

West Suffolk Council surveillance camera code of practice

This Code of Practice applies to the CCTV surveillance scheme operated by West Suffolk Council. The scheme comprises of cameras located at specific external and internal locations within the surrounding area.

The scheme allows for the control, monitoring and recording of images for the purposes of crime detection and prevention.

All cameras have been sited to capture images of identifiable individuals or information relating to individuals which are relevant to the purposes for which the scheme has been established.

In 2013 a new Surveillance Camera Code of Practice was published by the Home Office; this aims to create a more transparent, proportionate and accountable CCTV system.

To assist organisations in achieving the aims set out by the camera code of practice the Home Office also published a Code of Practice - Steps to complying with the 12 principles. If followed correctly, these principles will protect the public as well as uphold civil liberties.

West Suffolk Council works to comply with these practices and has conducted a privacy impact assessment to outline precisely what our system entails and what it is being used for, to allow transparency, proportionality and accountability as outlined in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

To access the privacy impact assessment visit the webpage https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/crime_and_safety/cctv.cfm

The areas that West Suffolk Council cover are listed below:

- Bury St Edmunds
- Haverhill
- Newmarket
- Mildenhall
- Brandon
- Stowmarket
- Endeavour House (Ipswich)

Ownership of system

The system is owned and managed by West Suffolk Council who operate cameras on behalf of themselves as well as Mid-Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council.

Scheme objectives

- To reduce fear of crime
- To improve conditions of local residents and visitors, to town centres, especially vulnerable groups, including elderly people and children.
- To support businesses confidence and invest in the local communities and thus improve the facilities and retail outlets for the community.
- To dispel avoidance factors affecting the town centres.
- To deter crime and vandalism
- To assist in the detection of crime
- To reduce the level of crime
- To aid the efficient and effective deployment of police resources.
- To achieve these aims while respecting the civil liberties of the residents and visitors.

The purpose of public space surveillance (PSS) systems

When CCTV systems are initially designed, each camera should have an operational requirement that specifies the purpose of that camera and the response that is expected from the operators. This information can be found within the councils Privacy Impact Assessment.

The purpose of a CCTV system is documented in both the CCTV Code of Practice and the General Data Protection Regulation. All PSS CCTV systems are registered with the Information Commissioner and their purpose can be broadly described under two categories:

1. Primary purposes

- a) To assist in the prevention and detection of crime.
- b) To assist in the promotion of community safety and to reduce anti-social behaviour.

2. Secondary purposes

- a) To assist the client (system owner) in providing any of its prosecuting or contracted services.
- b) To assist in the management of the town centre, this includes monitoring safety or operationally critical activities on a particular site.
- c) To assist the client in the protection of assets.

Roles and responsibilities of a CCTV operator

The role of a Closed Circuit Tele-Vision (CCTV) operator is one of today's most high profile security positions. CCTV Operations has become one of the most important sectors of the security industry. However, the quality of information obtained is only as good as the operators that monitor the cameras. The industry has made considerable technological advances in recent years which mean that the skills of a CCTV operator are developing on a continuing basis. Higher expectations are being placed on systems and operators to help with major crimes such as murder and terrorism, with anti-social behaviour on our streets also increasing the need for greater vigilance. As a result, CCTV operator's responsibilities have increased to deliver the quality of service and evidence that is required to provide evidential material of the highest integrity.

Licence to operate

All personnel operating within the CCTV Control room must be vetted to comply with NPPV Level 2 to operate the airwaves and be in possession of an SIA CCTV Licence which authorises them to operate a CCTV camera for 'Public Space Surveillance' (PSS). The training standards set out for these licences are governed by the 'Security Industry Authority' (SIA) who is the issuing authority of all CCTV operators licences.

SIA Website - <https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/home.aspx>

Location & access

The control room is situated in West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds; it houses the main control equipment for the system and has its own separate access, which is protected by both access control and a camera to identify persons before entry is allowed. The actual control room will be a secure unit at all times, with further access control.

Visitors will be strictly limited. Only authorised persons with the express permission of the Supervising Officer will be allowed entry. A police officer will be allowed access when authority has been provided by the local police control room supervising officer. Visitors' logs will record all visitors and operators entering or leaving the control room and will record the reason for that visit.

Deployment and use of cameras

With the exception of a few static or fixed cameras, all cameras controlled through the CCTV Control room in Bury St Edmunds are what is commonly known as PTZ cameras and controlled by the operator by use of a 'joy' stick on the control console.

Pan: Can move from left to right through 360 degrees

Tilt: Can be moved up or down

Zoom: Enables the operator to view close up images in order to obtain greater detail or panoramic

When cameras are not being operated by an operator the camera runs through a pre-set tour giving a 360 view of the area to capture anything that may be used later in evidence.

Siting of cameras

When siting cameras, consideration should always be given to the cameras pre-sets, its parking position and/or choke points. Once agreed upon, they should not be changed except for when it becomes operationally necessary.

On a yearly basis a privacy impact assessment shall be carried out for all cameras, to ensure compliancy with GDPR and the SCC code of practice. If needed the PIA will be updated due to changes with cameras or technology.

The siting of cameras is subject to the approval of the Council. All cameras will be prominently placed taking into consideration all privacy issues and allowing the cameras to be within the public view. No camera will be hidden.

Cameras will be positioned so as to provide the best possible coverage of the area in which it is placed rather than to provide camera coverage for individual premises. They will be capable of pan, tilt and zoom in almost every case, this will provide identification of persons facially and vehicles by registration plates in accordance with the councils system performance requirements.

Provision will be made to avoid unwarranted intrusion of the privacy by the camera. Random checks will be undertaken by the Team Leaders to ensure that public privacy is not abused. Any operator found to be doing so will be removed from the control room.

Incidents

Definitions of an incident are:

- 1) An event, or hostile clash.
- 2) A public event causing trouble.
- 3) A detached event attracting general attention.
- 4) A distinct piece of action.

These might include:

- 1) A fight.
- 2) An accident.
- 3) A crime.
- 4) A suspicious act – Person – Group – Vehicle.
- 5) An emergency.

Police request for viewing

The police may request, through the police officer in charge of the local police control room, that a particular area be viewed by the CCTV operator in the following circumstances:

- To assist in the event of a major incident or an emergency;
- To assist in the detection of crime;

- To assist in the arrest and gathering of evidence so that offenders may be prosecuted in relation to criminal or public order incidents
- To provide information in relation to traffic flow within the town centres,
- To assist in the search for very young, old or the mentally ill (when duties permit).
- Any request from the police will be entered in the occurrence log and the length of time engaged will also be recorded together with RIPA number.

Regulation of Investigatory Act (RIPA)

The Regulation of Investigatory Power Act 2000 or RIPA was introduced to protect Police and Intelligence Services by making surveillance and similar activities conform to the principle of 'Legality' under the European Convention of Human Rights.

Intrusive surveillance;

Defined as taking place on residential premises or inside a vehicle (where you would expect more privacy than walking in the street) for this to be undertaken, a RIPA authority is required.

Directed surveillance;

Directed surveillance is defined as a 'covert' surveillance that is undertaken in relation to a specific investigation or specific operation likely to obtaining private information about a particular person, if this is likely to obtain personal information, (images) a RIPA authority is required.

Any such surveillance requested by the Police, the operator must first obtain a RIPA authority before proceeding and entries made in the RIPA log and occurrence log.

Ground for authorisation

- 1) National Security;
- 2) Prevention and detection of crime;
- 3) Preventing disorder;
- 4) Protecting Public Health
- 5) In the interest of Public Safety.

Communications

A camera monitor will be situated in the control room of the local police station. This will be capable of receiving camera images relayed by the control room operators. A telephone connection will be provided for contacting other emergency services and to make any other calls that become necessary in the running of the control room.

Airwaves

The Airwaves radio is owned and maintained by Suffolk Constabulary.

West Suffolk Council is registered by OFCOM as an approved Sharer, which means we can use the equipment supplied by Suffolk Constabulary. This is a privilege, not a right and can be removed at any time.

There is an Airwave protocol between Suffolk Constabulary and West Suffolk Council which allows this arrangement.

Shopwatch/Pubwatch

Shopsafe is a radio link scheme which enables users in retail premises and public houses to communicate instantly with the Control Room using hand held portable radios. The radios are owned and maintained by Shopsafe and leased to retail organisations.

Shopsafe is currently operational in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Newmarket Mildenhall and Stowmarket, shopkeepers and publicans radio through to the control room when they are using the system.

Public information

To allow complete transparency with the scheme and its operations the following shall be published on the West Suffolk CCTV page;

Code of Practice

Privacy Impact Assessments

Self Assessment Tool

CCTV Sign Template

CCTV Location Maps

CCTV Statistics on a quarterly basis

Complaints

Any complaints received regarding CCTV operations will be dealt with in a timely fashion. Complaints can be made by calling 01284 763233 and asking to speak to a member of staff or by logging it on the West Suffolk website.