

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

SUBJECT: BUS CCTV

DATE: 10 NOVEMBER 2009

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

1.1 The Mayor's transport manifesto included a commitment to a trial of Live CCTV. This paper seeks to update the Surface Transport Panel on the outcome of the recent Live CCTV trial and sets out a proposed way forward.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 On-bus CCTV has been fitted to all buses operating on London's bus network since 2005. As well as providing reassurance to passengers and staff, its main purpose is to assist the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and other forces with crime investigations, and to support the investigation, by bus operators, of passenger complaints and personal accident claims.

2.2 Through the bus tendering process, the London bus fleet is constantly being modernised. Hence, there are various different CCTV systems out on the network, with more recent buses equipped with later generation systems. All employ a recording system and data is downloaded either through a garage-based wireless system or by staff visiting the vehicle and removing the recording disc.

2.3 Demand for CCTV footage has greatly increased in recent years. This is due to an increasing trend in personal accident claims against bus operators, greater awareness within the police service of the potential of on-bus CCTV and the judicial system having increased its requirements to see CCTV evidence in cases of bus crime.

2.4 Since 2004, TfL has funded an increasing level of police resources to tackle crime on and around the bus network and to provide reassurance to passengers. CCTV footage is increasingly used by these teams within the MPS, as well as by other areas of the MPS and other police forces. BusTag, a dedicated police unit, was set up by TfL and the MPS in November 2004 to investigate criminal damage using bus CCTV. The BusTag initiative alone has led to over 3,000 arrests.

2.5 The on-bus CCTV systems are owned and managed by the bus operators. There are a total of approximately 80 dedicated CCTV analysts employed by them. It is estimated London's bus operators currently collectively handle around 12,500 requests a year from police forces for on-bus CCTV evidence.

2.6 TfL has worked with the MPS and bus operators to develop CCTV operating procedures and training standards for CCTV analysts to ensure that footage

provided to the MPS is of evidential standard. TfL carries out a continuous programme of audits of the bus operators' CCTV Control Suites to ensure compliance with these operating procedures. Further improvements are currently being made to the interfaces between TfL, the bus operators and the MPS through the introduction of a new 'Single Point of Contact' arrangement. The aim is to reduce lead times for police requests for CCTV footage.

- 2.7 As bus operators are data controllers for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), it is their responsibility to ensure that disclosure of the data is compliant with the DPA. TfL has provided the bus operators with information about the DPA and encouraged them to seek further advice. The DPA includes a partial exemption for disclosures which are made for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime.
- 2.8 There is no doubt that on-bus CCTV has made a major contribution not only to solving specific crimes but also in contributing to the level of bus-related crime decreasing. Indeed, in 2008/09, bus-related crime was 18.1 per cent lower than in 2007/8.

3 TRIAL OF LIVE CCTV

- 3.1 The trial commenced in October 2008. Twenty-one buses on route 121 (which runs between Enfield and Turnpike Lane in north London using double deck buses) were fitted with additional technology at a cost of around £4,000 per vehicle. The trial allowed TfL staff at CentreComm (London Buses' control room) to view the on-bus CCTV in real time to assist with the incident response following a driver making a 'Code Red' emergency radio call. Route 121 was chosen because it experiences higher than average 'Code Red' calls.
- 3.2 An evaluation of the trial was carried out by TfL staff supported by Professor Martin Gill (a leading national expert in CCTV). In parallel with this evaluation, a market assessment and technical evaluation of the technology to enable Live CCTV was carried out.
- 3.3 The trial focused on the evaluation of Live CCTV's real time operational impact. During the trial period there were 114 crime and disorder related 'Code Red' calls received from drivers on the route. The most frequent cause was disturbances (60), followed by forgery/ fraud (37), criminal damage (12), violent offences (3)¹ and robbery/ theft (2)².

4 EVALUATION OF THE TRIAL

- 4.1 Professor Gill's evaluation of the trial acknowledged the effectiveness of TfL's existing communication facilities (i.e. access from all buses to CentreComm via the emergency radio system and now iBus, which immediately allows the emergency operator to identify the location of the bus making the emergency call).
- 4.2 The evaluation did not identify any major gaps or problems with the existing process for responding to incidents. As the trial did not demonstrate that Live

¹ Two of these three occurred off the bus and all were minor;

² One was an incident that occurred off the bus and the other involved a prank by school children who stole the driver's hat.

CCTV would significantly improve the existing process, the case for investing in the roll out of Live CCTV across the London bus network was not made.

- 4.3 While it was recognised that Live CCTV could help to improve the response to crime and disorder incidents, particularly where communication is impaired (i.e. the driver is unable to give clear details of the incident), these situations are rare given the effectiveness of the existing arrangements.
- 4.4 However, due mainly to the very low usage made of the system, it is proposed that the route 121 Live CCTV trial is extended. The marginal cost of continuing the trial is very low now that the equipment is in place. The continuation of the trial will enable more work to be undertaken in the following areas:
 - (a) further use and evaluation of the facility by CentreComm;
 - (b) detailed discussions with the MPS on its use and resourcing of Live CCTV, in particular focusing on its value immediately following a serious incident;
 - (c) further investigation of whether there are gaps in the current real time response to crime and disorder incidents by CentreComm or MPS, aimed at identifying for which incidents this may be the case and the reasons for this; and
 - (d) to carry out a number of further technical tests to assess the image quality, latency and capacity constraints of the mobile networks used to carry the data at peak times.

5 FUTURE APPROACH

- 5.1 Based on the current CCTV systems that are deployed across the London bus fleet, it is estimated that the cost of rolling out Live CCTV across the network in the next 2-3 years would be £11-12 million. This roll-out option is not recommended for the following reasons:
 - (a) the trial has not demonstrated that the additional benefits of Live CCTV would justify the expenditure; and
 - (b) network wide rollout would currently involve fitting Live CCTV to many existing older generation CCTV systems. This is both more costly than fitting to new generation systems and the buses fitted with these older systems will only continue to operate for a relatively limited time period before they are replaced.
- 5.2 The suggested approach is therefore to ensure that all new buses entering the London fleet are compatible with the future fitment of Live CCTV. This is mainly about ensuring that the specifications allow for such an eventuality. This would enable the introduction of Live CCTV at the lowest conversion cost per bus should further evaluation make the case for Live CCTV more worthwhile.
- 5.3 Meanwhile the recommended strategy for on-bus CCTV is to increase further the benefits of the existing systems by improving the success rate of meeting police requests and enhancing the image quality of footage provided. This will be achieved through the following initiatives:
 - (a) Working with the bus operators to ensure that:
 - (i) systems are configured to deliver the best quality images;
 - (ii) sufficient on-bus memory capacity exists to store data for a consistent

- time period before it is over-written; and
- (iii) fault diagnosis systems are in place to ensure that any failures are quickly identified and rectified.
- (b) Working with the MPS and bus operators to improve the data request and download processes to ensure that:
- (i) timely, accurate and proportionate requests are made by MPS officers; and
 - (ii) there is greater transparency around requests made and footage supplied.

6 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The Panel is asked to NOTE the report.

7 CONTACT

7.1 Contact: Clare Kavanagh, Director of Performance, Surface Transport
Number: 020 3054 0596
Email: clarekavanagh@tfl.gov.uk