had been in operation for approximately five months at the time of the audit. The overall review rating for the System was effective. The report highlighted the System is well designed and has highly effective controls over the critical risks associated with public CCTV operations. The audit report also identified several areas that present opportunity for improvement with respect to practices. Those recommendations are further outlined in the attached AlburyCity Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-2020 (Attachment 1).

A review of the Code was presented to Council at the 16 December 2019 Council meeting. Several issues were identified to advance and refine protocols by enhancing best practice methods, including improving operational capabilities based on recommendations by the Auditor. Revisions to the Code and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AlburyCity and the NSW Police Force were considered, and Council adopted the following actions:

- a. Receive and note the report;
- b. Adopt the amended CCTV Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedure, including the objective of 'Contribute to a decrease in the Albury LGAs rate of criminal behaviour for assault (non-domestic violence), steal from retail, malicious damage and resist or hinder officer';
- c. Update the Public Policy and Procedure Register with the finalised document; and
- d. Continue to work with NSW Police to measure outcomes from CCTV.

Code Requirements

The biennial review of the CCTV System in the Albury CBD specifically evaluates as a minimum the following elements as defined in the Code:

- i. Assessment of its impact upon CCTV Project objectives (within the Code);
 1. Contribute to a decrease in the Albury LGAs rate of criminal behaviour for assault (non-domestic violence), steal from retail, malicious damage and resist or hinder officer.
 2. Increase Community Satisfaction Survey results relating to community safety.
 3. Decrease the incidence of malicious damage in the Volt Lane car park.
 4. Support Police operations through provision of live CCTV feed.
- ii. Any views of the public on the operation of CCTV in the Albury CBD;
- iii. Operation of the Code; and
- iv. Whether the purposes for which CCTV in the Albury CBD was established still exist.

The following provides a summary of the performance review of the CCTV System against the above. Greater operational detail is provided in the attached AlburyCity Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-2020.

Assessment of its impact upon CCTV project objectives

1. Contribute to a decrease in the Albury LGAs rate of criminal behaviour for assault (non-domestic violence), steal from retail, malicious damage and resist or hinder officer.

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) agency report the four offence types show a stable five-year trend across the Albury Local Government Area. However, assessing the impact of the CCTV System on these offence types is not quantifiable, as Council is unable to obtain concise quantitative data at the micro level of data analysis corresponding to the location of the CCTV System. The BOCSAR agency does not provide data at the street level, the smallest level available is categorised by suburb or by postcode.

Additionally, the NSW Police Force are not able to quantify the number of arrests or convictions

that are directly attributable to the CCTV System. The use of CCTV as a crime management tool is part of a suite of approaches that Police use in the process of gathering evidence to determine criminal intent. The types of individual approaches used as part of an investigation, including CCTV footage, is not recorded as part of the NSW Police Force record management system logged against individual crime incidents. However, qualitative evidence provided by the Police indicates the CCTV System does contribute to the identification and prosecution of offenders in the Albury CBD.

AlburyCity will continue to work with the NSW Police to seek to develop suitable protocols that assist in the collection of useful information to inform conclusions and support decision-making.

As part of continuous improvement and in preparation for the inclusion of new CCTV Systems, objectives will also be revisited whilst developing and updating the governance and reporting protocols for the entire AlburyCity Public CCTV network, which is scheduled to commence in early 2021.

2. Increase Community Satisfaction Survey results relating to community safety.

The Community Satisfaction Survey conducted in February 2020 indicates that people are slightly less satisfied with the delivery of community safety across the Albury LGA than reported in 2018. However, the ranked importance of community safety remains stable across reporting time periods.

This measure is indicative of general safety concerns across the Albury LGA and does not necessarily reflect attitudes within the Albury CBD, nor can those attitudes be directly attributed to CCTV.

As part of revisiting objectives, further consideration should be given to redefining objectives, as overall LGA community safety issues do not directly provide a valid measure for evaluation of CCTV in the Albury CBD as a crime prevention tool.

3. Decrease the incidence of malicious damage in the Volt Lane car park.

This objective has been met as a reduction in the number of incidents of malicious damage, including graffiti vandalism, in the Volt Lane car park can be inferred from a decrease in the costs that Council expends on repairing damage. The data indicates that costs to repair damage from vandalism in 2019-2020 has decreased and similarly the costs for removing graffiti has decreased as well over a five-year period. This represents a 30% decrease in malicious damage costs from pre-CCTV operations in 2015-2016 to 2019-2020.

Anecdotal reports from the Police indicate they respond to unlawful activities in the Volt Lane car park when observing live images from the monitoring point in the Police Station, corroborating community reports of criminal activity as they occur. Therefore, it is deduced that due to the CCTV coverage in the Volt Lane car park that Police can respond more rapidly to any incidents, which may have acted as a deterrent to criminal activity.

4. Support Police operations through provision of live CCTV feed.

This objective has been met based on feedback provided by the NSW Police – Murray River Police District. Feedback received from the Albury Police indicates the CCTV System has significantly improved their capacity to prevent and detect crime. It assists in the identification of offenders, reduces the time to investigate criminal offences, supports witness accounts of incidents, can de-escalate, or prevent criminal offences occurring and provides a level of safety for Police as activities are monitored through the live CCTV feed at the monitoring point in the Albury Police Station.

Police requests for footage have increased significantly over time, from 37 in 2018-2019 to 68 in 2019-2020. CCTV continues to support Police operations in the detection and identification of offenders and that Police are using the CCTV System as part of criminal investigations.

As reported earlier, in collaboration with the local Police further consideration will be given to developing a means to measure policing outcomes that use the CCTV System.

Views of the public on the operation of the CCTV in the Albury CBD

During June and July 2020, two surveys were conducted to continue to understand trends in the community's perception of safety, particularly in the Albury CBD. A copy of the data analysis for the *Results Community Perceptions of Safety Dean Street Survey – June 2020* and the *Results Business Perceptions of Safety Dean Street Survey – June 2020* is presented in Attachment 2 and 3 respectively of the Biennial Report.

Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 health pandemic, there were 78 community members who responded to an electronic survey and 37 Dean Street business traders who were interviewed by telephone. The data indicates that most people are aware that CCTV surveillance is in operation in the Albury CBD. Of the 78 respondents to the Community Survey, there were 88% of people who reported feeling either very safe or safe while in Dean Street during the day, with 44% feeling either very safe or safe after dark.

The analysis of results to the Business Survey indicates 81% of business traders believe that Albury CBD is a safer place following the installation of CCTV. They also report that CCTV had a significant impact on improving security measures because it supports the Police in the identification of offenders leaving their businesses. There are 72% of business operators who do not have private surveillance outside their businesses and rely on the public surveillance system to offer a sense of protection against criminal activity.

The community view the CCTV System in the Albury CBD as a worthwhile crime prevention measure.

Operation of Code

The Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 identified that the Public CCTV System in the Albury CBD is effective and compliant with the Code according to all set requirements. A minor amendment

to the Code was endorsed by Council in late 2019 to establish whether an electronic data transfer protocol between AlburyCity and the Albury Police for retrieved footage was not completed due to resourcing being reallocated during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, trials are planned to recommence in early 2021.

Whether the purpose for which CCTV in the Albury CBD was established still exists

The purpose of the CCTV surveillance system to assist in the reduction of street crime, violence and antisocial behaviour through the prevention and detection of criminal activity in the Albury CBD remains valid, as evidenced by the data presented in the evaluation report.

The recommendation by the Auditor in April 2019 to clarify the purpose and audience of the Evaluation report was considered. It was determined that only the public system that is monitored by the Albury Police required a biennial report, which was endorsed by Council at the 16 December 2019 Council Meeting. Accordingly, the focus of the Evaluation Report was adjusted to reflect this refinement in audience and purpose.

The distinction between public and internal CCTV surveillance systems has expanded over time. While the current Code integrates both systems, it requires reviewing to provide greater clarity around core functions and operating procedures that are specific to the legislative requirements and the needs of the different user groups for each system.

While the evaluation has identified the CCTV System in the Albury CBD has met the objectives and requirements of the Code, there are further opportunities for improvement. Several recommendations are proposed in the Evaluation Report, which will be progressed at an operational level.

Upgrades and Expansion

Council has endorsed the growth of the public CCTV surveillance system with several projects currently in process, these include:

- Additional cameras in Dean Street to provide greater coverage of the area;
- Installation of a public CCTV System in the Lavington CBD; and
- Trialling two temporarily fixed CCTV Systems and one trailer mounted CCTV System for a period of six months.

These will be reported in the subsequent review period.

Evaluation Report Recommendations

The Public CCTV System Biennial Report July 2018 to June 2020 has identified several areas where Council can make improvements to the overall operation, governance and reporting protocols of both Public CCTV Systems and internally operated CCTV Systems. The recommendation requiring consideration by Council is to:

- Undertake a review of the CCTV Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedure incorporating the expansion of the Public CCTV System, delineating between the Public CCTV System and AlburyCity's internal CCTV Systems by developing independent governance and reporting objectives and protocols for the Public CCTV Systems.

This recommendation supports the findings of the internal Auditor's report conducted in the middle of 2019 and provides an opportunity to make refinements due to the rapid expansion of the public system into Lavington and mobile CCTV deployment trials. It also provides opportunity to clarify and provide clear guidance between public and internal operations that have different legal requirements, and the unique needs of AlburyCity and the community relating to surveillance.

Albury 2030

The Public CCTV System provides a framework to deliver on the following Albury 2030 strategic themes and actions:

- Theme One – A Growing Sustainable Economy:
 - 1.2 Improve visitors and residents' experiences.
 - 1.2.4 Continue to enhance Albury and Lavington CBDs.
- Theme Three – A Caring Community:
 - 3.2 Albury's key community safety indicators continuously improve.
 - 3.2.1 Develop and implement strategies to improve community safety and amenity.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – The Report outlines the expansion of CCTV into Lavington and the pilot mobile CCTV System. The expansion of CCTV will require resourcing and an update of the Code, policies and procedures. Council officers are currently reviewing resourcing in these areas as part of the Communities functional review, to ensure business risk is mitigated and the prioritising of the development of associated legal and procedural documentation.
- **Corporate Risk** – The Report provides the community with the assurance that governance and legislative requirements are being adhered to, and outlines to the community what has transpired and what is proposed. This to ensure the system is managed effectively and diligently. Council will continue to publicise and educate people on the potential benefits of the CCTV System to improve the public's confidence in the safety of the area.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – The Report identifies that the NSW Police have made extensive use of the Public CCTV System which has assisted in resolving crime issues in the Albury CBD. This improves community safety and has also been used to enhance the safety of police officers.
- **Environmental Risk** – No risk identified.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – The expansion of the public CCTV System to other locations in Albury is addressed in the Report. Where future CCTV Systems are identified, appropriate oversight will be undertaken by the Public CCTV Working Group to ensure the integrity and compliance with the Code for all Public CCTV Systems operated and managed by AlburyCity.

Community Engagement

Consultation occurred with senior members of the NSW Police Murray River Police District – Albury Operational Command, who reported the System acts as a valuable investigative tool and is fully embraced by members in the prevention and detection of crime in the Albury CBD.

To provide insight into community perceptions of public safety and CCTV awareness, community surveys were conducted to enable the evaluation of the Albury CBD system. The results of these surveys are identified and discussed in the evaluation report and surveys will be replicated in future years to enable trend analysis.

The Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 will be made available on Council's website under the CCTV page, following endorsement by Council.

Options

1. That Council receives and notes the Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 and adopts the following recommendation:

Undertakes a review of the CCTV Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedure, incorporating the expansion of the Public CCTV System and delineating between the Public CCTV System and AlburyCity's internal CCTV Systems by developing independent governance and reporting objectives and protocols for the Public CCTV Systems.

Recommended

This option is recommended as part of the continuous improvement of AlburyCity's operation of Public CCTV and to ensure the purpose and objectives of the public facing CCTV System will continue to be met.

Or

2. That Council receives and notes the Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 and does not adopt the recommendation.

Not Recommended

This option does not support the continuous improvement of AlburyCity's operation of Public CCTV Systems.

Or

3. That Council receives and notes the Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 and adopts an alternative recommendation.

Not Recommended

Conclusion

The Public CCTV System Biennial Report July 2018 to June 2020 assessed the performance of the 52 public CCTV cameras installed in Dean Street, Volt Lane carpark and QEII Square to ensure compliance, and that objectives were being met. The evaluation found the System was compliant with legislative obligations and has been well managed with no complaints received.

However, there are aspects of the listed objectives in the CCTV Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedure that have not been able to be measured or reported against. This is due to Council's inability to access quantitative data at the micro-level of analysis.

The data indicates a positive improvement to the community perception of safety and crime, and that community and business operators continue to support the use of the Public CCTV in the Albury CBD. Police anecdotal evidence suggests the CCTV System has significantly improved the way they prevent and respond to crime in and around the Albury CBD. It assists in the identification of offenders, reduces the time to investigate criminal offences, supports witness account of incidents, can de-escalate, or prevent criminal offences occurring and provides a level of safety for police as activities are monitored via a live feed. Police requests for footage have almost doubled since the last reporting period. Additionally, the maintenance costs associated with graffiti and vandalism in the Volt Lane car park is reducing over time.

Council is making improvements to the existing system and installing supplementary cameras in two black spot locations, expanding the CCTV network into the Lavington CBD, and piloting a mobile CCTV program to deter hoon drivers and reduce anti-social behaviour for a six-month trial.

Overall, the CCTV System is well managed and continues to deliver highly effective controls over the critical risks associated with public CCTV operations, and is compliant in all legislative aspects. The CCTV System is a key component of AlburyCity's approach to enhancing community safety and security in the Albury CBD.

Recommendation

That Council:

- a. Receives and notes the Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20; and
- b. Undertakes a review of the CCTV Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedure, incorporating the expansion of the Public CCTV System and delineating between the Public CCTV System and AlburyCity's internal CCTV Systems by developing independent governance and reporting objectives and protocols for the Public CCTV Systems.

Attachments

1. Public CCTV System Biennial Report 2018-20 (DOC20/240372).
2. Results Community Perceptions of Safety Dean Street Survey - June 2020 (DOC20/247784).
3. Results Business Perceptions of Safety Dean Street Survey - June 2020 (DOC20/247815).