



## MINI SPY CAMERAS IN WAR ON DOG MESS

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DANIEL ORR AND JONATHAN REED

12:00 - 21 June 2004

Spy cameras will target dog owners failing to clean up after their pets. The cameras will be hidden in Nottingham parks. Offenders will face fines of up to £1,000.

Nottingham City Council is buying two of the £6,000 cameras, which can be hidden in trees and bushes. Warning notices will go up within the next fortnight and the cameras should be in place this month.

City environment spokesman Coun Brian Grocock said: "Dog fouling is not acceptable and we won't tolerate it. "We hope the magistrates will support us in this."

The three-inch cameras will also be used to stop other 'enviro-crimes' such as graffiti, illegal fly-posting and fly-tipping. They will be moved around parks and other grot spots, including disused petrol stations.

The move follows a blitz on litter in the city centre where people face £50 fines from street wardens if they are seen dropping rubbish. Both schemes are part of the city council's 100 day clean-up campaign.

## HI-TECH POOP PATROLS

12:00 - 21 June 2004

Dog owners who let their pets foul in Nottingham face being caught on camera - and fined up to £1,000. It is the latest move by the city council to clear dog muck from streets and parks. JONATHAN REED and DANIEL ORR report

First private detectives were hired to hunt down offenders. Then undercover wardens tried to spot the guilty parties. Now the battle has turned hi-tech and will use tiny spy cameras - all in the name of dog dirt.

In the latest move - part of Nottingham City Council's continuing 100-day clean-up campaign - the authority is buying two digital cameras, at £6,000 a time, to place in sites where residents have complained of persistent dog fouling in the past.

At about three inches long, the cameras are little longer than a cigarette lighter, and can easily be hidden at problem spots. Offenders caught failing to clean up their dog's mess will face prosecution - and a fine of up to £1,000.

"I'm a dog owner and I think it's my responsibility as a responsible owner to clean up after my dogs," said the council's environment spokesman, Coun Brian Grocock. "I don't accept excuses from anybody. A small plastic bag in your pocket is no great detriment.

The wireless cameras are activated by any movement and images are relayed to a computer in council offices. Pictures can then be printed out.

And because of their size, the cameras can easily be moved around and will be able to target any particular hot spots.



"They are covert cameras and they're extremely good at producing good images," said Coun Grocock.

The devices will also be used to tackle the problem of fly-posting and graffiti in the city.

The council says it has not yet put together a plan of where they will go first. Warnings will be posted within the next fortnight, telling people about the plans. The council hopes to have the cameras in place by the end of June. If they are successful, the authority will consider buying more.

The council's health service manager, Barrie James, insisted privacy would not be infringed by the cameras.

He said: "They will be in public areas but none will be directed at people's property, and people will be warned in advance that the cameras may be in use."

Our officers are already doing the surveillance, and these cameras can be placed in strategic places at a very small cost. I believe the community will support us in spending money on particular pieces of equipment of this nature. "Now the officers can be using their time investigating other things and other areas."

The city council's mini cameras have been manufactured by security and surveillance specialists HomeNet Communications.

They will also be used to stop other 'enviro-crimes' such as graffiti, illegal fly-posting and tipping. Prime dumping spots, including disused petrol stations, may have cameras trained on them to catch anyone disposing of rubbish in this way.

Coun Grocock added: "These particular cameras can be used for many more things, to put in strategic places for fly-tipping and fly-posting. We will be using them for these particular misdemeanours."

Jim Wiltshire, sales manager for HomeNet Communications, said demand from councils had been on the increase.

He said: "Over the past few years it's fallen more on local authorities to enforce anti social behaviour orders and collect evidence for fly-tipping and that sort of behaviour, and they're investing in the equipment to do it. I've spoken to something like 20 authorities this month.

"These are high resolution colour cameras but they've got some nighttime capability. They're discreet enough to get lost in the bushes."