

# Enhanced safety in High Rise Flats via CCTV Monitoring

Date: 20 March 2024

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Report to: Chief Officer, Housing

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief summary

Since the Council's High Rise Strategy was approved by Executive Board in 2016, a programme has been underway to complete CCTV upgrade programme to our high rise stock - replacing the obsolete DVTeL CCTV system installed in high rise blocks across the city. These blocks have been connected to local recording solutions, until the full fibre network is rolled out by IDS. Works are now complete to a large proportion of blocks and we are proposing to implement a pilot for CCTV monitoring.

The report proposes a 12 month pilot delivered by LeedsWatch to undertake live monitoring of the 2000 (approx) cctv cameras in 26 high rise blocks and manage the requests for footage from Housing Officers and external partners such as the Police. The pilot will help us to determine resources needed to deliver an effective CCTV monitoring service and inform plans for any wider roll out of CCTV monitoring across all high rise blocks.

There is currently a concierge service in place at 7 high rise sites across the city. As an expensive, resource intensive service with unclear impacts it is proposed that the concierge service is scaled back from 7 to 3 sites for the period of the pilot in order to finance the cost of the pilot.

## Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer of Housing is asked to approve the creation of 6 temporary part-time CCTV Operators based in and managed by LeedsWatch to undertake the 12 month pilot of CCTV monitoring across 26 high rise blocks
- b) The Chief Officer of Housing is asked to support the proposed reductions in the concierge service from 7 to 3 sites.

## What is this report about?

- 1 In 2016 the Council's Executive Board approved a High Rise Strategy, a strategy for the management of and investment in the Council's 116 high rise blocks in the city. Community safety was an important priority of the strategy with an aim to put in place CCTV monitoring across all high rise blocks.
- 2 Since October 2016, the High Rise CCTV upgrade programme has been underway, replacing the obsolete DVTeL CCTV system installed in high rise blocks across the city. These blocks have been connected to local recording solutions, until the full fibre network is rolled out by IDS. Once fibre is installed, these blocks can be connected to LeedsWatch to enable live time viewing of approx 2000 CCTV cameras, undertake remote diagnostic & fault reporting and provide CCTV footage to Housing Officers, LASBT, Police and others as required.
- 3 It is proposed to deliver a 12 month pilot which will cost £218k p.a. for 6 part-time CCTV Operators recruited and managed by LeedsWatch. 26 high rise blocks will be included in the pilot. The scheme will provide 24/7 monitoring of cameras including bank holidays. Any incidents requiring a live time response will be passed to LeedsWatch Response Officers or the Police as appropriate and details of the incident and action taken is recorded so that Housing teams can take follow up action when required. Housing teams may use the information to support the effective tenancy management of the block and support cases of anti-social behaviour when proportionate to do so.
- 4 An important function of the CCTV is to enhance feelings of safety and security to residents of the block. 26 blocks have been identified by Housing Leeds which include blocks where there are longstanding or periodic community safety concerns, but along with a range of blocks where there are no significant community safety concerns including a Retirement Life block. This will help us to understand the monitoring need for different types of blocks as we consider a wider roll out. Included within the pilot are 11 blocks which currently receive a concierge service via Civic Enterprise Leeds (CEL).
- 5 LeedsWatch will provide quarterly reports of the number of incidents, how many were responded to in live time, actions taken and outcomes where known. Alongside this Housing will also collate feedback reports of the number of incidents it dealt with, actions taken and outcomes where appropriate to do so. Progress will be managed through monthly operational meetings between LeedsWatch and the Housing Leeds with quarterly review meetings to monitor the progress with the pilot and identify any issues and improvement opportunities. The pilot will also enable Housing and LeedsWatch to consider the longer term resourcing needs for a wider CCTV monitoring roll out including the following:
  - the number of operators needed to effectively monitor 2000 cameras
  - the number of requests that may be generated by Housing Officers and the resource needed to furnish these requests
  - the ongoing maintenance requirement for the High Rise CCTV network
- 6 There is currently a concierge service in place at 7 high rise sites across the city. The concierge service provides a team of on-site guards carrying out regular patrols and addressing any security concerns at each site between 5pm and 1am on a daily basis. The service has been more effective in some areas than others. The reassurance to residents and impact on community safety has worked well in some clusters of blocks, however in other areas there has been concern about the effectiveness of the service and limited feedback between the concierge and housing teams. Occasionally due to resourcing pressures we need to remove the concierge from individual sites, with little impact on community safety in blocks and few concerns raised by residents. The cost of the concierge service is approx. £110k per block per

year, therefore totalling £770k across the 7 sites. As an expensive, resource intensive service with unclear impacts it is proposed that the concierge service is scaled back from 7 to 3 sites for the period of the pilot and that the savings of £400k are used to fund the cost of the CCTV monitoring pilot, with the remaining saving contributing towards wider HRA savings. The concierge service will remain at 3 sites where it is not possible currently to provide CCTV monitoring until a point that they become compatible with LeedWatch, at which point these blocks may be brought into the pilot. There are 19 concierge staff working for CEL on behalf of Housing Leeds across those 7 blocks, reducing to 3 blocks would mean that reduction of 8 FTE's across this service.

### What impact will this proposal have?

- 7 The 24/7 monitoring of CCTV at the pilot sites will deliver additional security enhancements to the pilot blocks, offering reassurance to residents that any community safety issues are seen and responded to in live time and helping residents to feel safer in their block. It will also ensure that any maintenance issues are identified and reported promptly.
- 8 Social Housing Regulation requires us to have a robust approach for managing community safety. The Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard requires social landlords to work in partnership with partners to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in neighbourhoods. One of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) reported to the regulator is % tenant satisfaction with the landlord's approach to managing anti-social behaviour. As at Q3 2023/24 Leeds reported that 55% of tenants were satisfied with Housing Leeds' performance in managing ASB. Whilst this is an improving position performance from 2022/23 (42%) it is below other similar large urban local authority landlords and so a particular priority for Housing Leeds. The delivery of this pilot supports our aim to strengthen our approach to the management of community safety in high rise and to prevent anti-social behaviour. We will monitor the impact of the pilot by monitoring changes in customer satisfaction in high rise on this indicator during the course of the pilot.
- 9 The CCTV monitoring may have wider benefits to the service – helping to deter resident or visitor damage or leaving items in communal areas or helping to identify residents who may be vulnerable / possible safeguarding concerns so that follow up action can be taken. The number and types of incidents will be monitored during the pilot to understand the positive impacts, which will be used to inform the longer term service offer.

### How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 10 One of the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to provide safe and sustainable places that protect and promote health and wellbeing. The proposal will help to deliver enhanced safety of our high rise blocks which will in turn promote health and wellbeing of residents.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 11 The proposal to deliver a CCTV monitoring pilot and scale back the concierge service has been discussed at senior leadership level within Housing Leeds and there is support to providing the enhanced security model.
- 12 The proposal has been worked up jointly with senior managers in LeedsWatch. The Head of Service in CEL has been consulted on the proposed changes to the concierge service.
- 13 The Executive Member for Housing has also been consulted and supports the proposal. The Executive Member acknowledged that the concierge service may offer some support to vulnerable tenants and asked that the CCTV monitoring offer considers how we monitor resident wellbeing and vulnerability.
- 14 There has also been consultation with Trade Union colleagues. Trade Union colleagues queried if the proposal was a pilot as ideally they would like to see the continuation of the Concierge Service until a decision is taken that this will be a permanent change. The service outlined that since the approval of the High Rise Strategy in 2016 it has been the service's intention to roll out CCTV monitoring and so the pilot is to deliver a small scale rollout in order to identify longer term resourcing requirements and delivery model rather than considering if CCTV monitoring will be supported as a principle. TU colleagues outlined that they are not supportive of any staffing reductions that included in this proposal. TU colleagues also asked how the Concierge Service's on-site guards could be supported to increase their chances of being successful in applying for the CCTV monitoring roles. The service outlined how all 18 staff will be supported to identify their individual needs and preferences, the affected staff will enter the talent pool and based on their earnings package are likely to be matched to the CCTV monitoring roles as part of the recruitment process and put forward for a suitability chat. Support can be provided in terms of visiting the service to see what the role involves and supporting individual training needs. TU colleagues asked if on-site guards could be included within a ringfence for the CCTV monitoring roles but HR confirmed that this would not be possible as these are new vacancies and so the posts will need to go through the usual Vacancy Challenge Process and all staff who are in the Talent Pool need to be given an equal opportunity to be matched. Further specific detail about the options available to the on-site guards will be discussed as part of a separate Trade Union consultation.
- 15 Once the decision has been taken we will engage with local Members to make them aware of the pilot and reductions in concierge service and make plans to engage with residents ahead of the change. Consultation will also need to take place with the Trade Unions as the decision could lead to a Managing staff reductions situation for a number of CEL staff.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 16 The staffing costs of delivering a 12 month pilot which will be £218k p.a., for 6 part-time B1 CCTV Operators (29 hours per week) operating 24/7 and working shifts of 6am-2.30pm, 2pm-10.30pm, 10pm-6.30am; allowing for a handover period to complete paperwork and pass on any issues to the incoming operator. The roles will be line managed by Team Leaders within LeedsWatch.
- 17 LeedsWatch will undertake the recruitment and management of this project and will ensure appropriate resources are available, aiming to get staffing in place and fully inducted trained and Police Vetting checked by June / July 2024.
- 18 The cost of the pilot will be funded from savings delivered from scaling back concierge services from 7 to 3 blocks (£440k) resulting in an additional saving of £222k. There would need to be a reduction of 8 CEL staff from the 19 who work across this service. Workforce reductions would be managed through voluntary measures such as VLS and Flexible Deployment into other roles in CEL to try and mitigate the need for compulsory measures. Due to the working times and 7

day coverage these staff receive enhanced payments and rota payments that would be unlikely to be available in other sites/roles.

- 19 Some cameras at blocks included in the pilot require repair. Orders have been placed for this work to be completed ahead of the pilot starting. It is intended that the costs of such repairs will be funded by the additional savings from the reduction of the concierge offer.
- 20 During the course of the pilot Housing Leeds will work with LeedsWatch to identify what work is required to the 3 sites where concierge services will remain to identify what investment is required in order to make the CCTV at these sites compatible with LeedsWatch.
- 21 During the course of the pilot consideration will be given to options for the wider roll out of CCTV monitoring in blocks beyond the pilot. Any such roll out will give consideration to the cost and benefit of the monitoring and resources available in the HRA budget to fund a longer term model.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 22 There are a number of risks to the project as follows:
  - Risk of delay in approval for recruitment to the CCTV Operators as a result of the recruitment freeze will create a delay in the start of the project which could impact negatively on the savings that will be achieved. This risk will be minimised by presenting a strong business case to the vacancy panel.
  - Once this decision has been taken we will liaise with CEL to agree a plan for scaling back of concierge services at 4 blocks to be aligned with the start of CCTV monitoring in June / July. If there are any delays in the start of the pilot there is a risk that neither the concierge and CCTV monitoring will be in place at some of our higher risk blocks. This will be managed by allowing a month or so overlap in concierge and CCTV monitoring.
  - There is a risk that Members and residents are worried about the removal of the concierge service as this is a visible staffing presence and challenge the decision to remove it. This risk will be minimised by ensuring a robust communication plan for both local Members and residents ahead of the change.
- 23 Risks associated with the project will be monitored via monthly meetings up to implementation and during the pilot period through a risk plan.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 24 The recommendations within this paper are not subject to Call In as they are within the delegated authority of the Director of Communities, Housing & Environments.
- 25 The monitoring of CCTV live footage means personal data is being viewed in live time. A Data Privacy Impact Assessment will be put in place to ensure the robust protection of personal data viewed via the cameras and used to report incidents and management action to the service. Access to and requests for footage will be managed by LeedsWatch working in conjunction with Information Governance as required.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

Other options were considered including continuing the concierge service and out of hour patrols. This was discounted as it is expensive and resource intensive. The CCTV monitoring pilot will enable the live monitoring and deployment of an appropriate response at a much greater number of sites.

### **How will success be measured?**

26 Success will be measured by an accountability framework and the subsequent monitoring of key performance indicators set up by Housing and LeedsWatch.

**What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

27 Creation of the posts and associated recruitment will begin with immediate effect and the LeedsWatch will be responsible for delivering the pilot. Following vacancy release from the vacancy panel and the talent pool, LeedsWatch will seek an external advert to fill the 6 roles, working with HR and the LeedsWatch training provider to maximise the number of qualified applicants. All staff working in the LeedsWatch Control Room are required to undertake Police vetting which takes approx 12 weeks and has been built into the forward plan. Once appointed, all staff undertake a 1 week induction into the role, service and Council. Within 3 months, CCTV Operators will undertake the SIA CCTV training course to ensure operators are aware of GDPR and industry guidelines.

28 It is aimed that the pilot will be up and running by the end of June / early July. Progress with preparations for implementation will be monitored via monthly meetings.

**Appendices**

- None