

BIG BROTHER WATCH

Big Brother Watch
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7th October 2020

Schemes Planning and Delivery Manager, Nikola Floodgate
Highways Director, Simon Jones
Kent County Council

By email only

Covid-19 and electronic surveillance

Dear Nikola and Simon,

I am writing to you regarding local media reports that artificial intelligence cameras which can be used to monitor social distancing are "in the pipeline" for town centres in Kent.¹

As an organisation that protects the right to privacy and defends civil liberties in the UK, such technologies that automate monitoring and deepen surveillance of the public are of great concern to Big Brother Watch. Any suggestion of deploying such technologies requires further examination, serious stakeholder consultation and of course Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR compliance.

I would be grateful if you could disclose and clarify the reported plans by way of reply so we can respond.

First, I wish to submit some questions.

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and/or an Equality Impact Assessment for the planned trial been conducted? If so, please provide these.

The media report in question claimed that the scheme is "government-financed". Please could you provide details of the government financing for this project?

The report also claims that the deployment would be part of a wider national project to trial a variety of technologies in the UK. Please can you provide details of a) the wider national project referred to and b) Kent County Council's involvement in that wider national project?

Could you also confirm whether any data arising from this project will be shared with the Department for Transport, or any other Government department/agency, and detail the nature of the data shared?

Please provide any contracts or agreements with Vivacity Labs relating to activities in 2020.

Please can you also disclose the date or estimated date on which the cameras or sensors referred to in this report may be activated?

Yours sincerely,

Silkie Carlo

Director of Big Brother Watch

¹ Artificial intelligence Vivacity cameras that can monitor coronavirus social distancing 'in pipeline' for Kent prompting privacy fears – Ciaran Duggan, Kent Online, 6th October:
<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/cameras-to-monitor-social-distancing-in-pipeline-for-kents-town-centres-235059/?fbclid=IwAR2RB6NLejUatEGNnsCrYvnBsl2vnl0x5rfe6E8MU3g4jTDtcgkKiq6r0us>