

## **COUNCIL: 9 JUNE 2021**

### **RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

Please find below the response to a request by Councillor McNicol for supplementary information in relation to Shoplink and the Council's CCTV service provision.

The undernoted information has been provided by the Executive Director (Place).

#### **Background**

The purpose of the Shoplink system is to provide immediate intelligence of crime and antisocial behaviour amongst shop keepers and Police Scotland. Shoplink is not the responsibility of North Ayrshire Council CCTV service, but we can however assist in utilising Public Space CCTV in the area when informed of incidences of reported crime, recording images where possible and passing information and evidence to Police Scotland.

The Shop Link system was implemented by the old NACCTV Co Ltd. When Public Space CCTV was brought in house, the practice around the Shoplink system was found to be in breach of data security legislation and Ofcom rules. Graham Emans - CCTV Coordinator assisted the local businesses in getting Shoplink set up with the company GDS who they pay a fee to. The business owners were given guidance by both Police Scotland and NAC to help aid them remain legally compliant.

The Shoplink system is managed by a company called GDS and paid for by the local retail businesses. The radios they use are treated like a neighbourhood watch type process in which shops help each other by discussing arising issues.

If a shop assistant or bar owner gives descriptions over the radio of a perpetrator that they can confirm has stolen items or behaved in an antisocial manner within their shop/bar, the North Ayrshire CCTV team will respond and confirm what they have heard, they will then update the Locality Police officers on the perpetrators whereabouts and organise CCTV evidence if needed. If an incident happens when the Locality Police team are not on shift, the shop/bar must contact 101 or 999 depending on the seriousness of the incident. The Control Room will not take details of crime via the CCTV team as they need the full details from the retailer of what happened within the shop/bar. It should be noted that the North Ayrshire CCTV Team do not have access to CCTV within Shops and Bars, they are only responsible for Public Space CCTV, they therefore have not witnessed the reported behaviour and cannot provide evidence.

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The Council and Police Scotland work within the remit of the legislation to assist as best they can, utilising their joint resources. Unfortunately there have been occasions where the shops' expectations have been outwith this scope when shops have used the radios at times looking for the CCTV service to manage behaviours within their premises instead of contacting Police Scotland directly. There have been occasions where shops have reported to the CCTV service that people have stolen from them and the service has worked with Police to assist in tracking down the perpetrator only to find that it was a false report. There have also been incidences of bar owners requesting that the CCTV service contact Police Scotland in order for action to be taken against underage drinkers or people with addiction issues as the bar owners are reluctant to do this by themselves. As detailed above, the CCTV team cannot see this behaviour and cannot provide evidence, it is for bar owners to manage the behaviour within their premises, contacting Police Scotland for assistance if they are unable to do so.

The Rivergate Shopping Centre in Irvine has the same radio link system, set up in the same way as the Saltcoats retailers. It works well in the Rivergate as the shops use the radios correctly and know that the NAC CCTV Service is on hand when needed and that they will work with the Police. If Locality Police Officers are not available, the shops/bars/mall security contact 101/999. The Saltcoats retailers have been advised that they could make contact with Rivergate to discuss how they operate the system and get advice as to how they can get the most out of the system whilst remaining legally compliant.

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**Direct response to questions detailed below.**

	<b>Supplementary Questions</b>	<b>Information</b>
1	Shopkeepers pay £28/month to participate in Shoplink, but shopkeepers stating that when they try to contact the CCTV service via Shoplink, they don't get to speak to anyone but are instead asked to call Police on 101. They feel this is not as good nor as quick as reporting in via Radio to CCTV.	As detailed above, there would appear to be a misunderstanding by the shopkeepers as to the purpose of the system. They pay GDS for the use of the equipment which allows them to communicate amongst themselves in relation to perpetrators of crime and antisocial behaviour. Locality Police also carry the radio and when available can respond, when not available the retailers must contact 101 or 999 depending on the seriousness of the crime. The role of CCTV is to listen in on the conversation between the retailers and to track perpetrators when they enter Public Space capturing CCTV images on CCTV as necessary and passing information and evidence to Police Scotland.
2	Are the cameras monitored 24/7?	Yes, there are 145 throughout North Ayrshire and 5 in Saltcoats. We have four teams who operate a four on four off 12 hour shift rota covering 24 hours per day, 365 days per year
3	How many CCTV operatives are there?	There are 12 Full time members of staff, 1 Coordinator and 5 relief staff
4	How many CCTV operatives monitoring or in the monitoring station at any given time? (Ref made to social distancing requirements – suggesting an impact on service)	There are 3 Officers on each shift (1 senior officer, 2 officers) In addition the coordinator is there at different times throughout the day and evening.  There has been no change throughout the Pandemic, the service has remained fully operational.
5	What other duties do the operatives perform?	In addition to CCTV, the Officers have a range of duties including Fire Monitoring for High Flats, Concierge Duties, Out of Hours call handling, Key holding, ad hoc support. There is a minimum of one member of staff dedicated to the monitoring of CCTV at all times, should there be a major incident in place, there is the ability to transfer the CCTV control over to Police Scotland.