North Lanarkshire Council

Safety in cameras

At a glance

North Lanarkshire Council wanted to make sure its residents always felt completely safe in their local communities. With a new fibre optic network from Virgin Media Business, the Council has been able to set up one of Europe's largest IP CCTV systems across thousands of public areas in central Scotland. The network has ensured that local emergency services have access to CCTV footage 24/7, helping them to take faster action to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Organisation North Lanarkshire Council

Industry sector Public sector

Location North Lanarkshire

Challenge Enable high-speed access to live CCTV footage for police and transport departments, to ensure maximum safety and security for the local community.

Solution Secure network to store and transport CCTV video at speed.

Products Virtual Private Network

Benefits The Council gets fast and secure access to live CCTV footage in tower blocks, public areas and on recycling sites. As a result, local authorities have increased response times to emergency situations and cut crime.

> "Considering the scale of the project, it's really incredible that it's all gone without a hitch. The CCTV cameras are a huge boost to public safety, and Virgin Media Business has really helped us to maximise their potential. We're able to give the emergency services access to live information, and identify problems faster than before. We're more flexible and agile as a council, and are helping to make citizens and local businesses feel much safer too."

Emma Walker, Company Manager, Town Centre Activities Limited, North Lanarkshire Council.

North Lanarkshire Council wanted its county to be a safer and more secure place to live and work. With a network of CCTV cameras installed in public areas and buildings, the Council looked for a solution where local authorities could access live video footage and boost emergency response times.

Serving around 350,000 people, North Lanarkshire Council is the fourth largest local authority in Scotland. The Council's mission was to make its towns and public spaces one of the safest, not just in Scotland, but across the UK. To help make that happen, the Council came up with an ambitious plan to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

It rolled out a network of 600 CCTV cameras across residential tower blocks, town centres and local authority sites. As one of the biggest installations of its kind in the UK, it was absolutely key for the emergency services to have 24-hour access to the footage from these cameras – and that's where we came in.

We worked closely with the Council to connect up all of its CCTV cameras and provide North Lanarkshire with a high-speed and completely secure network. Each and every CCTV camera in the county is now connected to a central Emergency Response Centre (ERC) so that information can be shared with local police and other council departments as quickly and easily as possible. Because each camera feeds into this central hub, the operators can monitor the entire county, at all times. Previously, analogue CCTV footage was monitored by four separate police stations – but now, footage can be viewed and shared with the right department, in a matter of seconds.

Thanks to the network, ERC operators now have live access to camera sites across seven town centres, and over 26 housing areas. This means a more efficient and much faster deployment of resources – police and fire services can be sent out as soon as an incident is identified, and with more up-to-date information they are better prepared for the job at hand. As a result, crime in the local area has gone down and council staff have the right tools to continue making North Lanarkshire a safer place to live.

Keeping their eyes on the roads

Not only is the Council making the streets safer, but it's keeping its eyes on the roads too. With the Transport Department monitoring CCTV cameras stationed on main roads and commuter routes, they can keep track of troublesome areas. By monitoring accidents over time they can make informed decisions about which stretches of road need improvements. Not just that but it also allows for a faster deployment of emergency vehicles in bad weather - to grit or close roads where necessary, preventing accidents and serious injuries to citizens.

Giving the Council more eyes

The CCTV network is growing all the time and because of its flexibility and scalability, we have been able to increase capacity where and when it's needed. This means that more cameras can be added to the network, and footage stored without worries over capacity restrictions or outages. And because the network is fully managed, any issues can be quickly identified and fixed, so council staff can get on with the job at hand and not worry about IT problems.

"For us the safety of our local community is top of our list. We've worked with Virgin Media Business to support a state-of-the-art CCTV system and it's had an immediate impact on safety in the local area. With instant access to the cameras, it's really changing the way we work. Real-time intelligence for the emergency services has made a huge difference. It enables the police force to be in more places at once, meaning faster response times. And it's making a fundamental contribution to keeping the local community safe." said Emma Walker, Company Manager, Town Centre Activities Limited, North Lanarkshire Council.

Other benefits

The network's scalability has enabled the Council to roll out other innovative services to its staff. IP telephony has been installed across all departments, giving staff the flexibility to work in different areas of their office. This means that staff can be contacted on one number, no matter where they are.

The CCTV system is giving citizens peace of mind, and has already reduced crime rates in the area. Following this success, the Council is planning to extend the network to other public services including health and education. Another consideration is to increase the reach of the network, so that other local authorities can access these innovative services - a big step towards a shared services network.

Key benefits

- Faster response times
- Reducing crime rates and helping citizens feel safer
- Making it easier to share information, over a secure network
- Innovative use of new technologies

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