



# Picture of health

When Bath's bus lane cameras came to the end of their life, **Videalert** came up with a replacement that offers the flexibility to go beyond enforcement and help address the city's parking, congestion and pollution issues, including support for a proposed Clean Air Zone

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ath – rich in history, beautiful, friendly – no wonder it's one of the UK's leading tourist attractions. But, with 4.8 million visitors each year come high volumes of traffic, bringing parking, congestion and pollution challenges.

Bath and North East Somerset Council wanted a robust platform that would offer further support for its transport and parking challenges. 'It wasn't just about automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) enforcement for bus lanes – the brief was much wider,' says Andy Dunn, the council's parking services team manager. 'We explained our issues, and asked for a solution that meets these needs while maintaining a customer-focused service. We knew the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) could be coming so we wanted a flexible system that could give added value. We asked the market to show us what it could do.'

Step forward Videalert. Its video platform is highly configurable, allowing multiple traffic management, monitoring and enforcement applications to run simultaneously without requiring stand-alone systems.

## TRAFFIC FLOW

Reducing congestion and pollution have been key benefits of the new system. Cameras have been installed in seven bus lanes to help keep public transport routes clear, which has the effect of encouraging people to use the park and ride service.

The platform ensures only a single penalty charge notice (PCN) is issued for offences committed on the same journey, allowing multiple contraventions to be handled in a fairer way and supporting the council's philosophy of educating rather than punishing drivers. This ensures that up to 2,800 PCNs per year are not issued unnecessarily, which would otherwise be cancelled on further customer contact.

Cameras have also been installed in one of the city's central car parks

and at park and ride locations to assess demand, occupancy and duration of stay. This data feeds into the council's urban traffic management control programme to help guide drivers to free spaces.

The system also allows the council to manage coach parking. An advance booking system will ensure the availability of suitable parking spaces on a timed basis. Integration with the Videalert platform will direct coaches to booked bays, improving the experience of visiting Bath for coach drivers and tourists alike, as well as helping to reduce congestion.

Enforcement and data gathering is further complemented by a new mobile enforcement vehicle, which is linked to the council's virtual permit database and detects parked cars that do not have valid permits. It captures anonymised survey data, which helps to assess the impact of behaviour change and inform the development of new schemes.

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movements through the city,’ Dunn explains. ‘For example, if we put central car park prices up, what effect does this have on how people travel?’

**FURTHER BENEFITS**

‘The new platform has worked out very well,’ says Dunn. ‘We have a good relationship with Videalert – we understand the benefits of its system and it is on board with what we want to do. The improvements we’ve seen in park and ride use has come about from exploring what the system can do and then moving forward with it.’

This month, Bath will decide whether to implement a CAZ, where higher emission vehicles may be charged. The new platform can give real-time intelligence on the level of compliance

within the zone, helping to achieve the optimum information for improving air quality. If the decision is taken to implement a CAZ, the platform will also be able to help with the identification of those vehicles that would be subject to the daily charge.

‘Overall, we’re delighted,’ says Chris Major, group manager for transport and parking at the council. ‘The upgrade helps reduce the journey times for public transport and improve air quality in the centre of Bath. Our goal is to integrate with other platforms to improve our understanding of changing driver behaviours and influence this to the benefit of residents, local businesses and visitors to Bath.’ 



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