

Witham Town Council: Body Worn Camera policy

This policy outlines the use of body worn cameras by staff employed by Witham Town Council.

Policy Overview

This policy explains the protocol in which body worn cameras are operated and how we store the data that is captured.

Introduction

1. This document sets out the Town Council's Policy and Procedural Guidelines for the use of Body worn CCTV cameras by all Council staff. It will enable employees to comply with the relevant legislation relating to video recording and outline the associated benefits to staff, visitors and the general public. It also documents best practice procedures with regard to integrity of data, images and video as well as its security and use
2. The use of Body worn CCTV can provide a number of benefits which include a deterrent to acts of aggression or verbal and physical abuse toward staff, and providing evidence to support Police or Proctors investigations
3. Body worn CCTV forms part of a staff members' Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and is provided solely for Health and Safety purposes. It will be used in an overt manner and emphasized by staff that it is a CCTV device. Prior to commencement of any recording, where possible, staff will give a clear verbal instruction that recording is taking place.

Legislation

4. The integrity of any video data recorded will be considered in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Human Rights Act 1998.

5. The Town Council operates this policy in accordance with guidance issued by the Information Commissioners Office.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

6. The Information Commissioner's Office is the regulator for GDPR and has given guidance with regard to the use of Body worn CCTV equipment. This legislation regulates the processing of 'personal data' or 'sensitive personal data' whether processed on computer, CCTV, still camera or any other media.
7. Any recorded image that is aimed at or may identify a particular person is described as 'personal data' and covered by this Act and will include images and audio captured using Body worn equipment. The use of Body worn CCTV in this guidance is 'overt use' meaning that equipment is not to be worn or used in a hidden or covert manner.
8. Where an individual asks to view footage this is called a 'Subject Access Request'. The requester is only allowed to see footage of themselves and anyone who has provided consent for their images to be viewed by them.

Human Rights Act 1998

9. Article 6 provides for the right to a fair trial. All images captured through the use of a Body worn device have the potential to be used in court proceedings and must be safeguarded by an audit trail in the same way as any other evidence.
10. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 concerns the right for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Recordings of persons in a public place are only public for those present at the time and can still be regarded as potentially private. Any recorded conversation between members of the public should always be considered private and users of Body worn equipment should not record beyond what is necessary when recording a confrontational situation.

The Town Council will ensure that the use of Body worn CCTV is emphasised by staff wearing it in a prominent position (normally on their chest) and that its forward facing display is visible to anyone being recorded. Additionally, staff will make a verbal announcement, where practicable, prior to commencement of any recording.

Operational Guidance and Best Practice

11. All Operations staff will receive training in the use of Body worn CCTV. This training will include practical use of equipment, operational guidance and best practice, when to commence and cease recording and the legal implications of using such equipment.
12. Body worn CCTV will only be used in the event where Council staff find themselves in a confrontational situation where they are subject to, or feel that they are likely to be subject to, verbal or physical abuse.
13. Recordings will not commence until the staff member has issued a verbal warning, where possible, of their intention to turn on the Body worn device.
14. Recordings will not be made whilst performing normal duties.
15. All recordings will be held securely.
16. Access to recordings will be restricted to persons on a list maintained by the Town Council (currently the Town Clerk, Operations Manager and law enforcement agencies).

Recording

17. Recording must be incident specific. Members of staff must not indiscriminately record entire duties or patrols and must only use recording to capture video and audio of specific incidents. For the purposes of this guidance an 'incident' is defined as:
 - a) An engagement with a person on which in the opinion of the member of staff is confrontational, and where the member of staff believes they may be subject to physical or verbal abuse or for the purpose of evidence gathering for an Incident report.
 - b) The member of staff is approached by a person in a manner perceived as aggressive or threatening.

Verbal Warning

19. The purpose of issuing a verbal warning is to allow the subject a chance to modify any unacceptable confrontational or aggressive and threatening behaviour. If, at any time during an incident the member of staff considers that the use of Body worn CCTV or the issuing of a verbal warning, is likely to inflame a confrontational situation, the member of staff may use discretion to disengage from further discussion and withdraw from the incident.
20. A specific form of words to be used in any warning to a subject has not been prescribed, but Officers should use straightforward speech that can be easily understood by those present such as:

'I am wearing a Body worn CCTV camera and I am now recording video and sound'

Playback

21. Members of staff will need to be fully aware of the legal implications once digital images and audio have been recorded. To this end playback should only be at the request of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk or Police Officer attending the incident. Any request to view captured video by the subject, will need to be made in writing to the Town Council.

Storage of Data

22. All recorded footage will be uploaded to the secure Town Council servers.
23. The Town Clerk will assume responsibility for ensuring that any footage to be retained has been correctly bookmarked and that supporting Incident Reports have been completed.
24. For Incidents where the Police have not been in attendance the Town Clerk will review the recording and a decision will be made on whether referral to the Police is appropriate.
25. The Town Clerk will then transfer the data to the IT system hard drive and complete the Information Asset Log. All retained data will be kept until all investigations have been completed or a prosecution has taken place. Any other data not required for evidential purposes will be deleted after 31 days.

Last Reviewed: 17.06.2019