



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Northumberland
County Council

CCTV & Signage in Urban Hotspots

Northumberland County Council – Fly-tipping Intervention Grant

Northumberland is mainly rural with an urban area which includes two towns that account for the main percentage of fly-tipping reports in the county. The council introduced **overt CCTV cameras with clear signage** to 2 hotspot locations. The project started in August 2023 and fly-tipping incidents were monitored 3 months before and 3 months after intervention. Across both locations, there has been a **21% decrease in fly-tipping incidents** and so far, the council have issued **4 Fixed Penalty Notice's (FPNs)**.

The Fly-tipping Issue

Both hotspots are **older housing areas with back lanes** which have high walls on each side which provide many opportunities for the dumping of waste without detection. The dumped items are **general household waste** anything from white goods to beds, sofas, furniture, and black plastic bags containing food and general waste. The council's usual means of investigation to try and identify culprits had proved to be inadequate as no evidence was available to reactively identify offenders.

The Intervention

CCTV: The council purchased overt CCTV cameras and placed them onto existing street furniture, such as lampposts. The council also purchased a commando unit to provide power. Both the unit and the CCTV cameras are portable and can be moved to other locations should the problem be displaced or deemed to be resolved. The equipment is easy to use, and each unit is supplied with a wi-fi enabler which connects to a laptop to download footage; the footage provides excellent evidence of incidents that take place up and down the back lanes and directly below the unit.



Signage: The council purchased 'CCTV in Operation' signs and placed them at every hotspot. The intention is that once the cameras are redeployed the signage remains in place and acts as a further deterrent. The signage was easy to implement and is attached to existing lamppost columns.

Media Campaign: The council publicised that CCTV was in use to tackle fly-tipping via social media and the local press.

'Love Where You Live': Separate to the grant funding the council had previously engaged with residents via a campaign to give advice regarding the lawful disposal of household waste. The council distributed flyers and shared the campaign message on social media and via the local press. Positive feedback was received from householders although the response was lower from residents in rented properties.

Partnership Working: The council collaborated with one town council as they provide finance for an Environmental Enforcement Officer to work full-time in the town; the officer provided investigation support to this project.

The Result

The project has shown **positive results** and there has definitely been a reduction in fly-tipping at both hotspot locations. Council officers have reported improvement of morale and motivation as they can witness results and improvement in the target areas.

The council have found that most suspects would seem to be residents at the locations, and it is hoped that as the message of the CCTV and warning of enforcement action is communicated that a behavioural change will take place in the future leading to a further reduction in events. The council has already received positive feedback from residents, including those that have been caught, that the area is much cleaner.

Hotspot 1: Although the CCTV has been in place for only 2 months fly-tipping incidents have significantly reduced but we are seeking to establish if displacement is a factor yet.

Hotspot 2: The council have found this area more problematic as the rear lanes are longer and the areas more expansive; therefore, difficult to concentrate on one area. However, the council are considering moving all resources to be placed in another area to see if that effects behaviour.

Location	Intervention	Pre-Intervention Monitoring	Post-Intervention Monitoring	Results
Hotspot 1	6 CCTV cameras & Signage	94 1 st May 2023 – 31 st July 2023	57 1 st August 2023 – 31 st October 2023	39% Decrease
Hotspot 2	4 CCTV cameras & Signage	121 1 st May 2023 – 31 st July 2023	116 1 st August 2023 – 31 st October 2023	4% Decrease

Data Source: Northumberland County Council Fly-tipping Stats

Other Relevant Data

Enforcement: Since installing the CCTV in hotspot location 1 the council has issued 3 FPN's and in hotspot location 2 the council has issued 1 FPN. The council are currently investigating 30 incidents across both hotspot locations; due to the CCTV evidence the offenders have been identified and this will lead to a FPN or prosecution.

Additional Feedback: The council has received positive feedback from Street Crews staff requesting additional streets are covered as their workload has been dramatically reduced

enabling them to focus on other areas and additional services. The local councillors have also seen a positive difference in the areas concerned.

Feedback

What went well?

The CCTV installed has proved to be robust (no incidents of damage reported to date) and is providing evidence of offending that the council are able to use successfully.

The purchase of the equipment and the installation was straight forward, and locations are readily available using existing street lamps.

In the hotspot areas of concern there has been a noticeable drop in fly-tipping confirming that the project works; even the most cynical now can see positive results. The council would look to expand the initiative to other areas of Northumberland but unfortunately, this will be restricted due to budget limitations.

What barriers have you faced trying to complete the project?

The equipment was purchased later in the project time-period due to issues with the council's procurement and the release of funding; there are safeguards in place within the spending regime at the council to prevent misuse and any spending must be correctly approved. This resulted in a 2-month delay; however, the project was successful and sufficient results have been collected.

What key information would you pass on so others can deliver this project?

Ensure that the whole target hotspot area is covered by CCTV, for example if rear lanes are your target use sufficient cameras to cover the whole lane. The council has found that this is more successful than placing a camera to cover a hot spot as this just leads to displacement of offending.

Ensure that sufficient staff are in place to monitor/download evidence from the equipment and that there is sufficient staff available to progress the investigations especially at the beginning of the project as the workload will increase significantly.

Equipment Inventory

Item	Supplier	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Value
Street Watch 480GB Full HD DVR CCTV Cameras	VIPA UK	£1,495	16	£23,920

Commando Unit (<i>for street light power needed for CCTV installation</i>)	CEE Norm UK	£450.00	19 <i>(3 spares to ease redeployment and mitigation of vandalism risk)</i>	£8,550
A5 Non reflective hard plastic 'CCTV in Operation' Signs	NCC Sign Services	£12.25	26	£318.50

Contact Details

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Defra's Fly-Tipping Intervention Grant: The Fly-tipping Intervention Grant supported projects trialling approaches and interventions to tackle fly-tipping. Administered by Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on behalf of Defra, this grant provided capital funding for projects at known fly-tipping hot-spots that showed the potential for improving infrastructure, raising awareness, and supporting enforcement activity.