

**Name of Committee: Aldridge & Beacon Area Panel
Tuesday 6th April 2015**

Title of Report: Environmental Crime Covert Cameras

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 To inform the panel on a brief history of Operation Capture, an Environmental Health Enforcement led project which started in September 2011.
- 1.2 To advise the panel on current capability, costing, project successes and impact on Environmental Crime matters.
- 1.3 To advise the panel on what is required to bring a prosecution to Court and the processes involved.

2. Background papers

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the report be noted.

4. Report detail

- 4.1 Operation Capture started in September 2011 when it was identified the WMBC had no covert capability at a time when Environmental Crime was on the increase and methods to secure conviction were inadequate.
- 4.2 Eye witness accounts are useful but can receive limitless interrogation if the matter goes to Court and the issue nearly always comes down to identification. These cameras can provide that identification.
- 4.3 Our current covert cameras are designed for monitoring game animal activity at night. They are compact, portable, have reasonable storage, can take video or photographic images, day or night, are movement activated (PIR) and operate on standard AA batteries.
- 4.4 We have made the units covert by heavily camouflaging each camera and placing them in objects where they will not be noticed.
- 4.5 Deployments are made according to demand.
- 4.6 When Operation Capture started, each unit cost £236.00. The price has now reduced, because the technology has improved and other manufacturers have joined the market.
- 4.7 The Operation has achieved 7 successful prosecutions, purely from the evidence provided from the covert cameras.
- 4.8 It is not possible to say how the cameras have impacted on Environmental Crime, but without them, Walsall Council would not have any covert capability and so may not otherwise obtain the evidence required to prosecute.

4.9 I will be able to answer questions relating to what is presented, however some information is held in strict confidence by the lead of the project and assisting Officers.

5. Resource and legal considerations

5.1 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

6. Governance

6.1 N/A

7. Risk management issues

7.1 Each deployment of a covert camera is dynamically risk assessed.

8. Equality implications

8.1 None

9. Consultation

9.1 None

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