Committee(s): Police	Date(s): 14th September 2012
Subject: City of London Police Smartphone Application (App)	**Public**
Report of: Commissioner of Police POL 58/12	**For Information**

Summary

Members were given a verbal presentation at your July Committee, introducing the City of London Police (CoLP) Application (App). Members raised some concerns regarding certain aspects of launching the App and requested a presentation and report to your September Committee.

As a result of attending a presentation CoLP worked with members of the Socionical[1] Project team to develop a bespoke App for the Force at no cost to the Force. It was used successfully as pilot for the Lord Mayor's Show in 2011. All legal aspects were considered and the City Solicitors were consulted as part of the development process. This was monitored through the governance of the Force Digital Media Group and the Assistant Commissioner gave approval for the live launch in July 2012. A non-disclosure agreement has been signed by the Socionical Project team and the City of London Police.

A comprehensive communications strategy and action plan encompassing social media, traditional media and general publicity has been drawn up and launched by Corporate Communications.

The main objective of the App is to share real-time information with the people in the City of London; to warn and inform and enhance Community Engagement.

Recommendation
It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

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[1] Socionical is a four year European project funded by the European Commission with the aim of helping scientists and policy makers better understand how the applied use of new technology can benefit society.

Main Report

Background

1. Members were given a verbal presentation at your July Committee, introducing the City of London Police App. Members raised some concerns regarding certain aspects of launching the App and requested a presentation and report to your September Committee.

2. In early 2011 City of London Police (CoLP) Emergency Planning Section attended a presentation organised by the City of London Corporation. The presentation was given by members of the Socionical Project team. Socionical were seeking partners to work with them to test the smart phone application (app) technology they were developing. The CoLP Emergency Planning team recognised its potential and, on the authority of the Directorate Chief Superintendent, worked with the Socionical team during the development of the app for the 2011 Lord Mayor's Show.

3. The Lord Mayor's Show app provided information about the Show and the City of London to the phone user, and also provided information to the project team about crowd density and movement during the Show and Fireworks display.

4. As a result of this joint working, Socionical offered to develop an app for the City of London Police for use on smart phones at no cost to the Force. A paper describing the app was presented to the Force's Digital Media Group chaired by the Assistant Commissioner in January 2012 and, together with the Force Corporate Communications Department, Emergency Planning began work with Socionical to develop a City of London Police app.

Legal considerations

5. Members should be reassured that all legal aspects have been considered. It was recognised that as the App would have the capability to collect information from Smartphones, safeguarding the App users' privacy was of paramount importance. The below points cover the measures taken:

    -   A comprehensive paper was submitted in February 2012 to the City of London Corporation Comptroller and City Solicitors outlining the App proposal, its capabilities and the safeguards that were to be built in. Additional recommendations made by the Solicitors as to appropriate safeguards were incorporated into the City of London Police App. The City of London Corporation Solicitors are now satisfied that the App proposal meets the legal requirements.

- As a European Commission funded information and communication technologies research project, the project team developing the app technology had to satisfy stringent European Commission standards.

- The Ethics Committee of the London School of Economics (LSE) (the LSE are one of the Socionical Project partners) also had to be satisfied appropriate safeguards were in place.

- The Socionical Project Team had lengthy discussions with the Force Information Manager regarding the collection, storage and security of the app generated data. The Force Information Manager was satisfied with the protocols agreed.

6. This was monitored through the governance of the Force Digital Media Group and the Assistant Commissioner gave approval for the live launch in July 2012. A non-disclosure agreement has been signed by the Socionical Project team and the City of London Police. The agreement states that in return for the support and assistance provided by the City of London Police the Project grants us free access and use of its software. It also means that the City of London Police will not disclose details of the software to a third party.

Current Position

7. The iPhone version of the App has been developed and is available for free through the Apple App store. An android version will be available in due course, possibly before the end of the year.

8. The Force has not incurred any cost in the App's development. Current prices for app development range from £3000-£5000 for a simple App, which this is not, to £50,000 to £150,000 for a complex app. These figures are quoted for single platform Apps and do not include costs of future upgrades. To date (as at 10th August 2012) there are 500 subscribers to the App.

9. A comprehensive communications strategy and action plan encompassing social media, traditional media and general publicity has been drawn up and launched by Corporate Communications. This includes targeting App specialist media, making a video demonstrating how the App works for 'YouTube' and directly targeting our business and residential communities. The plan includes a second push of activity in September/October to continue to publicise the App and to encourage businesses and commuters to download.

Objectives/functionality of the App

10. The main objective of the App is to share real-time information with the people in the City of London; to warn and inform and enhance Community Engagement. Anyone installing the App on their Smartphone will get access to information on:

    - Street level crime information, navigable maps showing police stations, London Underground transport links and iconic sites/ points of interest.

    - Links to the latest City of London Police news and live @CityPolice twitter feed, plus the force's website

    - Enhancing Community Engagement by making available useful information about the City of London Police, including its community policing teams and role as the police service lead for tackling economic crime.

    - Information on how to be prepared in the event of an emergency/ major incident.

11. There is also an additional key feature that will help the force to assess and monitor crowd density during large scale events, which works when people who have installed the App agree to share their location data. When the force 'switches' on this crowd sourcing capability during big events or gatherings, people with the App installed receive a message asking if they are prepared to 'opt into' the service.

12. People who agree will share their location. This information is used anonymously by the City of London Police to provide greater clarity on the movement of crowds during events and will allow the force to send relevant warning and informing messages to people through the App, on twitter and through the force website.

13. In order to demonstrate the viability of the crowd dynamics feature of the App the Force plans to activate the feature on the 10th September 2012. On this date there is a parade of British athletes starting at the Guildhall and travelling through the City towards Buckingham Palace. Utilising it on this date would enable the Force to examine spectator movements overlaying the normal City business population movements on what would be the first "normal" day after the finish of the Paralympics.

The future

14. The Force is in the process of developing an area for Community Engagement which will give App users information about how the Force provides services. In addition, 'Police.UK' has confirmed that they are happy for CoLP Corporate Communications to embed their mobile site pages into the CoLP App. This means that the App user's experience in the community engagement section will be far better than simply accessing an area that just 'points' to the 'Police.UK' domain. Users will also be able to link through to 'Police.UK's' mobile website enabling them to see:

- Who their ward officers are
- When their next Community Partnership /Panel meeting is
- How to get in touch with community policing (for interactive community engagement to help inform the force of community concerns and priorities)
- A breakdown of crime in their area (similar to the crime map function already on the App, but showing content differently)

15. The Force needs to first identify exactly what services the App should provide for community engagement and is in the process of doing this.

Conclusion

16. As a result of collaboration during the Lord Mayor's Show 2011 the City of London Police now has an App which utilises technology not used by any other police force with continuing support and upgrades. Whilst CoLP has officers and cameras that can give the Force information from the ground this technology allows the Force to have an overview of crowds that can aid decision making processes and will improve community engagement in the future. In addition this App puts the City of London Police in peoples' pockets. The Force can communicate with the community for free without either party having to pay for the privilege. The only caveat is that we may have to pay a fee for data collection in the future.

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