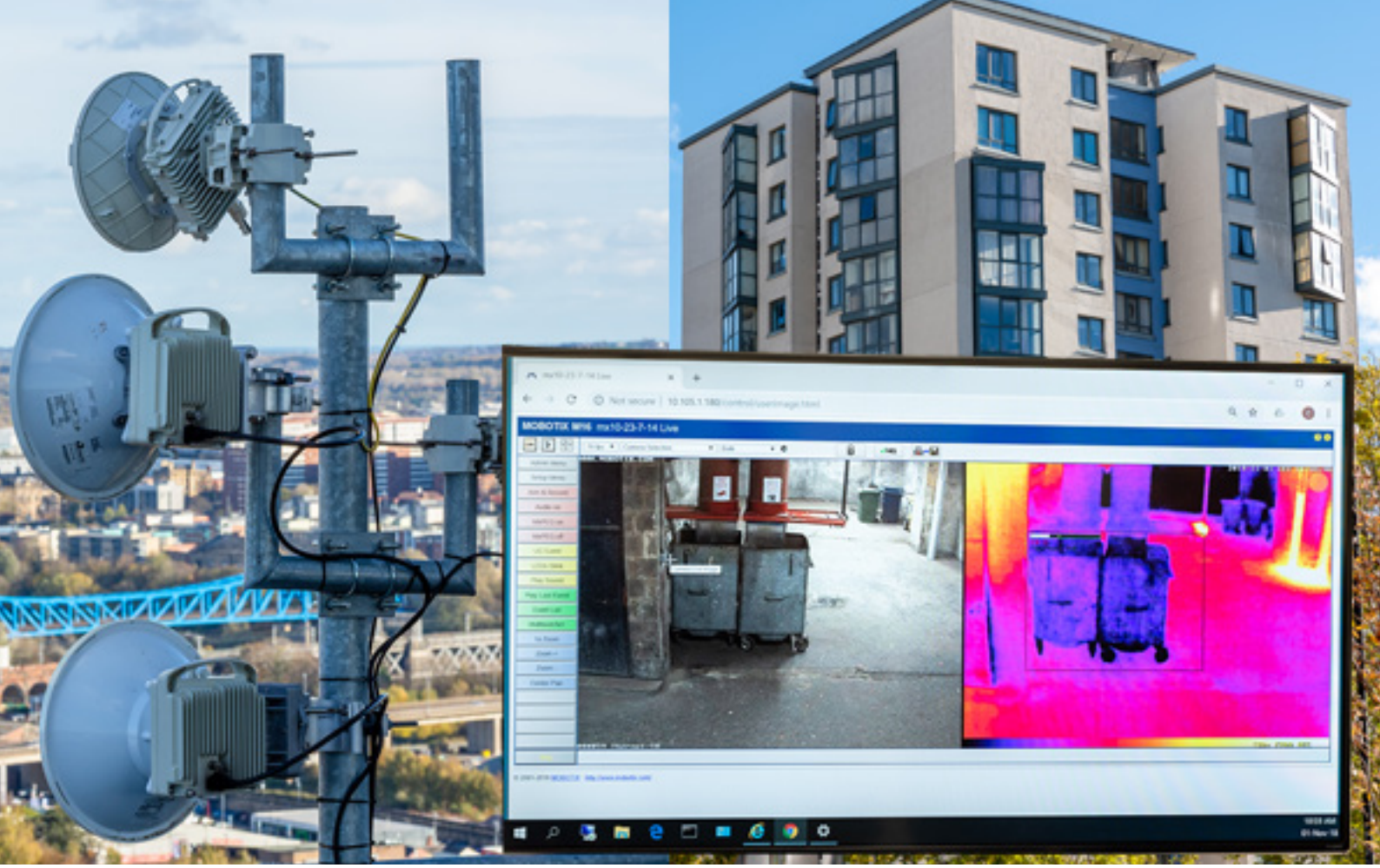
YHN PILOTS REVOLUTIONARY FIRE SAFETY MEASURE FROM OPENVIEW IN NEWCASTLE TOWER BLOCKS

Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), which manages more than 26,000 properties on behalf of Newcastle City Council, is taking an innovative approach to fire safety with a pilot project utilising thermal imaging cameras in tower blocks. The organisation has installed thermal imaging cameras in three of its 45 multi-storey blocks across the city in a trial partnership with OpenView Security Solutions, the UK'S largest privately-owned independent security company and a leading national supplier of fire, electrical and mechanical services to the public and private housing sectors.

The pilot involves the installation of Mobotix M16 thermal cameras in bin chute rooms to detect minute increases in temperature, triggering an alarm in YHN's central enquiry centre before any fire has had a chance to take hold. This ensures that an alarm is raised with the fire service within seconds of a possible fire. The camera continually monitors the temperature in the room, with information relayed back to the fire service enabling them to better prepare their response.

David Langhorne, YHN's Assets and Development Director, said: "The tragic events at Grenfell Tower have undoubtedly put fire safety in multi-storey blocks under a microscope, but we have been trialling new measures in our multi-storey properties for some time. "We pride ourselves on being innovative, so it was an easy decision for us to test something that had not yet been adopted elsewhere. The early detection system provided by the OpenView system has many benefits. Most importantly, the faster response time from the fire service means the potential impact on residents and their properties is minimised and they and their homes are far safer as a result."

This pilot system is one of many fire safety measures currently in place in the blocks manage by YHN across the city. Other measures already installed include wet and dry risers, central alarm systems, smoke alarm activated bin chute fire dampers and bin room sprinklers.



The project is already attracting praise from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. According to Alan Robson, Assistant Chief Officer at Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service: "It's great that YHN is innovating in this way. Using technology to support the monitoring of storage areas such as this helps improve the information we receive about incidents. This technology can reduce false alarm calls and improve our response to confirmed fires."

The Mobotix M16 Thermal camera's lens is triggered when an unexpected heat pattern occurs and automatically sends an alert to the central control room. Images from the thermal lens are automatically presented to operators enabling the exact location of hotspots, such as smouldering fires, to be pinpointed. The standard CCTV lens provides a live feed for further verification of events.

YHN's existing infrastructure, which uses Openview installed equipment in the blocks to link alarms through to its enquiry centre via Jontek, meant the new approach could be easily implemented without any disruption to residents.

Andy Ward, Sales Director of OpenView Security Solutions, added: "This innovative fire protection solution enables housing providers to provide a safer environment for residents and minimise the incidence of false alarms. It now forms part of our expanding portfolio of fire and life safety solutions, which is one of the fastest growing areas of our business, and consolidates our leading position in the public and private housing sectors."

Commenting on the partnership with YHN and OpenView, Frank Graham, Mobotix Regional Sales Manager, said: "We are very happy to be working so closely with both YHN and Openview in the development and provision of an innovative solution for such a serious issue. Mobotix cameras have inbuilt intelligence to meet all the requirements of integrator and end users alike and we look forward to a longstanding and fruitful partnership with both organisations moving forward."