



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Big Brother Councils Treble CCTV Cameras

Sky News 18th December 2009

Fears are growing over "Big Brother" councils after it was revealed they have trebled the number of CCTV cameras. **There are now 60,000 cameras being operated by local authorities.**

Privacy campaign group Big Brother Watch www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/ revealed the figures, after putting in a Freedom Of Information request to every council in the country. **Director Alex Deane** said the rise of the expensive "surveillance networks" had made little impact on the crime figures they were designed to cut.

He said: *"Local councils across Britain are creating enormous networks of CCTV at great expense, but the evidence for the ability of CCTV to deter or solve crimes is sketchy at best. The quality of footage is frequently too poor to be used in courts, the cameras are often turned off to save money and control rooms are rarely manned 24 hours a day. If you ask people whether they would prefer a camera or a police officer, I'm sure they would say an officer. Another main concern is privacy - people are concerned about the permanent retention of images of them doing perfectly innocent things like walking into a council building."*

The study, entitled Big Brother Is Watching, found that **418 local authorities control 59,753 cameras - 10 years ago the total was 21,000.**

Ministers have said CCTV is an "important tool" in fighting crime, but a Home Office study found the cameras made little or no difference.

A Metropolitan Police study found only one crime is solved every year for every 1,000 CCTV cameras.

One senior Met officer, Mick Neville, described London's CCTV network as an "utter fiasco". Often CCTV footage requested by police is too grainy or the tapes have been lost.

John Bromley-Davenport, a criminal QC in Manchester, said the CCTV supplied by police to courts was frequently so poor it was "worthless".

In an online survey carried out by Wycombe District Council this week 35% of the 626 people who completed it asked for CCTV spending to be slashed. They requested the money be spent on policing and reopening a local swimming pool instead.

:: The 10 most watched places in Britain by **cameras per 1,000 people**

Eilean Siar (Outer Hebrides) - 8.3,, Portsmouth - 7.8, Dundee City - 6.1, Woking - 5.9, South Lanarkshire - 5.6, Shetland Islands - 5.3, Nottingham - 5, Leicester - 4.5, Rugby - 4.4, Wandsworth - 4.3

The PPP comments ... This survey again confirms that CCTV has been a waste of money and we much prefer crime prevention by targeted Policing. A grainy image of a violent crime against people or property by a hooded criminal is of no value to the victims. Enter **CCTV into our **News Articles search** facility for further proof of their failure,**