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The following information is 'Confidential' by virtue of the provisions of Section 100A (2) or 'Exempt' by virtue of the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 17 October 2022

EXEMPT MATTERS

The following items are exempt under Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraphs indicated

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Exempt Questions to Portfolio Holders

(Paragraph 2, 3, 7 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.)

The question had been formally submitted by Councillor Hoptroff but was asked by Councillor Swindlehurst during the meeting itself.

Q1. "CCTV positively deters opportunistic crime. Safety in our town centres is paramount when considering individual well-being, business success and regeneration.

In the past month I have received nine reports of repeated antisocial behaviour in Leek Town Centre.

We are advised there is a budget of £212,000 allocated to spend on CCTV in 2022. (Response for Cllr Worthington Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Sept. 2022.)

Cllr Bentley and myself have both met with our new Chief Inspector who is appalled at the lack of functioning CCTV and it's subsequent detrimental effect on town centre policing.

When will we have effective and efficient CCTV in our three towns?"

Response from Councillor Ward – Portfolio Holder for Communities:

The Council awarded a contract to upgrade the public realm CCTV system to OpenView in 2019 following a procurement exercise. The Council were supported in

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carrying out the technical aspects of the evaluation of bids by SGW Safety and Security Limited. The budget that the Councillor refers to in her question is the money allocated to this upgrade.

The project made good initial progress but delivery was then delayed as a result of the national lockdowns that were imposed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Although the upgrade of the control room was completed as the country reopened post lockdown, the upgrade of the cameras across Staffordshire Moorlands is not yet complete.

Post lockdown, OpenView have had a high staff turnover, have consistently missed deadlines, and have failed to communicate and update on progress.

To help move things forward, the Council recently commissioned SGW to carry out a technical review of the installation. This review confirmed that all cameras have been upgraded in Biddulph and Cheadle, but there remain issues with the reliability of the wireless connectivity. In Leek, two-thirds of the camera upgrades have been completed with similar wireless connectivity issues as in the other areas.

The Council has held regular meetings with OpenView throughout the contract and has regularly escalated problems to the company's directors. The Council made an initial payment around the time of the first lockdown but has refused to make further payments given the failure to deliver the contract.

OpenView most recently committed to completing all remaining work by Friday 7th October, but again failed to meet this deadline. We are awaiting a response from OpenView, but the Council will use all contractual levers at its disposal to ensure that the work is completed and to protect the Council's interests.

With regards liaising with the police, Council Officers regularly meet with the police to discuss issues and to work together to provide solutions. Responsibility for policing our town centres clearly rests with the police, and their Safer Nights campaign has delivered good results over the years - as has our joint work with the Council's Licensing Team. We will continue to support the police in their efforts through our local Community Safety Partnership.

Councillor Swindlehurst reiterated the negative impact of the anti-social behaviour on residents and businesses in the town centre which had occurred for long period of time. It was felt that some of these issues were due to a nightclub and food outlet being open until 3am. The licences for these establishments could be reviewed and it was suggested that a report could be considered by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date