



Limerick Chamber Submission on  
Community CCTV Cameras in Public Areas

March 2022



**Limerick  
Chamber**  
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## Introduction

Firstly, Limerick Chamber would like to thank Limerick City and County Council for the opportunity to submit our views on Community CCTV Cameras in Public Areas - Public Consultation.

Limerick Chamber is the largest business representative body in the Mid-West, with over 420 member organisations supporting over 50,000 jobs across the region.

**Our submission covers all four areas; Northside, Southside, Smarter Travel Canal Bank, and Hinterland (County Limerick) with an emphasis on the Smarter Travel Canal Bank route given its strategic importance with linking the University of Limerick to the city centre.**

### **Q1: What issues need to be addressed in Limerick city and county in terms of safety and crime?**

If Limerick is going to pursue more sustainable and active travel methods such as walking and cycling, then the comfort of knowing the route is safe and efficiently monitored will be a core aspect of encouraging people to engage in these sorts of activities. This will help to engender a more livable city and county.

This holds particularly true for the Smarter Travel route along the Canal Bank, which provides an important transport option for the people of Limerick as well as those travelling from the Corbally and University areas. To ensure greater linkages between the University and other areas of Limerick and Clare, we must ensure that these areas are safe.

The most recent amendments to the Smarter Travel route had seen adequate lighting provided along with the resurfacing of the path. In order to capitalise on the current plans both locally and nationally to push sustainable and active transport methods, any safety concerns that exist on this path must be addressed. Adequate CCTV coverage must be provided to reduce and discourage criminal and antisocial behaviour along this popular route.

Antisocial or criminal behaviour can happen at any time of day but tends to take place once it gets dark. Providing reassurance at all hours of the day, whether its bright or dark outside is important moving forward.

Improved lighting in other areas of Limerick can also help to deter any antisocial and criminal behaviour in conjunction with the use of CCTV.

An item that could be trialed along the Smarter Travel Canal Bank route is the introduction of motorway style SOS phones - these types of communication devices have also been implemented at the university campus. This could provide reassurance to people that use this route, while also helping to deter antisocial and criminal behaviour.

### **Q2: What are the benefits of a CCTV system to alleviate these issues?**

CCTV will help to deter those considering antisocial or criminal behaviour by them knowing that they are being recorded or actively monitored. If a crime was to be committed the evidence from CCTV may be used in court at a later date which may help to secure a criminal conviction and thus deter any future crimes. The very introduction and use of CCTV will provide a visual presence and will act as a deterrent for those thinking about committing a crime or undertake antisocial behaviour.

The Smarter Travel route is an important commuting option for many students and workers in Limerick, and the provision of such security will only encourage the use of this route further. There have been reports in the past of [criminal behaviour](#) on this route. On such a route where it is not regularly monitored/patrolled by Gardaí, and where one can often find themselves walking alone and out of sight of people, such stories of criminal behaviour on this path can discourage people from using this option and revert back to travel by means of private car usage.

### **Q3: What other less privacy intrusive solutions, such as improved lighting etc., could be of benefit?**

Looking at alternative solutions to monitor and reduce criminal and anti-social behaviour, an initial suggestion would be to increase the frequency of patrols in these areas. However, this could be done in tandem with other options:

- Introduction, or expansion, of neighbourhood watch style groups with adequate training provided by the Gardaí and Limerick City and County Council. In some parts of Ireland, neighbourhood watch groups use SMS to report issues. A dedicated SMS number to report criminal or antisocial behaviour would be a welcome addition to such a group, with the SMS number open to all.
- Motorway style SOS contact points could be introduced, particularly, along the Smarter Travel Canal Bank route.
- Increased lighting in areas

- Introduction of signage to spread the message that the area is being monitored by CCTV, SMS reporting or a neighbourhood watch group

- Altering the area to remove blind spots and areas where people can conceal themselves, although, this would need to be part of a wider consultation process

- The marketing of a public reporting campaign designed to encourage members of the public to report unsafe spots, antisocial and criminal behaviour

#### **Q4: What are your views on the CCTV system being live monitored?**

Limerick Chamber feels that the appropriate amount of surveillance should be provided to firstly, provide comfort to the public knowing that such provision of surveillance discourages crime and antisocial behaviour effectively. Secondly, it is appropriate that cameras be lived monitored in the event that it assists in preventing/stopping criminal activity. Live monitoring of CCTV will allow for quicker interventions by the Gardaí, which is helpful if there is an active crime tacking place especially in the case of violent crime.

Live monitoring is also efficient from a time standpoint, theoretically, less time should be spent sifting through recordings when somebody is actively monitoring and knows the date and time a crime or antisocial behaviour took place.

In some jurisdictions, for CCTV footage to stand up in court, assurances must be provided that the evidence was not tampered with. Live monitoring may help to mitigate this issue.

Criminal activity unfortunately occurs in every city. It is importance that the correct and appropriate structure is put in place to allow local authorities and Gardaí to address these issues. However, this must be done within the confines of the law and also must adhere to best practice guidelines.

#### **Q5: Have you any views on processing of personal data via the community CCTV system?**

The processing of personal data must be done within the confines of the law and by liaising with the Data Protection Commissioner to ensure adherence to their processes and guidelines.

All staff with access to recordings, CCTV live feed etc. must pass the appropriate checks (Garda Vetting) and also receive appropriate training. Limerick Chamber understands that this is already the current process.

#### **Q6: Have you any views on the privacy risks of CCTV cameras?**

Inherently, CCTV cameras come with an element of surrendering personal privacy. As stated previously, Limerick Chamber feels that cameras and footage must operate within the confines of the law with regular liaising with the Data Protection Commissioner to mitigate any potential issues or breaches.

With increased reports or violent crime in national media over the last several years it is important that the greater good is balanced with personal privacy. Much of these personal privacy issues can be mitigated through adherence to the law, working with the Data Protection Commissioner, working with the public, organisations and Gardaí while at the same time protecting the public.

Limerick Chamber would also like to commend Limerick City and County Council for carrying out this public consultation so that all people within society can put forward their views. It is important that all views are given equal weighting and concerns are addressed and positive and negative feedback is taken on board.

#### **Q7: Have you any other comments or views on the Northside CCTV cameras**

Overall, Limerick Chamber welcomes the use and introduction of CCTV by Limerick City and County Council. There are a number of initiatives that could compliment CCTV which are put forward in this submission. We do encourage a balanced approach to any future CCTV introduction, to ensure there is no "over surveillance" of the general public, however, we are conscious that CCTV, and the live monitoring of CCTV, is a valuable deterrent in the fight against crime and through immediate intervention may help to save lives and thus we support its use.

Limerick Chamber would like to thank Limerick City and County Council for the opportunity to submit our views and we look forward to working with you going forward,



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