

Community Safety CCTV Annual Review 2024

Introduction

South Gloucestershire Council currently operates 83 Community Safety CCTV cameras which are permanently situated throughout seven towns and along the Metrobus route within South Glos. These Community Safety CCTV cameras are located in key areas to assist with public safety, the prevention and detection of crime and the general wellbeing of users to the area.

The Community Safety Team also operates a further 4 Deployable CCTV cameras which are used to deploy in hotspot locations to help with tackling Community Safety concerns. These cameras are installed on a temporary basis and for no longer than is necessary to serve the purpose.

The Council also uses Body Worn Cameras for a range of Council Services and commissioned services for the purpose of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. These include Civil Enforcement Officers, Council Officers in Libraries, Planning Enforcement Officers, Environmental Enforcement Officers and Taxi Marshals who are commissioned to support the Police in dealing with the night time economy.

The objectives of the South Gloucestershire CCTV system are as follows;

- *To assist in the prevention, investigation and/or detection of crime*
- *To assist in the apprehension and /or prosecution of offenders*
- *To deter Anti-Social Behaviour offences against the personal and property*
- *To prevent and reduce Anti-Social Behaviour*
- *To enhance community safety*
- *To comply with this Code of Practice*
- *To provide a safe environment for people who live, work and visit the area*

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure all the Community Safety CCTV cameras operate in accordance with the CCTV Code of Practice. The Council employs a dedicated CCTV Officer who has responsibility for ensuring this code is adhered to at all times. The CCTV Officer also provides appropriate access to information, requests for service and complaints in relation to the Community Safety CCTV System.

Annual Review

During the annual review various elements of the CCTV system were checked and reviewed to help assess the effectiveness of the system. These included:

- *The purpose and scope of the system.*
- *Any changes to the operation and management of the system.*
- *Any proposals to reduce, amend or expand the system.*
- *The aims or objectives for the next 12 months.*

Observations were made of the surrounding areas of each camera system to identify any changes to the environment that may impact on the CCTV system. In addition to this, each cameras pre-set position, image quality, privacy masking (where applicable), time and 3 date stamp, retention period and PTZ functionality was checked against the previous years to establish if there had been any changes.

CCTV Monitoring

South Gloucestershire Council currently hold a contract with Bristol City Council for the monitoring of 50 of their town centre cameras and 33 of their Metrobus cameras. The service is provided by way of a dedicated SIA Licensed operator monitoring the CCTV cameras 24 hours a day 7 days a week and providing incident reports to South Glos Council as and when necessary.

CCTV Consultation

A private consultant was appointed to ensure the appropriate consultation was carried out at the design and implementation stage of the Community Safety CCTV network. An appropriate consultation framework will be established as and when any expansion of work is required.

Data Retention

The Data Protection Act does not specify a minimum or maximum time for the retention of CCTV footage but does specify that the footage should be kept for the shortest period necessary to serve the purpose. As a result of this, the Council retains all CCTV footage for a maximum of 30 days whereby the oldest footage re-writes over itself as per the settings within the DVR/NVR's.

The annual review found that the data retention period for all CCTV systems are satisfactory and remain in line with the councils CCTV Code of Practice.

CCTV Signage

CCTV signs are prominently placed at the entrance to the CCTV surveillance system's zones and throughout the immediate areas. Each sign reflects the purpose of the cameras, who it is controlled by and sufficient contact details of South Gloucestershire Council.

During the review, each individual CCTV sign was checked to ensure the relevant information remained visible along with a further review of the signs quantity and location.

CCTV Related Incidents

Between the 1st of April 2023 and 31st of March 2024 46 separate live incidents were reported to South Gloucestershire Council via Bristol City Council's Operations Centre whereby the CCTV system had played a part.

In addition to this, a further 113 requests for CCTV footage were received from the Police during this period to help with their investigations.

Justification

The justification for the continued presence of Community Safety CCTV in South Gloucestershire is to prevent and detect crime and disorder and maintain general public safety. Further justifications of this are:

- *To reduce the fear of crime and provide reassurances to the general public*
- *To detect, deter and prevent crime by: assisting in the prevention of crime, helping to identify, apprehend and prosecute offenders, providing evidence to take criminal and civil action in the court, maintenance of public order, reduce vandalism, graffiti, criminal damage and other nuisances, reduce vehicle crime in the South Gloucestershire area and the public car parks and enable the Police to provide a more effective response.*

Individuals affected by this initiative will be all pedestrians and vehicles who choose to enter the areas covered by the CCTV system.

The justification for using body worn CCTV varies depending on the nature of the role. For example, Council staff can sometimes experience verbal abuse and be subjected to complaints from the public. In the case of Taxi Marshals, the service they provide can be confrontational dealing with people that are leaving pubs and clubs often under the influence of alcohol. Factual evidence of what happened can support the Police and other agencies in establishing what happened and taking action to deal with incidents, or offences that have occurred.

Observations

During the review there were no observations identified that needed remedial action. All cameras and recorders are operating as expected and in accordance with the necessary legislation.