Mayor approves world’s largest roll-out of traceable liquid technology to combat burglary in the capital

The Mayor of London Boris Johnson has today announced the world’s largest roll-out of an innovative ‘traceable liquid’ to dramatically reduce burglary rates across the capital.

The Mayor’s Police and Crime Plan set a target to reduce burglary by 20 percent by 2016 and the number of burglaries in the capital is down 23% compared to March 2012. However there were still 74,029 residential and commercial burglary offences recorded in London from February 2014 to February 2015 and it is a crime that has a significant impact on victims.

The new ‘Met Trace’ programme, which will run over three years, will provide 440,000 homes in burglary hotspots across the capital with a free kit containing an invisible traceable liquid, allowing owners to mark their possessions with a unique forensic code and to display warning stickers to deter burglars. This code can then be used by the police to trace the items should they ever be stolen and to link suspects to crime scenes.

Created by SmartWater Technology Ltd, the liquid, which is virtually impossible to remove and can only be viewed under UV light, has already been proven to significantly reduce burglary rates. During a recent Met trial across five boroughs, burglary rates reduced on average by 49 percent, with some areas seeing a reduction of over 70 percent. More than half of residents involved in the pilot said they felt safer having applied the liquid to items in their homes.
The technology has a significant deterrent effect and it is predicted the roll-out could prevent over 7,000 residential burglary offences, saving the Met Police almost £5 million and freeing up 140,000 police hours (equivalent to 17,400 police working days).

The Mayor of London Boris Johnson said ‘Crime is down in London and burglary rates are at their lowest since 1974, however we cannot be complacent. I am committed to tackling burglary in the capital, and this traceable liquids programme shows that once again the Met Police is at the forefront of innovation when it comes to preventing crime. I hope Londoners receiving this kit will take advantage of it to protect themselves and their homes from thieves.’

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime Stephen Greenhalgh said, ‘Burglary is a sickening offence which has a devastating effect on victims, and we need to do more to prevent it. Recent trials in London provide strong evidence that traceable liquid technology is a good investment and this large-scale roll-out will help us drive down burglary rates even further. Investing in this technology will not only help us protect homes and businesses, but by preventing crime will also free up hundreds of officers.”

Commander Simon Letchford, who is co-ordinating the programme, said, ‘The Met is committed to driving down burglary and is working hard every day to reduce offences, arrest offenders and support victims, using innovative technology to help us achieve this. Our pilot has proved the concept of traceable liquid property marking works and we are delighted the technology will benefit a further 440,000 homes across London, which we estimate will prevent a further 7,000 properties from being burgled. We will use traceable liquids as effectively as possible to create a hostile environment for burglars and to make our communities safer.’

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator Maureen West said ‘We had a spate of burglaries in our neighbourhood and SmartWater has made a real difference in deterring crime, making us feel a lot safer. I am thrilled that this amazing kit will be used more widely in London.’

Phil Cleary, Chief Executive and co-founder of SmartWater said, ‘The proven track record of SmartWater’s technology within the criminal courts, along with our unique crime
reduction strategies, create a longstanding and powerful deterrent for the benefit of both residential and business communities. Consequently, we are delighted to be partnering with the Metropolitan Police Service in this world-first project.’

Notes to Editors

- The latest data available on the MOPAC Crime Dashboard shows how burglary is falling across the capital https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/data-information/crime-dashboard
- SmartWater, a London-based company, has a proven and successful track record of working with international law enforcement agencies to reduce crimes ranging from burglary to metal theft, in both the public and private sectors. The concept of using traceable liquids to suppress crime was created in 1996 by the Cleary brothers, one a chemist, the other a former police officer. Website: www.smartwater.com
- Photos available here: http://we.tl/HlwIEKYG6X

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Information for the media is available from policing@london.gov.uk, or 0207 7983 4066
PUBLIC/NON-MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Call the Public Liaison Unit at the Greater London Authority on 020 7983 4100
DUTY PRESS OFFICER: For out-of-hours media enquiries, please call 020 7983 4000