

## **ANPR aims to stamp out commercial use of Somerset's Household Waste Recycling Centres**

*A Dallmeier ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system and digital CCTV storage system, supplied by Norbain SD, has been used to reduce the amount of commercial usage at the Household Waste Recycling Centres in Somerset. It is expected that the move will save the County Council around £35,000 over the coming year and has allowed the Authority's contractors, Viridor Waste Management, to make the most effective use of their resources.*



Viridor Waste Management is one of the UK's leading waste management companies. Currently operating 25 regional landfill sites, numerous regional recycling facilities and 180 waste processing sites UK-wide, it provides a full range of waste management services. Contracting for Somerset County Council, Viridor manages 18 Household Waste Recycling Centres in the Somerset area.

With an aim of reducing the cost of illegal deposits by at least 10% every year, the Council needed a solution that would help them prevent commercial companies from using the sites. Whilst the fight against illegal deposits of commercial waste was at the forefront of the Council's decision making process in implementing the ANPR system, both the Council and Viridor also wanted to find a method of enhancing on-site skip management, site security and improving health and safety for the general public and site personnel.

Brian Nicholls, Contract Manager for Viridor Waste Management, was put in charge of finding a solution to all of these requirements. As CCTV was required on the sites for company insurance purposes, Mr Nicholls started looking at how this could be

further utilised to meet the demands. Having gone to tender, Perspective CCTV were chosen to carry out the installation.



In consultation with Perspective CCTV a Dallmeier package was recommended consisting of DLS6 digital recorders and Pview Software. "Dallmeier particularly impressed me because they can programme their software to meet our exact needs," says Mr Nicholls. "The whole process is very simple for me because it means I can deal with just one company, one person and one solution." Perspective CCTV also suggested a Dallmeier driven ANPR system with Vista ANPR camera. This could be used to record the number plates of vehicles coming onto the site.

"Perspective CCTV suggested a great package that incorporated all of the Dallmeier technology that I was so impressed with," says Mr Nicholls. "Not having a background in CCTV, their knowledge and experience was invaluable in getting the project on track."

### **Council clamps down on illegal commercial usage**

In business, waste producers are charged for the waste they create to be properly disposed of at designated sites. By attempting to use the Household Waste Recycling Centres, companies try to avoid the cost of disposal. Although an attractive course of action for businesses, the cost of removing such waste would fall to the Council and hence the Council taxpayer.

In order to help tackle this problem, ANPR has been introduced across a number of sites. Once a vehicle number plate is captured, it is displayed on an LED board, providing people with immediate visual notification that their number plate has been recorded. ANPR is a highly effective tool as it provides data on how often certain vehicles are entering the site. Statistics show that the average householder comes onto site once every one to 12 weeks. For businesses, the average is obviously considered to be much higher.

Six and 12 Way Dallmeier DVRs record on-site footage which is then transmitted via the BT broadband network. The specially designed Dallmeier Pview software then

interrogates it and highlights any unusual site usage. For example, a query can be entered asking what vehicles have used the site more frequently than expected in one week and can then be filtered down to look specifically for commercial type vehicles. By linking into the DVLA database, the Council's designated Commercial Waste Contract Compliance Officer can carry out discreet investigations at the registered address to determine if the user is from the business sector. If this is the case, the Council send a letter to the address informing them that they have been recorded and reminding them that the sites are for householder use only. If they ignore this warning the Council can then take further action.



### **A change in the law**

Mr Nicholls has seen new government regulations influence a change in usage levels at the sites. "Many areas now only have bin collections once a fortnight and the public don't like seeing any waste round their homes," he explains. "Because of this, they're visiting the sites more regularly than we've seen in past years." The ANPR cameras have allowed Viridor to monitor the number of vehicles coming onto the sites. From this they can determine how busy it is and thus alter staffing levels accordingly. This not only allows them to provide excellent service to the public, but also helps maintain the high health and safety standards to both the public using the sites and Viridor site staff. "There's a strong correlation between peak periods and the number of accidents so we wanted to ensure that this was controlled by having appropriate staffing levels," says Mr Nicholls.

Andrew Oakes, Managing Director of Perspective CCTV says, "We chose the Vista ANPR camera for the job because of the quality of the product itself and because of the service we receive. We haven't found the same level of technical support or

customer service anywhere else in the industry and this is an essential component of any supplier offering.”

### **Keeping a watchful eye**

In addition to the ANPR cameras, Samsung SDN520PH Day/Night cameras have been positioned round the sites. For both the Council and Viridor, this set up allows them to monitor the state of the sites. Mr Nicholls can determine immediately if skips need to be emptied and the Council can ensure that Viridor are fulfilling the terms of their contract. “We have achieved significant cost savings by using the cameras for this purpose,” says Mr Nicholls. “The ability to divert our haulage fleet and rearrange schedules according to demand really maximises our time and resources.”



As well as the management of the sites, Viridor use these cameras to improve health and safety. “It’s becoming increasingly important to be able to track the events leading up to any accidents on site,” explains Mr Nicholls. “If a claim is made against us, the footage allows us to determine what happened and who was responsible.” This footage can be copied onto disk and used as evidence if required.

There have been incidences in the past where a customer has dumped something and, at a later date, requested its return. “Fortunately this new system allows us to see which bin the item was placed in which gives us a better chance of tracking it down and returning it,” says Mr Nicholls.

Finally, Viridor are using the cameras as an added security measure. This helps them ensure that no-one is on site without permission out of hours, and also acts as a preventative measure to any violence. “Customers can occasionally become

aggressive toward the staff,” says Mr Nicholls. “Often, just pointing out that they are being recorded is enough to diffuse the situation.” Should it go any further, the footage can be used as evidence in any prosecution.

There are plans to further utilise the network. Using the Somerset County Council web site, it is planned to transmit live images showing the site and the number of vehicles already on it. With this information, customers can see how busy it is and choose a quieter time to visit if they prefer.



### **Remote control**

Dongles used to activate the Dallmeier software have been assigned to designated Council users at County Hall, and to Mr Nicholls and his team. Depending on their designation, administrator or power user, the individuals have access to certain aspects of the system. Administrators can view, review and make copies of the footage, while the power users can simply use and review. “We’ve kept the system as simple as possible for the moment and restricted access to the more sophisticated functions,” says Mr Nicholls. “Once everyone is comfortable with the software and there is a need to expand the functions, we’ll increase the capabilities. This flexibility is another advantage of the solution provided by Dallmeier.”

The system allows Mr Nicholls to review the state of the sites each day, giving him a level of control that would otherwise be impossible. ANPR reports are displayed in the form of graphs showing peaks and troughs throughout the day, week, month and year. This is of particular use to the Council, allowing them to track suspected commercial vehicles at each of the various sites to see if, having been refused admittance at one, they try to gain admittance at another.

### **The importance of team work**

Perspective CCTV has a long standing association with Norbain, the reasons for which were truly highlighted in this project. “This was a large job, and our account

managers at Norbain ensured that they proactively handled our requirements,” explains Mr Oakes. Pallets were assigned for each of the sites with the equipment loaded up and ready to be shipped before installation even began. “This meant that we could change the order of the site installations and add or remove equipment as needed. As far as I know, there’s nowhere else you could get this level of service.”



### **A winning formula for all**

Although the ANPR cameras have only been in operation for a couple of months, there has already been a reduction in the amount of commercial waste disposed at the sites. Letters written to offenders warning them that they’ve been recorded using the site have been enough of a deterrent so far and the Council has had to take no further action. David Oaten, Waste Operations Co-ordinator for Somerset County Council, estimates that, so far, a saving of around £35,000 has been made. If this trend continues, their plans to consistently reduce the cost of commercial waste by 10% per year will certainly see fruition.

There’s no doubt that the system is benefiting all the parties involved. “Both the Council and Viridor have already seen cost savings and its allowed us to provide a more efficient service to our customers,” says Mr Nicholls. And it’s not just the equipment that gets the thumbs up. “Perspective CCTV have provided us with a thoroughly professional service and have catered to all our requirements. We’ve already extended their contract and wouldn’t hesitate to recommend them to others.”

### **About Perspective CCTV**

Truro-based Perspective CCTV has grown from scratch to having a base of 200 clients in just four years. Its business model is that a customer buys a system and a comprehensive maintenance agreement too. The Company’s philosophy is to source the right blend of tried and tested manufacturers which can give the clients confidence in the long term performance of the systems.

[www.perspective-cctv.co.uk](http://www.perspective-cctv.co.uk)