Call for costs of CCTV to be shared

Councillors adament that Aberystwyth should not bear the brunt of fees

ABERYSTWYTH residents should not have to pay extra council tax to help meet the running costs of CCTV, town councillors maintained last week.

Cynon St Ceredigion had sent a high-powered three-man team to address Aberystwyth Town Council in a bid to obtain funding towards the town's CCTV revenue costs.

Ceredigion's executive assistant Mark Elliott, county council Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Clr. Alan Lloyd-Jones, and finance department's Justin Davies sought to persuade Aberystwyth Town Council to contribute towards CCTV running costs. But after a 15-minute presentation, some councillors vehemently opposed their appeal.

Mr. Elliott told the meeting: "The Crime and Disorder Act led Ceredigion into a partnership to reduce crime, and the fear of crime. And Aberystwyth and Cardigan have benefited from CCTV. A £300,000 grant for community development of CCTV. And Ceredigion has applied for a £100,000 capital grant to upgrade CCTV to suit new, larger and more central area. Justin Davies quoted the CCTV equipment cost for the next financial year as £77,000."

He said: "At present, Ceredigion will have to fund all the costs. And Clr. Lloyd-Jones said: "The benefit is partnership. The quality of life is better because of CCTV. But maintenance costs are expensive - that is the bottom line."

Councillors were told that some abnormal camera lead pictures by radio waves, and an agreement with British Telecom was nearing an end, this was being looked at.

Clwyd Chris Simpson told the council: "This council is happy to help with one-off capital expenditure, especially for radio pictures. But we don't want to load the ratepayer with revenue costs."

"There is a Dyfed Powys concept - it's a police matter really. Why should Aberystwyth people pay twice?" Mr. Elliott said that in CCTV reduced crime, the town attracting more people who spend money.

Clwyd Chris Simpson responded: "Money brought into town by visitors goes to businesses. This council gets its money from individual domestic rate. Businesses pay a uniformed business rate - we get nothing from business rates."

He was supported by Clr. Carol Kilburn, who runs a business in the town: "Most businesses are trying to make ends meet. It's time to make others understand how people in the town feel. I'd like to see positive things coming from other community councils."

"The aim is on you to spend business rates that come back to Ceredigion in Aberystwyth, where the most businesses are. Ceredigion should allocate a share of business rates for this."

Clwyd Carl Williams said: "Many businesses live outside Aberystwyth, but it's their businesses that benefit from CCTV. I'm sure this council would support you, but on a pro rata basis with other community councils."

Town councillors referred the appeal to its finance sub-committee.