



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Someone is watching you... NOW Dec 29 2007 by Hywel Trewyn, Daily Post

THE SCALE of North Wales' Big Brother-style surveillance operation is revealed today – with figures showing a massive £16m of taxpayers' money was spent installing and monitoring around 500 CCTV surveillance cameras in the past decade. There are plans for dozens more in the pipeline, say officials who have so far spent £4.6m on cameras – and a further £11.3m monitoring them 24-hours a day – since 1997. Rural Gwynedd has the most cameras with 102 now in place, followed by 95 in Conwy and 87 in Wrexham. There are 85 in Flintshire, 67 in Denbighshire, 46 in Anglesey, and in Powys, Newtown town has 10.

The figures do not include CCTV cameras **operated by police** or any other bodies. Councils say the technology is vital in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour and many of the existing cameras need replacing. More than **300 incidents a month** are reported to police thanks to **CCTV in Denbigh** where 46 of the cameras are less than three years old.

In Flintshire there are plans for 12 more cameras for 2008. Three more are to be added in Gwynedd while plans are under consideration to spend £150,000 replacing Conwy's entire stock of 95 cameras with 96 new ones. Denbighshire wants four more, Flintshire hasn't yet costed its plans for an extra 12. In Wrexham, where the annual CCTV budget is around £430,000, officers want four more cameras and are planning a capital funding bid of £100,000 for 2011-12 to upgrade the central control system

There are now 4.2 million CCTV cameras across the UK – one for every 14 people. They can be found in town and city centres, shopping malls, car parks, stations, schools, universities and hospitals. Many Welsh communities have been campaigning for CCTV cameras to be set up in their streets, where **it is hoped they will be a deterrent.**

But the unchecked march of the cameras has been criticised by human rights campaigners who claim they are an intrusion into privacy. **A Liberty report entitled Overlooked: Surveillance and Personal Privacy in modern Britain, published in October, warned: “major changes in the nature of surveillance could take place without the public being fully informed and the implications properly tested.”** It said local people should be fully consulted and take part in any decisions to renew, improve or set up new CCTV schemes. This report and many others are available for free on the internet at www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/publications/index.shtml

The PPP comments ... WE DO NOT BELIEVE that someone is WATCHING OUT FOR US. We are against the uncontrolled proliferation of CCTV systems. We believe that in a country with wide open borders, illegal immigrants working for security companies and airports, ineffective community policing and massive public sector waste and incompetence CCTV will be used to hide these shortcomings with false expectations. Do you really want poor quality recordings at great expense of your property being vandalised or stolen and yourselves, friends and family being mugged or murdered RATHER than prevention and protection by a REAL community Police Force. We are currently researching the misuse of traffic cameras. Note the Denbigh stats ... after nearly 3 years use there are still over 300 incidents/month occurring in the small compact town. How's that for deterrence...and how many actually led to a conviction of any sort. Maybe, residents of Denbigh would like to comment?