

CCTV and Crime Reduction in Crawley.

Follow-Up Study 2000.

An independent evaluation of the Crawley CCTV System.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

This report examines the impact of the Crawley CCTV system upon crime and incident trends in Crawley Town Centre. It follows an earlier study, completed in January 1998. During the first six months of the CCTV system's operation the cameras appeared to have a significant impact upon five out of the six crime and incident types considered. The total number of offences recorded for the evaluation area fell by 20% and crime on three specified shopping parades had fallen by 25%. The results were generally taken as a success. Taken together they suggested that the Crawley CCTV system had a significant, preventative impact upon criminal activity where it was installed.

1.1 It was acknowledged in the original report that six months was a rather short period over which to draw reliable conclusions about the impact of a crime prevention initiative. Furthermore, it has been noted that, "the effect of cameras on crime may start to fade in the longer term." (Brown, 1995, p.vi) Therefore an important question concerned the sustainability of the crime reduction figures produced during the first six months of the scheme. If the results from the first evaluation were fairly conclusive, the results from the current analysis present a rather more ambiguous picture. The original study covered the period from December 1995 (18 months before CCTV installation) to November 1997 (6 months after). This study takes the evaluation period through to December 1999 (a further two years) and is confined to an evaluation of crime and incident trends in the Crawley town centre.

2. Evaluation Methods

The current study adopts the same methods as the original survey. The performance of the Crawley CCTV system is assessed in terms of its apparent impact upon a series of crime and incident trends within the surveillance area – these are compared alongside the underlying crime and incident trends for the Crawley Sector more generally. The crime and incident types, were identified by the original project commissioning team, although two further offences categories have been added. This study comprises: incidents recorded by Sussex Police and, specifically, public order incidents and criminal damage incidents. Offence categories examined include: 'all crimes' recorded, and specifically violent crime, burglary, shoplifting and criminal damage. The two further offence types which were drugs offences (possession and supply) and racially aggravated offences.

2.1 Data on all of the above, in monthly totals, covering the period December 1997 to December 1999 inclusive, were obtained from the Sussex Police, Horsham Data Centre. The data was reworked as twelve-month moving averages and then indexed for purposes of comparison. Finally a limited amount of information was obtained on CCTV system usage and performance, including incidents originated by CCTV, arrests monitored, and arrests due to CCTV.