

From: Aran L Johnston (Metropolitan Police)

Sent: 26 August 2021 09:00

To: Planning; Elizabeth Beaumont

Subject: Infocus planning response

Good Morning,

Thank you for allowing me to comment on the replacement of infocus kiosk/Hubs at numerous locations around Camden. My comment and recommendations are below

The applicant has liaised with design out crime officers and have made several key design changes to the device, such as removing what would more than likely have been a problematic charging 'shelf', reducing the depth of the canopy and introducing an angled design to the top of the defibrillator housing amongst others. These are all positive changes from a crime prevention perspective.

The inclusion of a management plan is a very important factor of these applications, as this will set out the strategy for the ongoing management of each device. It is very positive that this strategy will remain flexible, as crime patterns and trends can change/evolve over time and ongoing liaison between all relevant parties will remain an essential part of the process.

It is important to mention that the device provided by InFocus/JC Decaux will not support free calls to mobile telephone numbers. This is an excellent approach in assisting with crime prevention measures with any installation of this device. From previous experience of the installation of a very similar device in London (from another organisation), free calls to mobile telephone numbers led to a serious increase in drug related reports and offences. This obviously attracted other issues such as violence and disorder in and around the vicinity of the device. Therefore the inability to make free calls to mobile telephone numbers from these units is a very positive aspect of the application.

In relation to the locations of the kiosks around Camden there is a common theme among the crime statistics. All these areas have a major issue with street crime and in particular antisocial behaviour, pickpocketing and theft from person. These are areas of significant footfall with both commuters, local residents and numerous tourists. The design of these kiosks does not reduce the risk of these types of crime from occurring. Due to the openness of the kiosk any mobile phones on display at this location (either in hand or on charge) will be vulnerable to the opportunist phone snatch. With the new locations mostly closer to the carriageway this form of crime can be carried out by moped or bicycle. The large façade where the advertising screen is proposed will act as an opportunity for concealment and increase the risk of theft and assault. The close proximity to the carriageway will mean that the advertising screens will be in full view of vehicles driving past. This will be a distraction and could lead to an increase in reported collisions along these stretches of road. During hours of darkness the illuminated screens will offer increased distractions as these adverts pop out. The other consideration should be safety of the user as well as other road users. Due to the close proximity to the carriageway and the lack of visual permeability through the kiosk persons could step into the road with little to no warning for a road user. The potential for road traffic collisions increases.

Areas such as 371 Euston Road may not be suitable for a replacement kiosk. There is little active frontage at this location. Many of the local businesses are shut. The area looks run down. The risk of anti-social behaviour is higher. Without the legitimate activity of active frontages and increased footfall it is believed that this installation will require ongoing maintenance and will be subjected to criminal damage and the like.

The proposed location of Great Thornton House should be carefully considered. There is an undercroft area overlooking this device and it appears to have had issues with antisocial behaviour in the past. This has potential to have a higher crime rate. With a safe sheltered area in close proximity the

risk of data theft is increased. Users may be monitored by thieves and theft of mobile phones could increase.

The proposed kiosk at 148 High Holborn has another phone box located next to the existing kiosk which is not infocus. The other phone box looks to have been criminally damaged and in need of repair. The two devices next to each other make the street look cluttered and offer a larger object for persons to conceal themselves behind.

The proposal at 100 – 106 Southampton Row also has another device (not infocus) a short distance away offering telephone service and free WIFI. Are both required in such close proximity? The street appears cluttered and both installations hinder sight lines allowing for concealment opportunities.

If the replacement kiosks are to be considered then the following is recommended

- Strict compliance with Communication Hub Unit Management Plan (October 2020).
- Integrated CCTV camera (operational from Day 1 of official unit 'switch-on').
- Consider moving the kiosk slightly back from the carriageway where the risk of phone snatches will be higher. Also consider angling the hood of the kiosk to mitigate against this risk.
- The other consideration should be safety of the user as well as other road users. Due to the close proximity to the carriageway and the lack of visual permeability through the kiosk persons could step into the road with little to no warning for a road user. The potential for road traffic collisions increases.
- Having the advertising screens in such close proximity to the carriageway could be a distraction for road users leading to an increase in reported collisions in the vicinity of these proposed infocus kiosks. The screens at night could cause drivers unnecessary glare. It is recommended that the advertising screen be switched off overnight.
- The display screen for the advertising is quite large and could be used for concealment which could lead to a rise in opportunistic theft. Lines of sight along the street will be impeded. Consider a reduction in size of the kiosk.

Kind regards

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