



VIDEALERT DELIVERS EFFICIENT BOLLARD MANAGEMENT IN WATFORD TOWN CENTRE

With a population of more than 1.1 million people, Hertfordshire comprises an area of around 1,643 sq km and is part of the East of England region. The county borders London to the south, Essex to the east and Buckinghamshire to the west with Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire to the north.



The Challenge

As part of a major £180 million development programme to create a single 1.4 million sq ft retail destination in Watford town centre, Watford Borough Council, in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, wanted to create a more attractive, less polluted and safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians. To achieve this vision, new measures needed to be deployed including controlling vehicular access to the pedestrian dominated street, narrowing the road to allow more space for pedestrians and cyclists by relocating taxi and blue badge bays and re-routing some through bus services.

The councils also wanted to install rising bollards in Clarendon Road, south-west of Watford House Lane, and in the High Street, north-west of Market Street, to reduce the high number of vehicles that were illegally driving through the town centre and restrict access to authorised vehicles only.

County Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst praised the idea, saying: "Making this section of the High Street more pedestrian friendly and restricting it to buses only will greatly improve the shopping experience and allow for more people to enjoy the outdoor environment, especially with some extra seating and less traffic fumes."



The Solution

Ringway, part of the Eurovia Group and a leading provider of highway maintenance services to local authorities under the seven-year Hertfordshire Term Contract, was asked to install an IP-based ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) system to control rising bollards at both locations. The control systems, which utilised the same Videalert ANPR software technology as used at the De Havilland Campus at the University of Hertfordshire, were deployed on a hosted basis to automate the control of the rising bollards.

Commenting on the new scheme, Peter Taylor, Elected Mayor of Watford Borough Council, said: "We're widening pavements, stopping vehicles from illegally driving through the town centre

and generally smartening the whole place up. It will mean a more attractive, less polluted, pedestrian and cycle friendly town centre. And I hope that older residents and families in particular will feel safer with more space and less traffic coming through. The improvement works will lead to some disruption in the High Street but the end results will absolutely make this worth it."

The High Definition IP cameras combine ANPR with advanced Videalert analytics to accurately capture the number plate of each vehicle approaching the bollards. When an authorised vehicle is recognised, the ANPR system communicates directly with the MACS bollard control system to automatically lower the bollard and allow access.

The system works by storing the Vehicle Registration Marks (VRMs) of authorised vehicles on a 'whitelist' which is managed using a secure hosted server. Authorised users are able to access and update the list via a web browser to ensure that it is always up to date. In turn, the server communicates directly with each bollard location on an hourly basis to apply any updates or changes made. Should it be required, Watford Borough Council's CCTV control centre can override the system and manually lower the bollards.

The Videalert system also provides Hertfordshire County Council with the flexibility to move away from physical bollards in the future and adopt automated ANPR-based traffic flow systems.