CCTV cameras will be switched off in towns across Ceredigion at the end of the month unless an 11th-hour funding deal can be thrashed out.

Ceredigion County Council, which has already made three camera monitors redundant, will scrap its CCTV funding from the start of April. It is hoping to save £150,000. But an urgent review of the effectiveness of the cameras has been called for by Dyfed Crime Commissioner Christopher Salmon. He wants the county council to join a partnership to save at least some of the cameras.

Aberaeron, New Quay and Cardigan town councils have rejected a suggestion that they help pay for the cameras. Aberystwyth Town Council at a meeting on Monday night voted not to provide cash, and Lampeter Town Council is expected to follow suit on Thursday night.

Questions have been asked as to why the police should not pay the total cost of the cameras seeing as they are used in the battle against crime.

Mr Salmon said the police offered to contribute and the offer remained open but that they must use money "wisely".

He will review the effectiveness of the provision, ways to improve or change the technology, the possibility of mobile CCTV and other short-term options.

"I have an open mind on CCTV regarding its effectiveness in cutting crime and antisocial behaviour," he said.

"I believe that decisions on installing and employing CCTV -- or alternative technology -- can only be taken after careful consideration of need, effectiveness and cost.

"The police have never funded CCTV in Dyfed-Powys. "Nevertheless, I am determined to ensure that our communities are safe and so I have proposed a review to assess the appropriate future provision that balances safety, privacy and cost." Aberystwyth town councillor Martin Shewring, who is their representative on the CCTV partnership, said they had only found out in February that Ceredigion County Council was definitely pulling the plug.

He said: "It gave us no time to look for partners and we had to make a decision purely on a financial basis. "Aber's system has developed in such a way that huge areas are covered giving greater peace of mind to locals, businesses, students and holiday makers which contributes to keeping insurance costs down and to the Purple Flag initiative. "It's encouraging the Commissioner is looking at ways to fund it, but I feel they should be doing so anyway given they benefit from them as the end users and the cameras help their crime figures." Cllr Elizabeth Evans, a member of Aberaeron town and Ceredigion county councils agreed it was "unfair for town councils" to cough up.

"If the police feel it's such a valuable tool for them then they should fund it," she said.

"We can't justify it." Lampeter Town Council