

Down District Town Centre CCTV Scheme



February 2010



Ballynahinch ▪ Downpatrick ▪ Newcastle

Introduction

Down District Town Centre CCTV Scheme was launched in Downpatrick and Newcastle in July 2008 with funding from the Northern Ireland Office 'Looking Out for You' Town Centre CCTV Challenge Fund Competition. The scheme funded six cameras across Downpatrick and Newcastle. Down District Council provided funding for one further camera to be installed in each town, and an additional six cameras in Ballynahinch town centre. The CCTV Town Centre Scheme is managed by Down District Community Safety Partnership on behalf of Down District Council.

The system aims to:

- Prevent and detect crime
- Provide evidence to relevant enforcement agencies
- Maintain public order
- Prevent anti-social behaviour and nuisance
- Provide reassurance
- Promote economic wellbeing

The cameras are monitored from a control room in Lisburn, where recorded images can also be accessed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Incidents of Crime in Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and Newcastle

The key aims of the scheme are to reduce crime levels, help improve public confidence and decrease the fear of crime when working and visiting our town centres, and promote long term economic growth.

Incidents of Crime in Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and Newcastle (continued)

Crime Incident	Downpatrick			Newcastle			Ballynahinch		
	Aug 07 – Jul 08	Aug 08 – Jul 09	%	Aug 07 – Jul 08	Aug 08 – Jul 09	%	Aug 07 – Jul 08	Aug 08 – Jul 09	%
Offences Against the Person	147	140	-4.8%	157	154	-1.9%	22	11	-50%
Criminal Damage (including Criminal Damage to Vehicles)	266	199	-25.2%	293	230	-21.5%	22	4	-81.8%
Youths Causing Annoyance	312	316	1.3%	339	342	0.9%	21	7	-66.7%
Theft from Vehicles	9	11	22.2%	11	14	27.3%	1	0	-100%
Theft of Vehicles	10	11	10%	13	12	-7.7%	0	0	-
Robbery	5	6	20%	5	6	20%	1	0	-100%
Shoplifting	35	54	54.3%	35	55	57.1%	4	2	-50%

Operational figures taken from Ibase: Accessed 28 January 2010

Down Town Centre CCTV System	Aug 07 – Jul 08 (Prior to Cameras)	Aug 08 – Jul 09	%
Offences Against the Person	326	305	-6.44%
Criminal Damage (including Vehicles)	581	433	-25.47%
Youths Causing Annoyance	672	665	-1.04%
Theft from Vehicles	21	25	+19%*
Theft of Vehicles	23	23	0%
Robbery	11	12	+9%*
Shoplifting	74	111	+50%
Total number of Crimes **	1,708	1,574	-7.85%

Operational figures taken from Ibase: Accessed 28 January 2010

* Few incidents of this type were reported in 2006, any variation therefore creates a significant percentage change.

** Refers to the total number of crimes in the footprint area only



Incidents of Crime in Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and Newcastle (continued)

The information received from official statistics clearly shows that the introduction of the Town Centre CCTV Scheme in Down district has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of incidents between 2007 and 2009.

Although the Down District Town Centre CCTV Scheme has assisted in the prevention of crime, it will not eradicate it. The Community Safety Partnership recognises that public authorities and those organisations carrying the functions of a public service nature are required to observe the obligations imposed by the Human Rights Act 1998, and consider that the use of CCTV in designated areas a necessary, proportionate and suitable tool to help reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime and improve public safety.

It is recognised that operation of the Down District Town Centre CCTV Scheme may be considered to infringe on the privacy of individuals. The Partnership recognises that it is their responsibility to ensure that the CCTV Scheme should always comply with all relevant legislation and ensure its legality and legitimacy. The scheme will only be used as a proportional response to identified problems, and only in so far as it is necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, public safety, the economic well-being of the area, for the prevention and detection of crime or disorder, for the protection of health and morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Monitoring

CCTV cameras are monitored by Central Monitoring Services, part of the Federal Security Group from their control room in Lisburn. They provide evidential quality footage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In the period November 2009 to January 2010 the CCTV Scheme identified 23 events, 19 of which were detected by the operator using the CCTV equipment and the remaining four events were as a result of PSNI requests. Seven incidents took place in Downpatrick, four in Ballynahinch and the remaining 12 in Newcastle, breakdown as follows:

Theft	3
Assaults / Disturbances	9
Suspicious Behaviour	2
Criminal Damage	2
Public Nuisance	1
General Events	6



PSNI Viewing Requests

In the same period the control room received 24 viewing requests from the PSNI in relation to crimes within the area. 12 were negative results where no relevant footage was identified, 10 have been successful resulting in data being recorded and provided to the PSNI for investigation and two are still pending, breakdown as follows:

Hours Requested	11 hours 22 minutes
Total Positive Results	2 hours 59 minutes
Total Negative	8 hours 23 minutes

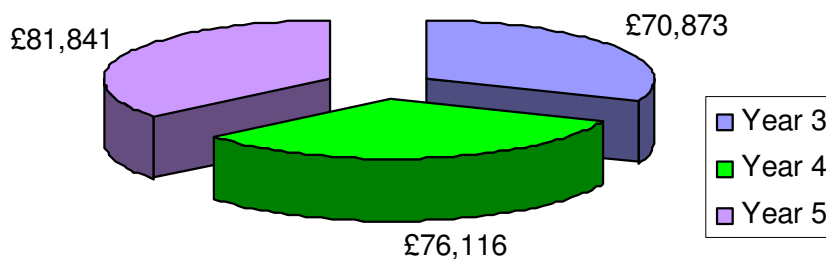
Publicity

Down District Council, Down District Community Safety Partnership and the local PSNI have identified the need to continue to publicise the presence and use of the system in order to gain community support and act as a deterrent for crime.

Costs

The Town Centre CCTV Scheme is subject to a five year budget and tender process which enables Down District Council to ensure value for money. To date, statistical analysis has shown a good return for ratepayers' money.

The budget profile which includes the connection, monitoring and maintenance of 21 cameras across Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and Newcastle over the next three years is detailed below:



Conclusion

This review report is one element used for the review process surrounding the operation and effective use of the system. The CCTV working group comprising PSNI and Community Safety Partnership officers meet with monitoring staff regularly to review the effectiveness of the system and implement change where necessary.

CCTV is a tool in the overall crime reduction strategy; however it will never stop all crime or anti-social behaviour. The system will make a substantial difference in the reduction of crime levels and is an effective way for the PSNI to investigate incidents and gain positive convictions through the magistrate's court.

Commitments

The Down District Town Centre CCTV Scheme is owned by Down District Council and administered by Down District Community Safety Partnership.

The staff undertake to:

- Be pleasant, helpful and courteous at all times
- Act with fairness, integrity and impartiality, according equal respect to all
- Identify themselves to all their customers
- Respond to all enquiries requiring a written response within five working days
- Give information and advice to customers on all areas of their work
- Answer the majority of telephone calls within 10 seconds

How to Tell Us What You Think

If you are pleased or unsatisfied with any aspect of the service provided by Down District Council then we would like to hear from you. Comments and complaints will help us improve our service.

If you have a complaint you can raise it informally with the person you have been dealing with. However, if you prefer, or if you are still not satisfied, you can contact Down District Council by telephoning 028 4461 0800 or in writing to Down District Council, 24 Strangford Road, Downpatrick BT30 6SR.

If you complain in writing, your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days. We will investigate any complaint thoroughly and give a response within 10 working days. If, after contacting Down District Council you are still dissatisfied, you can write to the Clerk and Chief Executive who will also respond to your complaint within ten working days.

If you are still not satisfied you can contact the Northern Ireland Ombudsman by telephoning 0800 34 34 34 or in writing to:

The Ombudsman
Freepost
Belfast
BT1 6BR

