

Wirral Council iDefigo Vodafone Case Study

Helping combat fly tipping at Wirral Council

iDefigo's partner Vodafone, has partnered with Wirral Council to help combat the growing problem of illegal fly tipping. The council has invested in Vodafone Smart Wireless Camera, an alternative to CCTV, provided by iDefigo, to address their need to capture illegal dumping offenders and keep the local environment rubbish free and safe for its local inhabitants.

Issue

Despite the excellent provision of waste collection services at Wirral Council, many areas of the borough suffer from the illegal depositing of waste of all types. This often occurs on highways, passageways and on green space areas and causes serious impact on local environmental quality and people's perception of the area in which they live. The perpetrators are typically residents who fail to use the waste services, or commercial businesses looking to avoid paying for disposal of the waste they generate as a result of their activities.

There are significant costs involved in dealing with the impacts of illegal fly tipping. The Council is estimated to spend approximately £3.6m per annum on street cleansing, the cost of cleaning fly-tipping alone on Council land is in the region of £180 per incident. The cost to the Parks and Countryside service, who must commission a contractor on each occasion, is circa £450 per incident. There are also hidden costs associated with forensic investigation to attempt to identify perpetrators, pollution of land, increased disposal costs and the social cost of residents and businesses.

The Council's Environmental Enforcement Team have, for some years carried out covert CCTV surveillance at fly tip hotspots across the borough to attempt to catch and prosecute those responsible. However, success has been limited, primarily due to the existing equipment provisions - cumbersome outdated CCTV units requiring a wired infrastructure, a large heavy battery in situ at hotspot locations and encrypted hard local drives. The equipment is often unreliable, difficult to deploy, hide, and maintain on site.

The equipment also needs daily inspections for incidents of fly tipping running the risk of exposure, unwanted attention and rendering the equipment vulnerable to detection and theft. Poor battery performance, particularly in colder weather, means that they require changing every few days. Reviewing incidents also requires a significant amount of officer time to manually review footage.

Deploying this equipment had a significant impact on resources as installation required two officers for 2 - 3 hours on site, to secrete the cameras, hard-drive and battery, meaning the location has a high potential of being compromised. The site required daily visits to monitor for fly tips and maintenance visits at least twice a week by two officers. The cost implications of this, just in terms of officer time is in the region of £660 before any time cost in reviewing any footage for incidents.



Solution

Vodafone Business work with over 50 councils around the country in helping combat their fly tipping issues through their SIM enabled Smart Wireless Camera solution provided by iDefigo.

The 15 smart cameras owned by Wirral can be sited at fly-tipping hotspots where cameras can monitor activity and record illegal dumping. All footage is securely transmitted across the Vodafone mobile network to the iDefigo IoT (Internet of Things) Surveillance Platform. The cameras are wireless and easily and rapidly located on lamp posts or in trees, where they can be sited permanently or easily moved from location to location to tackle new fly tipping hotspots as they arise.

Result

The Vodafone iDefigo Smart Camera Solution offers many benefits to Wirral Council through the detection of fly tipping incidents at hotspots and the possibility of the issuing of fixed penalty notices or even prosecution of those captured on the captured footage. Not only does this act as deterrent to further illegal dumping (offenders are less likely to re-offend once caught) but fines help the council to offset the cost of monitoring and clean up, a cost which is often not budgeted for. Savings and efficiencies are made through:

- Savings are made through the rapid deployment of the cameras, less management time incurred from Environmental Officers visiting sites, managing, replacing equipment or batteries and the reduced cost of reviewing footage due to the AI (Artificial Intelligence) capabilities built in to the iDefigo monitoring platform, for example, only reviewing footage with human presence and linked to an actual event.
- Rapid deployment, taking approximately 30 minutes, therefore reducing the potential for compromising the site. Only one person required to install, although two officers always attend for health and safety reasons.
- Requires no daily visits to the site to download GDPR compliant footage as it is stored on a secure, encrypted cloud-based platform and can be easily reviewed from anywhere using the Web or phone-based Apps. The cost in terms of officer time has been reduced by approximately £110.
- The cameras can be left on site for weeks without having a battery re-charge, subject to volume of activity or traffic at the site.

Prosecutions using the iDefigo solution are far more successful in attracting higher level legal costs and compensation to offset clean-up costs when evidence in the form of footage is provided in court. The costs awarded to the authority by the court in a prosecution without camera footage average £500 but with camera footage the average is £1,000 per one off event. CCTV footage evidence usually leads to an early guilty plea which further reduces the financial and resource burden on the authority of progressing to a full trial therefore reducing the impact on Wirral Council's legal and environmental/enforcement resources.

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