



Proposed CCTV in Forest Fields



Dear Neighbour,

You may have heard that the council are planning to install a CCTV system in Forest Fields. The proposals have gone through several revisions, and currently they intend to install three masts. The suggested locations are on the corners of Leslie Road and Berridge Road, Burford Road and Berridge Road, and Gladstone Street/Alberta Terrace and Foxhall Road.

The council will be posting their own information and consultation sheet through our doors soon. We are writing to you separately – as a group of Forest Fields residents concerned about these proposals – to stimulate informed debate on the subject, and to ask you to consider whether CCTV is really the best use of funds for our neighbourhood.

In an Evening Post article on Monday April 13th, it was reported that people in the area are hopeful that the CCTV cameras will cut down on litter, anti social behaviour and speeding cars, as well as being used to tackle more serious problems such as robberies.

It would be great to see improvements around Forest Fields - after all, who wouldn't want to live in a safer, cleaner neighbourhood? However, there is a huge amount of evidence to show that CCTV has little to no effect on crime in residential areas. More often than not, it is just an exercise in throwing expensive technology at societal problems, to be seen to be “doing something”.

Technology doesn't do anything to address the underlying social issues – the only thing that can fix those is a better community. Thus, if there is money available for Forest Fields, wouldn't it be better used to strengthen the local community, rather than to remotely video our problems?

Here are a few points to consider:

- In 2007, London Assembly members obtained information under the Freedom of Information Act that showed CCTV has little effect on solving crime. The statistics show that more CCTV does not lead to a better clear-up rate. London has over 10,000 state-run cameras.
- A Home Office study in 2002 found that improved street lighting is up to seven times more effective at reducing trouble in problem areas than CCTV.
- Hoping that CCTV will tackle things like litter and speeding cars is pretty optimistic! The police are not going to trawl through hours of video to catch people dropping crisp packets and bottles, or driving too fast.
- Displacement of problems to other areas has been a consistent criticism of CCTV schemes, and the same will happen in Forest Fields. Problems will not go away, but will just move onto adjacent streets, out of range of the cameras.
- We are not convinced that the council has made the case for why CCTV is needed here, or produced any evidence to demonstrate how CCTV will address the issues they claim it will.

A presentation about the CCTV cameras will be held from 6.30pm until 8pm on April 23rd at Djanogly City Academy on Gregory Boulevard. We hope you will attend, and voice your opinions.

For more information, further reading and discussion, please see www.forestfields.org.uk, or email us at no_cctv@forestfields.org.uk