

CASE HISTORY

	Date:	19 TH OCTOBER 2004	Ref:	UK-005
	Title:	Haringey Council goes on the alert		
	Subject:	North London traders get networked		
Tel: 0870 240 1970 www.alertbox.co.uk				

Haringey Council is sending criminals and troublemakers in Tottenham a clear 'not wanted' message by installing the first large-scale public trial of a recently launched electronic version of the neighbourhood watch concept.

Digital radio AlertBoxes have been distributed to around 100 independent traders around the Tottenham High Road as part of a crime-busting initiative, which is designed to knit the community together and fight the fear of crime. The AlertBox network, which is being widely publicised, is expected to deter criminal activity and reassure businesses as it enables them to call for immediate help from their neighbours or alert them to suspicious activity.

Haringey Council set up The Business Watch Scheme with funding from the London Development Agency and Haringey Council's City Growth Strategy. The funds were used to purchase nearly 100 AlertBoxes, which link traders together on a secure digital radio network. The devices are used to alert neighbouring traders of trouble in the area – for instance gangs of youths creating a disturbance or shoplifting. The boxes can also be used to summon assistance should a shopkeeper have a problem.

The introduction of AlertBoxes to the area sits alongside a number of other initiatives within the Business Watch scheme: Haringey Council has also introduced a Radio Link System, till guards, and is helping to foster closer links between traders and beat police. The overall objective of the programme is to bring the community closer together and to get different groups working harmoniously towards a common end.

Collette Makambila, Regeneration Officer, Haringey Council, said: "We have a broad mix of businesses and cultures within the Tottenham High Road and it's important to get everyone communicating and supporting each other. One helpful warning message from a neighbour you haven't spoken to before is really all it takes to get a dialogue going."

Tony Azille, Regeneration Officer, Haringey Council said: "The project is very encouraging. I am constantly amazed at how resilient the business owners are at coping with the high crime rates in their area so it's particularly rewarding to give them tools to help curtail the activities of the criminal element".

The Council plans to measure the success of the pilot scheme by monitoring its impact on petty crime figures. Anecdotally however, the project already seems to have had considerable impact. One trader said that since the AlertBoxes were introduced, there has been no trouble in the street. Both the retailers and the Council attribute this to the deterrent effect of the boxes. Highly visible signage in the form of window stickers warns of the presence of the new technology. The Council is also looking at advertising the AlertBoxes' presence on posters and in the press.

Mick Mulhern, Regeneration Officer, Haringey Council said: "Long-term we'll see how the scheme works out but hopefully we'll be able to introduce a rental system where more traders will be able to join the AlertBox network for a nominal cost."

Despina Johnson, Tottenham High Road Strategic manager, Haringey Council said: "The AlertBox initiative is an example of how good partnerships deliver robust crime prevention schemes. This partnership has consisted of the businesses, Met Police and Haringey Council. The success of this scheme has encouraged us to build on the relationships established to find more ways to reduce crime and the fear of crime."