



From the Leader of the Council
Cllr Philippa Roe

2 August 2016

Steve O'Connell AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Steve

Thank you for your recent letter. I understand the concerns that you and the committee have regarding the decision taken by Westminster's Cabinet. However, the City Council can no longer continue to subsidise an out-dated service primarily used by the police. This is an issue that every London borough needs to tackle and only a pan-London approach will address the concerns of the city as a whole.

As Sophie Linden stated in the Q&A session of the committee, this decision will only affect the Council's CCTV network. Other CCTV networks, such as those owned by TfL, private businesses, housing associations and many others, will remain operational. The Council's CCTV network is used primarily on a reactive basis by the police. Therefore, the usage data does not indicate that the loss of CCTV would result in more crime, given that evidence suggests it has little impact on deterring crime. The police have told us that CCTV is only used to assist in dealing with approximately 2% of all reported crime in Westminster. We do not know how many of the 2% of crimes resulted in successful prosecutions as a result of the use of CCTV.

The Council had set aside £1.7 million to update the CCTV system, provided a partner or partners agreed to support the on-going revenue costs of £1million per annum. After more than two years of discussions with relevant partners, we were disappointed that no one chose to enter into meaningful dialogue regarding the medium and long term strategies for the system. Westminster's Cabinet thus agreed to keep the £1.7 million in our capital budget to re-invest on public realm improvements, in order to 'design' out crime. Given that CCTV is primarily reactive, these investments are likely to have a much larger impact on deterring crime in our city.

Criminals do not care for borders and thus, the best solution to this issue would be to have a pan-London CCTV network. My colleague, Cllr Nickie Aiken, and I have been in discussions with partner agencies and businesses on this issue for some time. All have agreed that the best method to resolve this issue would be on a pan-London scale. I would strongly urge you and the

committee to liaise with the Mayor, as we have, and offer your support to a pan-London CCTV network – an option I believe he is considering.

On the 7th June, notice was given to G4S that the staffing contract will not be extended. ATEC have also been instructed to prepare for camera decommissioning from the 1st September. The 1st of August is the deadline for our partners to express an interest in taking over management of cameras, feeds and other assets. We are currently in discussion with both the police and several businesses, however no partner has yet approached the Council with a firm commitment to take over the CCTV network or feed in their area.

I hope that this better explains the Council's reasoning for the decision. I look forward to working with London Councils and MOPAC going forward in ensuring the city's safety.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philippa Roe', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Councillor Philippa Roe
Leader of the Council
Email: leader@westminster.gov.uk