

Medway Commercial Group statement

25 October 2018

Re: Kent Online article, published 20 October 2018

MCG not responsible for Medway's faulty CCTV cameras

An article published by Kent Online on 20 October 2018, under the headline "Fury over Towns' faulty CCTV", suggests that Medway Commercial Group (MCG) is to blame for the broken CCTV cameras in Medway not being repaired or replaced.

This view stems from a general misunderstanding of the contractual relationship between Medway Council, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and MCG, and also incorrect interpretations of the contractual arrangements.

Medway Council owns all of the CCTV infrastructure within the Medway towns, MCG maintains this equipment within a strict regulatory framework. MCG's highly-trained engineers regularly assess all of the cameras in Medway and report any faults to the CSP, who then decide whether or not to repair or replace the faulty or broken cameras.

In this particular case, MCG had recommended the replacement of the faulty cameras in Twydall and Gillingham High Street as the existing network connections and hardware was no longer economical to maintain. MCG is able to confirm that it has now received the go ahead to replace these cameras.

In both the 2016/17 and the 2017/18 financial years, the CSP decided to reduce the amount of funding for CCTV services within Medway — reducing the maintenance spend. The CSP is a multi-agency, cross party and community interest group, of which MCG has no input or control of.

Unsurprisingly, the decision taken by the CSP, has had a negative impact upon the quality of the CCTV maintenance service that MCG is able to provide in Medway

A review of the CCTV infrastructure in Medway is currently taking place. MCG has excellent knowledge of the infrastructure and is keen to work in partnership with the CSP to provide a long-term, sustainable solution that meets the needs and expectations of the general public and the CSP alike.

MCG continues to exceed its current contractual obligations, both in relation to monitoring and maintenance of the CCTV networks in Medway, and its other CCTV partners, including Maidstone, Gravesham and Swale.

It should also be noted that of all the partners, Medway has the largest suite of cameras, some of which have been in operation for over 20 years and whilst still effective, could be much improved with upgrades to more modern technology. Some cameras within the suite will require immediate upgrade and / or replacement.

In these instances, it is often more sensible to replace the broken cameras with new ones that are compatible with Medway Council's overarching Smart Cities agenda, which — if fully implemented — will deliver improved services and create lasting benefits for all the people of Medway and give greater longevity to the quality of the current service.