Public Space CCTV in Scotland:
The Current Landscape and Future Opportunities

Executive Commentary

Contents

1.   Background, rationale and aims of the research

The Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) is the national forum for officers who are responsible for the strategic development of community safety at both local and national level, in the private, public and voluntary sector. The SCSN act as a collective voice for community safety in Scotland and through working collaboratively with its members and partner agencies, it champions community safety and influences the shaping and development of national policy and local delivery.

The Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) commissioned this work to review Public Space Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Scotland. The research project reviews the current landscape for Public Space CCTV across Scotland and identifies some future opportunities in terms of Community Safety outcomes. COSLA, Scottish Government, Police Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland are all parties of interest in this work and comprise the project advisory board; involved from the Project Initiation Document to the brief that was used in the tendering process to reviewing drafts of the report.

Since 2014 a review into Public Space CCTV in Scotland has been mooted. Some small pieces of research and research proposals around this bigger issue were completed in 2015 and 2016 but no key research outputs were finalised nor has the central question of what the future for public space CCTV in Scotland been answered. Discussions with SCSN and partners in 2019 agreed that this work needs to be resurrected and the start of this was the commissioning of a piece of work which explored the current landscape and future opportunities.

This review is offered as a starter for a conversation about what the future might be for CCTV in Scotland and highlights some key considerations on this topic. It builds upon the 2011 Strategy for CCTV in Scotland. It does not make, nor did it ever seek to make judgement on current arrangements or recommendations on what should happen next. In bringing together a current picture of CCTV in Scotland we hope this review will help Local Authorities, Police Scotland and other partners in their collective local discussions and decisions. We trust this review will also be helpful to support any national discussions that take place.

In 2019, 28 authorities and other key stakeholders including Scottish Government, Police Scotland, COSLA and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland were engaged through mixed methods including an online survey, a full day workshop, webinars and one to one phone conversations. This evidence, in addition to some desk-based research gave rich insight into the current landscape and explored the future opportunities for CCTV in Scotland. This document summarises the key findings, and is accompanied by a lengthier summary from Perform Green. The full report is available on request by emailing info@scsn.org.uk.

The SCSN would like to extend its thanks to all of the individuals and organisations that took the time to participate in this research and to the commitment from the members of the Project Advisory Board to supporting this research. Thanks also to the Perform Green team who undertook the research.

2.   Method

In order to produce this report, a detailed research exercise has been conducted building on existing knowledge. Within tight timescales, a considerable number of research activities have been undertaken that have helped to build a picture of the current CCTV landscape, and opportunities, in Scotland.

The research methodology used for this project included:

- A thorough desk research exercise to identify relevant case studies supplementing existing Perform Green's knowledge of the Smart CCTV landscape.
- Designing, administering, managing and analysing an online survey.
- Creating and running an in-depth workshop using a focus group of key stakeholders from Local Authorities, Police Scotland, Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, COSLA and the SCSN.

- Creating and running a series of virtual webinars to support other stakeholders who were unable to attend the focus group.
- A series of one on one telephone interviews for further clarification and to test assumptions.
- A further data gathering exercise to widen participation following earlier tight deadlines.

In 2019, 28 authorities and other key stakeholders including Scottish Government, Police Scotland, COSLA and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland contributed data and views which were used in the production of the report and this document represents the key findings.

Note: Some participants responded via multiple channels.

Survey Responses	Focus Group Attendees	Webinar Attendees	Interviewees
28	18	18	11

The evidence used in this research is both quantitative and qualitative and provides a rich insight into the current landscape of CCTV and reflections on future opportunities from those that are currently working within the CCTV sector in Scotland. This represents a wealth of knowledge and experience from across the sector.

3.   Key Findings: Current Landscape

The research found that there are mixed views on the success of the 2011 strategy, with over 60% of respondents stating that it was still relevant to some extent, but a significant minority of people surveyed felt it was not at all relevant in 2019 due to the length of time that has passed. Two separate local authorities noted that they found some of the information in the strategy useful in helping them to plan for rebuild activities.

The primary public safety benefits of CCTV are well understood by participants, however participants found it challenging to quantify the benefit of CCTV in the local area to support business cases for investment.

CCTV practitioners are well trained, very knowledgeable and passionate about their area of business. There are a large number of good and promising practices present across local authorities in Scotland – in terms of shared arrangements, frameworks and procedures, income generation and new technologies - though mechanisms for sharing these practices and learning from other arrangements would be welcomed by research participants. Some practitioners would welcome a national practitioner forum or steering group to facilitate this. The accompanying reports go into more detail on some of these practices.

There are some areas of good practice and pockets of investment, however many local authorities are working with an aging estate of fixed-position analogue cameras, as well as dated control room software – 70% of the estate is analogue and only seven local authority areas (from 25 that responded) have a wholly digital estate. Maintenance and network costs are increasing.

Primarily as a result of the tough public sector finance environment, budget constraints have resulted in, broadly speaking, a lack of funding and investment in the public space CCTV estate. There are a range of funding and management responsibility arrangements in place across Scotland which is to be expected; but participants in the research highlighted that this is not without its challenges.

Although there is some interest in cutting-edge technologies such as facial recognition, machine learning and analytics, the reality is that most local authority areas are not in a position to consider investing in them yet, whilst others are. These are accompanied by ethical considerations which are currently a topic of some interest to the Scottish Parliament and implications and opportunities arising from the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill (passed on 10th March 2020).

There is a real appetite for peer support and learning between CCTV practitioners which is to be commended. Forums for local practitioners have been suggested as a way of facilitating this learning and support.

4. Future Opportunities

This section was informed by discussions at the focus group workshop, webinars and one to one telephone conversations as well as desk-based research about new ways in which CCTV is being used.

Note that during the time between the research phase and publication of these reports the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill was introduced into the Scottish Parliament and was passed on 10th March 2020. This creates a Biometrics Commissioner, who will oversee how policing bodies take, store, use and dispose of data such as finger-prints, DNA samples and facial images. Once in force, the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill will ensure that the police's approach to biometric data, including the potential use of new technologies such as facial recognition software, is carried out in a lawful, effective, proportionate and ethical way. The research has not considered the implications or opportunities this Bill offers but it should be considered in any future national and local conversations on public space CCTV in Scotland.

There is clear support for an updated strategy that provides a unified vision for CCTV in Scotland: when asked if Scotland should have a unified vision for CCTV strategy, 70% responded that they either largely or completely agree with the idea.

The primary public safety benefits of CCTV are well understood, however participants would welcome more work to quantify the benefit of CCTV and use this to support business cases for future investment. This work would also allow exploration of the other potential benefits of public space CCTV and take advantage of these opportunities.

In 2009 Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services undertook a review recent published evidence regarding the impact of CCTV on crime which could support these future conversations.

It can be accessed at https://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/294462/0090979.pdf

Mechanisms for sharing good practice and learning from other area's arrangements would be welcomed by research participants. A number of suggestions of the form this could take can be found in the accompanying reports. A standardised training programme in Scotland would be welcomed by research participants.

Adopting standard practices and procedures can contribute towards a unified vision and coherent strategy for CCTV delivery. Adopting the highest level of adherence to British Standards can promote appropriate stewardship to citizens and visitors and is an opportunity for the future. Noted throughout the reports is the need to balance national standards with the flexibility for appropriate local variation and discretion.

Participants thought that there were opportunities offered by hosting different services, income generation opportunities, shared procurement and management models, sharing technology platforms; and not all opportunities were dependent on technology.

The accompanying reports go into more detail of the opportunities offered by advanced technology such as Smart CCTV, data analytics and biometrics; in addition to opportunities for income generation.

5.   Issues to Consider

The future opportunities are not purely technological advances or dependent on investment in technology - for example consistency in frameworks and standards, training, opportunities for learning and practice sharing – but it is clear that many of the future opportunities lie in technological developments or are dependent on these; and therefore conversations on the future opportunities may be hindered if funding is excluded from this wider discussion. Similarly, it may be prudent to include the variety of funding arrangements between interested parties in this conversation.

The research has shown clear asks from the sector on investment, funding, sustainability, leadership and coordination in relation to public space CCTV.

Notwithstanding the 2011 CCTV strategy, there is a desire by research participants for some unified (national) vision and clear direction of travel for public space CCTV in Scotland.

Any future conversations should consider the implications and opportunities offered by the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill (which was introduced and passed during the write-up phase of this work and as such the research has not considered this) and connect with other broader ethics conversations happening in Scotland.

In bringing together a current picture of CCTV in Scotland we hope this review will help Local Authorities, Police Scotland and other partners in their collective local discussions and decisions in relation to the future of public space CCTV. We anticipate this review will also be helpful to enable and support any national discussions that take place between relevant partners.

6. Review on a Page

Aim	**To understand the current landscape for Public Space CCTV across Scotland and identify future opportunities in terms of Community Safety outcomes.**

Desired Impact	To create an up to date picture of the Public Space CCTV estate in Scotland to understand the current provision and gaps/challenges, and to use these to start a conversation about the potential future use and development of Public Space CCTV in Scotland.

The Study	The study gathered information which gave an overview of the current level of provision of public space CCTV in Scotland including standards, technology, procurement training, resourcing and good practice. It also touched on the benefits of public space CCTV and set this within the context of the 2011 National strategy for CCTV in Scotland.	The study also considered the future of public space CCTV in Scotland including potential use of new technologies, the different needs of rural and urban communities, developing a shared vision and potential options for models of procurement and management.

The Research Questions	Has the 2011 Strategy delivered on its promises; is it still relevant; what has changed since it was created and what has remained the same?	Does Scotland has a unified vision for CCTV strategy; should it?	What current approaches are there to public space CCTV in Scotland? This covers technology, procurement, training and standards.
	What are the benefits of CCTV services?	What are the current gaps and challenges in relation to CCTV in Scotland?	What could future approaches look like? And where are the opportunities?

Evidence Gathering	*The evidence use in this research is both quantitative and qualitative and provides a rich insight into the current landscape of CCTV and reflections on future opportunities from those that are currently working within the CCTV sector in Scotland and represent a wealth of knowledge and experience.*	
	Desk-based research of 2011 CCTV strategy	Focus group workshop
	Desk-based research for case studies on good practice	Webinars with those unable to attend the workshop
	Online survey	One to one phone call interviews

Conclusions	*This piece of research is offered as a starter for a conversation on the future direction and opportunities for public space CCTV in Scotland.*	
	Clear elements of good practice in Scotland with well trained and committed staff.	Clear need for more evidence to demonstrate the value of public space CCTV in relation to community safety.
	Clear considerations over investment and funding; and leadership/direction.	Clear considerations of how maintenance and investment in new technology could be managed and delivered.
	Clear demand/support for a new vision for CCTV	Clear opportunities for sharing practice within the sector.