



Daniel Washington C2010
Designing Out Crime Officer

Thames Valley Police
Headquarters South
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

23 September 2024

Reference: 242141

Location: 59 Station Road, Wokingham, RG40 2AD

Reference: 242143

Location: Land Outside 42 Market Place Wokingham. RG40 1AT

Reference: 242145

Location: Land Outside 58 and 60 Peach Street, Wokingham, RG40 1XG

Reference: 242147

Location: Land Outside 145 Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, RG5 3JP

Reference: 242149

Location: Land Outside 8 London Road Twyford, RG10 9ER

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for consulting Thames Valley Police in relation to the above planning applications. I have reviewed the submitted documents and crime statistics for the local area for each application. The following comments are provided to ensure the applications meet the requirements of;

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 paragraph 96(b); which states that Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion...
- The National Planning Policy Framework 2023, paragraph 135(f) which states that "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible... and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience".

Having reviewed the applications, and from a review of research undertaken by colleagues on the use of similar kiosks elsewhere in the country, I do have some concerns with how the units could be used. The following are examples of issues that can be associated with such facilities:

- **Criminal Damage:** It is noted that the units include some vandal resistant features (and the defibrillator is shown within a locked box). However, such facilities are often the target of vandalism and criminal damage and therefore deterrents, such as the presence of integrated CCTV should be in place. It is noted that the management plan states that the kiosks will be subject to bi-weekly inspections and this will be important to ensure that any damage is quickly identified and repaired.
- **Misuse of 999 emergency line:** This misuse of the system creates additional demand on already stretched 999 call centres, increasing the time spent waiting for real emergencies. Additionally, where we do not have CCTV coverage, misuse of 999 calls may result in officers being unnecessarily dispatched to check on callers, if we are unable to verify misuse at the point of the call.
- **Street Clutter and Pinch Points:** The proposed location of some of the kiosks introduce additional pinch points, where the width of the footpath is reduced, creating spaces where an offender (e.g a pick pocket) is provided a legitimate excuse to be within very close proximity of their target. The height and width of the units also create ideal hiding places, which reduces forward visibility for pedestrians. In addition, it would be impossible for someone walking towards a unit to know if an offender is hiding on the other side of it until they are directly alongside them.
- **Drug offences and ASB:** It is understood from the submitted information that the kiosks are not proposed to have free call functionality (however, it is noted that page 12 of the submitted Management Plan contradicts this). If this functionality was enabled, evidence around the country shows that these types of units are regularly abused to support the purchase and supply of illegal drugs. This is of a particular concern where units are proposed in locations that are not currently covered by police monitored CCTV. This abuse of the units also creates a noted increase in antisocial behaviour around the unit, with users regularly congregating to make use of the publicly available Wi-Fi whilst behaving in an antisocial manner. It is noted that the publicly available Wi-Fi can be switched off and free calls are only available to emergencies and charities, so this will help limit this type of abuse in this case.

In consideration of the above highlighted issues, it is important that the units are subject to natural surveillance, and formal surveillance in the form of CCTV within the kiosks (with clear signage that it is present). The CCTV within the kiosk would act as a further deterrent to misuse and vandalism and assist in identification should any criminal behaviour occur. Integrated CCTV cameras are referred to within the submitted Management Plan as an optional facility, but only on the advertising display side of the kiosk. It is recommended that CCTV is provided to cover both sides of the kiosk. It is noted that similar facilities include these features.

It is also noted that the Management Plan states that tactile paving will be provided on the advertising display side of the new kiosk “to prevent people sitting and leaning against the kiosk”. However, this detail should be shown on the submitted plans to ensure that this is included when installed.

I suggest that the Management Plan is revised/updated to ensure consistency with proposals (i.e to confirm free calls are limited to emergency services and charities only) and to confirm full extent of CCTV coverage of each unit. A condition should be added to any planning permission requiring the kiosks to be managed in accordance with the agreed

Management Plan.

The above comments are made on behalf of Thames Valley Police and relate to designing out crime only. I hope that you find these comments of assistance. If you have any queries relating to crime prevention design, please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Washington | Designing Out Crime Officer