

‘HOME’ WIN FOR COLLIER ROW TRADERS

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Retail businesses in Collier Row received a surprise visit from Home Office officials this week, to evaluate the success of Havering’s shop community alert scheme.

The VIPs were accompanied by Mayor of Havering Councillor Georgina Galpin, representatives from the scheme organisers the Havering Community Safety Partnership and the manufacturers the AlertBox.



AlertBox is a warning device for shopkeepers that alerts neighbours about criminal activity taking place in their high street.

Supplied and fitted free-of-charge, AlertBoxes were initially trialled in Collier Row last November and have resulted in significant reductions in localised shop robbery and theft - by 78% and 33% respectively.

There have also been substantial reductions in the number of calls made to the police. During a recent alert, sixteen local shopkeepers rushed to the aid a fellow retailer, resulting in the arrest two shoplifters by the police.

Speaking about the AlertBox device, Collier Row shop-owner Julie Phillips told the Home Office VIPs: “I was sceptical about their usefulness at first, but they’ve been great in helping keeping thieves away.”

Fellow shopkeeper, Joanne Burn, said: “I’ve used the AlertBox on occasions, and the speed of response from neighbours has been amazing. They’re a real plus.”

Given the success of AlertBox in Collier Row, devices have also been installed in Elm Park and Harold Hill.

David Read, head of the Business Crime Unit at the Home Office, said:

“The AlertBox scheme has clearly proved very effective at reducing localised shop-based criminal activity. The Havering experience provides an excellent example of the way community working – particularly between retailers, shoppers and the local Safer Neighbourhood team – can help in keeping crime out of our high streets.”

Deborah Luff of the Havering Community Safety Partnership, added: “The results of this scheme speak for themselves. In addition to cutting shop-based crime, AlertBox has provided a real deterrent to those contemplating carrying out criminal activity in the area.

“The HCSP will continue to develop innovative community safety schemes to help make Havering a better and even safer place for everyone.”