

Doing more with less - how to cost effectively extend enforcement activities

By Tim Daniels, Sales & Marketing Director, Videalert

With the increasing pressure on budgets, local authorities are now actively looking for ways to reduce overhead costs and increase efficiency whilst maintaining a high level of public services. CCTV enforcement is not exempt from this challenge. In order to achieve this, councils can take some practical steps towards extracting greater value from their limited resources by utilising existing assets more effectively.

Process Automation

Switching to an automated, unattended enforcement platform will deliver higher levels of productivity at a lower cost than can be achieved with traditional, manually operated systems which require operatives to monitor each camera location to identify contraventions and construct evidence packs. When you consider that some council operations have in excess of sixty operators performing this manual function, it is easy to see how substantial reductions in staffing costs can be made. Importantly, councils that have automated the enforcement process have also reported up to a six fold increase in the number of contraventions captured in comparison to their legacy manual systems.

Digital Platform Approach

Using a single, multi-tasking digital video platform can further reduce costs when compared to legacy, single point product solutions. This platform approach delivers higher levels of future proofing as it supports multiple civil traffic enforcement, traffic management, parking, crime prevention and improved community safety applications simultaneously using the same infrastructure. In fact, several councils are now using the enforcement of moving traffic

contraventions to self-fund the deployment of cameras outside schools to enforce parking restrictions on the 'keep clears' and actively reduce the number of accidents involving children.

Integrating Mobile Enforcement

Mobile enforcement vehicles can also be integrated into this new generation of digital video platforms. This can be seen in Southampton where the council's new multi-purpose vehicle supports multiple traffic enforcement and community safety applications simultaneously in conjunction with the platform that is used for the CCTV enforcement of bus lanes in key areas of the city.

Videalert is now the UK's only supplier with the ability to provide the full suite of CCTV traffic and parking enforcement solutions comprising attended, unattended and mobile using the same intelligent platform.

Partnership Strategies

Centralised digital video platforms facilitate the sharing of data to multiple stakeholders, including the police, crime and safety partnerships, to leverage available budgets and achieve extended coverage at a lower cost. The sharing of CCTV infrastructure assets and real-time data by multiple stakeholders increases the value of the information captured and delivers significant cost savings.

Flexible Infrastructure

The latest digital enforcement platforms use standard off-the-shelf equipment and seamlessly integrate with existing CCTV systems and infrastructures used by local authorities. As well as supporting existing analogue cameras, such platforms allow a progressive migration from

analogue to digital camera environments. The ability for these platforms to support the industry standard (ONVIF) for IP cameras, access control and edge based video storage is crucial as it means that local authorities no longer need to be locked into products from a single vendor, and can choose "best of breed" to evolve their infrastructures as new technologies arrive.

Hosted Services

Videalert's DfT Manufacturer Certified hosted solution is easy to install because it does not require the procurement and deployment of any equipment within a council's IT infrastructure or software on local PCs for evidence pack review. As well as enabling additional enforcement activities to be procured on demand with installations taking place in weeks rather than months, this new breed of service requires no ICT involvement from councils and can be delivered through a variety of flexible commercial models to improve efficiency, increase income and deliver greater control over costs.

The latest fully managed Civil Enforcement as a Service (CEaaS) solutions are available for a fixed monthly cost per location or on a fee-per-PCN basis. They include the planning, supply, installation, commissioning and ongoing

maintenance of all necessary on-street equipment with the latest digital cameras and associated communications connectivity.

Low Emission and Clean Air Zones

Defra's proposed introduction of Clean Air Zones will target city areas where air quality problems are most serious to reduce the impact on people's health and create cleaner and healthier environments. Councils are already planning for the introduction of these zones, which will of course need to be cost effectively enforced.

Videalert's hosted platform automates the management and enforcement of CAZ and LEZ contraventions. With real-time identification of vehicles including make, model, colour, gross weight, engine type, Euro rating and CO₂ emission band, the system can determine whether an offence has been committed and/or whether the correct tariff has been paid for entry into the restricted zone. The system also provides real-time intelligence to determine the extent of contraventions in any target location.

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