



NO CCTV

www.no-cctv.org.uk
NO CCTV ON THE COWLEY ROAD

Cowley Road
Carnival
Edition

Better community reduces crime, technology does not

Summer Newsletter 2008

LAST CARNIVAL BEFORE 24 HOUR SURVEILLANCE OF COWLEY ROAD ?

This could be the last Cowley Road carnival before the road is put under the 24 hour gaze of state-run CCTV cameras. The police originally said the cameras were needed to reduce violent crime but recent crime figures show that violent crime on the Cowley Road has fallen once again - without a single camera being installed. If the cameras had already been installed the police would of course have claimed that the 11.3% drop was thanks to CCTV.

So now the police are clutching at straws - they claim cameras will somehow magically stop car crime! But they haven't picked the best alternative cover story as research shows that CCTV has a small effect in reducing car crime - in car parks! Are local police suggesting that Cowley Road is a car park? (The research also shows that CCTV does not reduce violent crime at all.)

Since our campaign began the tide of public opinion has started to turn against surveillance cameras in the UK, spurred on by worries about the surveillance society and the fact that despite some £500 million of public money being spent on cameras their impact on crime prevention, detection and prosecutions has been risible.

The council however is still planning to go ahead with four wireless cameras along the Cowley Road (at the Plain, opposite Princes Street, near the public toilets on Manzil Gardens & at the

end of Southfield Road), though the decision has not yet been ratified by the East Area Parliament (EAP). Some members of the EAP say they want a one year trial of cameras to see if they work. But why waste our council tax on another trial when all previous trials show that CCTV does not work and when any meagre benefits are vastly outweighed by the cost to civil liberties of law abiding citizens.

Surveillance camera technology is moving towards smaller, networked cameras that can record sound as well as images and use facial and behavioural recognition to identify people. Such tools of oppression are being trialled in China right now, it is only a matter of time before our government begins installing a new generation of cameras "to protect us".

Decisions at the local level can have huge ramifications to the freedoms of citizens of the entire UK and beyond. The residents of East Oxford have an opportunity to fight the creeping powers of the state by saying NO to CCTV on the Cowley Road. Go to our website. Get informed and join the fight.

UK LOCAL AUTHORITIES MIS-USE OF CCTV

Councils now have the power to secretly film & bug UK citizens. The powers were granted to local authorities supposedly to fight terrorism and organised crime but instead they have been used to detect breaches of the smoking ban, playing music too loudly, dropping litter, dog fouling and to find out if families are living in a school catchment area.



GORDON BROWN SEXES UP 2002 CCTV DOSSIER

In June, in the wake of David Davis MP's resignation over the "slow strangulation of fundamental British freedoms by this government", Gordon Brown gave a speech to the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR). Brown wanted to defend the many accusations that we are living in a surveillance society. Brown hailed technology as the saviour of society, and said we must listen to those who say "that for too long we have used nineteenth century means to solve twenty first century problems". Of course surveillance cameras were part of his gushing praise for modernity: "CCTV cuts crime, and makes people feel safer - in some cases, it actually helps give them back their liberty, the liberty to go about their everyday lives with reassurance". What an incredible piece of doublespeak - how can liberty be increased by decreasing it?

And how did Brown come to the conclusion that CCTV cuts crime? Well he told his IPPR fan club that in Newcastle "after CCTV was installed, burglaries fell by 56 per cent, crimi-

nal damage by 34 per cent, and theft by 11 per cent". All seems done and dusted then doesn't it.

Except that he forgot to mention a few minor details. Like the fact that in a detailed report commissioned by the Home Office on CCTV in the UK - 'Effects of Closed-Circuit Television on Crime' (Welsh and Farrington, 2002), the effect of CCTV on crime in Newcastle was described as "undesirable". The headline figures that Brown used to prove CCTV's worth need to be looked at alongside underlying trends in crime and figures from areas in Newcastle without CCTV. In Newcastle, total crime fell by 21.6% in the area with cameras but by 29.7% in the area where there were no cameras! The fall in burglary that Brown uses is a fall from 17 a month to 9 in the area with CCTV compared to a fall from 75 a month to 46 where no cameras were installed.

Brown's defence of CCTV simply doesn't stand up at all. Neither does his unquestioning love of technology. Better community reduces crime, technology does not.

Download our Report on proposals for CCTV on the Cowley Road at: www.no-cctv.org.uk/press