



FOLKETINGET
STATSREVISORERNE



FOLKETINGET
RIGSREVISIONEN

October 2021
– 2/2021

Extract from Rigsrevisionen's report
submitted to the Public Accounts Committee

Police patrolling and CCTV

1. Introduction and conclusion

1.1. Purpose and conclusion

1. The purpose of the police is to contribute to maintain safety, security, peace and order in society. This is attained through preventing and fighting criminal offences against the citizens, so that they can be safe and feel secure.

2. It is essential that the police manage their resources effectively in order to provide maximum community safety, avert danger and prevent as much crime as possible. We have examined two of the methods employed by the police to accomplish this goal: patrolling and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance.

3. Frontline response is a core task for the police. According to a budget analysis from 2019, manning control centres and patrol cars require just under 2,400 man-years. The purpose of the frontline response is to keep communities safe through the protection of public peace and order and by averting danger to individuals or the public safety.

The police have not managed and coordinated patrols in a satisfactory manner, and analysis-based data have only to a very limited extent been used to secure suitable patterns of patrolling by car. This was the outcome of a budget analysis from 2015 that also pointed to a clear potential for targeting resources in areas, where better value for money in policing could be obtained.

4. Since 2018, the Danish Folketinget (parliament) has reserved funding for placement of 450 CCTV systems to contribute to an increased sense of security, prevention of crime and to inform investigations. Research shows that the effect of CCTV systems very much depends on their placement and the type of crime that takes place there. It is therefore essential that the police pick locations for the CCTV systems with the greatest potential for preventing street crime.

The police response unit

When a citizen calls the police to report a burglary, an accident or an assault, the response unit takes initial action. The response to these calls is determined in the control centre, which manages emergency turn outs, preliminary investigations, daily patrolling and special events that require the presence of the police like, for instance, football matches. The response unit also handles and considers cases.

Targeted patrolling

The term *targeted patrolling* is used, when the amount of patrolling generally matches the amount of crime in a specific area. This definition has been made by Rigsrevisionen, because the National Police has not defined the meaning of the concept.

The effect of CCTV

Rigsrevisionen examines the effect of the CCTV systems that the police placed in 2018 and 2019. We examine whether the cameras achieved two of three objectives set for their effect; preventing crime and/or informing investigation.

Police codes

It is the responsibility of the control centres to organise the deployment of patrol cars. They use codes to do so. There are codes for "Patrol car to location" or "Supervision". Each type of incident is registered with a four-digit code, indicating what type of incident the patrol car is responding to, at the time of registration.

Patrol time

Patrol time is the total amount of time that the police have patrolled in a given period of time in response to the pattern of crime in a specific area. For instance, the patrol time may have been spent on turn outs or patrolling in locations with a high concentration of crime.

5. The purpose of the study is to determine whether the Danish Ministry of Justice has ensured targeted patrolling and ensured that the police have placed CCTV systems where they have had the greatest impact on the fight against street crime. The report answers the following questions:

- Has the effort made by the police to accomplish targeted patrolling been satisfactory?
- Have the locations selected by the police for placement of CCTV had the greatest possible effect on preventing street crime?

6. In the opinion of the Danish National Police, Rigsrevisionen's analysis of targeted patrol cannot be used to demonstrate whether the police have optimised their front-line response. The analysis only shows whether patrol cars are generally patrolling the areas that are most affected by crime, based on number of reports. The analysis is not reflecting the variety of tasks that are solved by the frontline response. The Danish National Police is of the opinion that it is impossible to isolate the patrol time that is driven by patterns of crime. Rigsrevisionen agrees that the frontline response unit solves a variety of tasks, and draws attention to the fact that the police use 258 different codes for different policing activities. Rigsrevisionen's analysis includes six of these codes, which the police have categorized under turn-outs, patrolling and planned tasks, respectively. Together, these six codes make up 77 per cent of the overall time spent by the police on the front line. This means that the analysis isolates the patrolling time as accurately as the registration practice of the police allows, because it filters out a long list of tasks that are not directly part of police patrolling like, for instance, time spent on paper work in the office, assistance to other authorities and transporting individuals.

7. The Danish National Police is of the opinion that having focus on achieving the greatest possible effect on the number of reports and charges of street crime does not adequately consider the political ambitions behind the placement of CCTV, which included making the citizens feel safer. Rigsrevisionen notes that it appears from the fiscal act for 2018 and 2019 that the first CCTV systems were to be placed in "locations where experience shows a concentration of violence and disorder". It appears from a memorandum by the Danish National Police that the objective of the cameras was to increase the sense of security, prevent crime and inform investigation. The placement of subsequent cameras was intended to prevent and inform investigation of crime. The police have neither before or after placement of the cameras measured the citizens' sense of security in the areas, where the cameras were placed. This means that an assessment of the level of safety in selected locations, or the extent to which the cameras increase the citizens' sense of security, is not possible due to lack of data. In 2018, the Danish National Police identified reported street crime as one among several useful indicators of unsafe locations. Reported street crimes are therefore included in Rigsrevisionen's assessment of the locations selected by the police.

8. Rigsrevisionen initiated the study in May 2020.



Main conclusion

The Ministry of Justice has not ensured targeted patrolling and has not ensured that the police have placed the CCTV systems, where they have had the greatest possible effect on preventing street crime. The consequence of this is partly that the police fail to realize the potential of patrolling, and partly that the police could have charged more offenders based on CCTV evidence. Rigsrevisionen's study shows that the effect of CCTV could have been more than doubled – corresponding to minimum 389 additional criminal charges in one year – if the cameras had been placed in the areas, where crime is most concentrated, and not in the areas selected by the police.

The police effort to target patrolling has not been satisfactory

The police have not developed a strategy or set targets for the implementation of more analysis-based patrolling in order to achieve a higher degree of targeted patrolling. The police have failed to do so in spite of the fact that this was one of the objectives of the multi-annual police agreement covering the years 2016 to 2019 (extended to 2020).

Rigsrevisionen finds that the pattern of patrolling should reflect the pattern of crime. Rigsrevisionen has examined the patrol pattern based on GPS-data from the patrol cars. The analysis found that on average 28 per cent of the time, that the five police districts included in this study spent patrolling, was spent in areas with crime rates that did not justify that amount of police presence. Seventy-two per cent of the remaining patrol time in the five police districts was targeted, which, according to Rigsrevisionen's definition, means that patrolling generally matched the pattern of crime.

The locations selected by the police for placement of CCTV have not had the greatest possible effect on preventing street crime. Rigsrevisionen's analysis found that the police could have selected locations where the number of reported crimes was well over 140 per cent higher, which corresponds to just under 10,000 additional reported offences in 18 months.

The police have not selected the locations for the cameras on a sufficiently informed basis. The locations were not selected by the police based on systematic analyses of the level of crime in the potential areas. Nor had the police – prior to selecting the locations – secured an overview of the location of existing CCTV systems, because the cameras were not registered in their CCTV registry system (POLCAM). Not all the cameras were placed in locations where incidents of violence and disorder occurred regularly, as prescribed in the finance acts for 2018 and 2019. Thus, in 2018 and 2019, well over 14 per cent of the cameras were placed in locations where the number of reported incidents was less than 10 over a period of just under 18 months. This in spite of a considerably higher concentration of street crime in other locations with no cameras.

The five police districts in the study

- Copenhagen
- Western Copenhagen
- North Jutland
- South Jutland
- South East Jutland

Rigsrevisionen's analysis of effect does not demonstrate that the use of CCTV has prevented crime. The analysis did, however, show that the cameras provided useful evidence in criminal investigations. The cameras led to more charges for possession of illegal weapons, drug offences, violence and disorder. Overall, the cameras led to minimum 271 charges in 12 months. However, the best possible placement of the cameras based on patterns of crime could have led to minimum 660 additional charges.

Rigsrevisionen recommends that the police

- set targets for their patrolling and explore the opportunities in using GPS data from the patrol cars for patrol planning. Combining the professional and local knowledge held by the police with analyses of GPS data from the patrol cars can assist the police in determining how they can achieve a higher degree of targeted patrolling;
- explore the possibilities of measuring the effect of CCTV on the citizens' sense of security;
- target future placement of CCTV systems based on knowledge of their effectiveness in preventing certain types of crime.