Keeping an eye out for crime

Images from cameras all over the county will feed into Aberystwyth control room.

TWENTY closed-circuit TV monitors in a purpose-built control room at Aberystwyth police station are playing a vital part in the detection of crime whilst also proving a significant deterrent to law-breakers.

And several fixed locations in New Quay and Aberaeron are being added to the county's CCTV system, in which mobile cameras can be moved from one location to another as required. And a mobile CCTV van will allow rapid deployments of a CCTV camera to any "hot spot" identified.

Aberystwyth town centre presently has seven CCTV cameras, and Lampeter has six. And when Cardigan's four are upgraded in the near future, all will have digital cameras providing colour pictures.

Aberystwyth and Lampeter pictures are viewed on monitors at Aberystwyth police station, but Cardigan's CCTV images are presently received at the town's police station. But in the near future they too will be transmitted to the Gifford control room at Aberystwyth police station, via Cygnet Street Cardigan's state-of the-art fibre optic link.

The CCTV control room has a supervisor, who does not want to be named, said: "All cameras are in recording mode 24 hours a day, except for those in Aberaeron and New Quay.

"Locations are watched by three full-time and one part-time members of staff, employed by Cerediog. They obviously work during the busiest periods, particularly Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. This allows police officers to see where the public are needed, concentrating on other duties rather than watching CCTV monitors.

"The supervisor said: "For example, we can inform police when persons have been filmed going to a licensed premises. Police may then attend the scene to calm down any potential trouble-shooters."

"CCTV has helped in investigations into assaults, robberies, shoplifting - often in conjunction with members of Safer Streets who follow offenders through the town via CCTV - and in many other categories of crime."

CONFIDENCE in the county's CCTV system is so high that a recently-issued card for CCTV operators is now worn on an arm band. It identifies the operator and his code number.

REPORTING BY NORMAN WILLIAMS

There are signs around the town informing locals and visitors alike that CCTV cameras are operating - and that they could be coming into their property.

"The Gifford control room monitors the whole of Aberystwyth and any incident that officers need to be made aware of, or that might merit police attendance.

"The supervisor said: "We are in contact with the police's control room, and it is up to them to decide whether officers need to attend - they can view CCTV pictures in the control room."

"Since the introduction of CCTV to Aberystwyth in 1998, there has been a reduction in crime." But from April 2004 to March 2005, police officers made 393 requests to view tapes recording incidents in Aberystwyth.

"In the same period, there were 39 requests relating to incidents in Lampeter."

"The supervisor said: "The figures relate to requests by officers for CCTV tapes to assist in their investigations."

"There are no statistics available to show the impact that CCTV plays in crime detection and prevention, by directing officers to specific incidents."

"The supervisor added: "For example, we can inform police when persons have been filmed going to a licensed premises. Police may then attend the scene to calm down any potential trouble-shooters."

"CCTV has helped in investigations into assaults, robberies, shoplifting - often in conjunction with members of Safer Streets who have offenders through the town via CCTV - and in many other categories of crime."

"This has led to an increase in public confidence in the police and the community feeling more secure."

"But CCTV is a prime tool in detecting and deterring criminal behaviour."

CAMERAS’ KEY ROLE in detecting and deterring criminal behaviour

Cardigan county’s CCTV funding ‘is money well spent’

The figure includes a contribution from Aberystwyth Town Council. And Lampeter Town Council plans to add to the cost of transmitting the Lampeter pictures to the CCTV control room, whilst Cardigan Town Council will be examining whether to make a similar contribution when the new Cardigan scheme is up and running.

"CCTV is an important aspect of the county’s Community Safety Strategy for 2005-08."

"And we recognise the positive contribution made to CCTV in helping to address crime and disorder issues which may arise and to assisting the emergency services and the police in responding to a wide variety of incidents."

CEREDIOG’s deputy divisional commander, Chief Inspector Huw Meredith, said: "CCTV is an effective tool in the detection and prevention of crime."

"And CCTV evidence itself has proven an excellent evidential tool in court."

"The showing of CCTV evidence to a defendant, or his solicitor, can often lead to an early guilty plea being tendered. This saves the need for a trial, saving court time, and also节约 the need for police officers to attend to give evidence at a trial."

"And CCTV evidence itself has proven an excellent evidential tool in court."