

Midlothian Council's upgraded CCTV coverage captured attempted murder

Hammer-wielding youths, an attempted murder, attacks on police and tracking the movements of a serious crime gang have all been captured on CCTV in Midlothian, a new report has revealed.

Midlothian Council has invested more than £500,000 in upgrading its CCTV coverage over the last four years introducing fixed and mobile units across the county.

A report on the impact of the coverage in the county revealed a wide range of examples where it had proved valuable to police and the council, from identifying violent criminals to catching fly tippers in action.

A meeting of councillors this week heard the first phase of work to improve the county's CCTV coverage was reaching completion and had "significantly enhanced the ability of Police Scotland to conduct investigations and improve community safety".

It said the upgraded system provides critical support as well as enhanced community safety.

Among incidents where the report said the improved system had directly helped police were providing valuable evidence for an investigation into a serious organised crime group and its

movements through Midlothian, and helping identify who was at fault in a serious vehicle crash.

It said an investigation into an attempted murder where the victim could not describe their attacker, saw CCTV provide crucial information to identify the suspect leading to their arrest.

And it said officers had used CCTV footage of youths acting anti-socially to show their parents how they were behaving adding it also led to the identification of youths who were "throwing stones and wielding hammers towards passers-by" leading to them being charged.

The meeting was told that phase two of upgrading CCTV coverage across the county was now being looked into as well as plans to ensure new council vehicles coming in later this year have cameras installed.

Council leader Kelly Parry said the ongoing investment in coverage was welcome and making a difference.

She said: "I think it is really unique. A lot of councils, under financial strain which is understandable, haven't prioritised CCTV in the way this council has and that should be duly noted."

And Councillor Dianne Alexander, cabinet spokesperson for community facilities, said: "The council's investment in modern CCTV technology is a proactive step towards creating a safer environment for all residents."

"As we're already seeing, these upgrades are enhancing public safety, discouraging anti-social behaviour, and making it easier for the police to investigate crime."

The meeting also heard that mobile CCTV units have been used to good effect in communities with one notable incident at Butlerfield Industrial Estate, Newtongrange, where a fly

tipper was caught on camera dumping asbestos and later charged.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter