

CCTV POLICY SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

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CCTV POLICY

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy is to control the management, operation, use and confidentiality of the CCTV system in the town of Sevenoaks managed by Sevenoaks Town Council. It was prepared after taking due account of the Surveillance Code of Practice pursuant to the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This policy will be subject to periodic review by the Town Council to ensure that it continues to reflect the public interest and that it and the system meets all legislative requirements.

The Town Council accepts the principles of the 2012 Act based on the Guiding Principles as follows:

- 1 Use of a surveillance camera system must always be for a specific purpose which is in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary to meet an identified pressing need.
- 2 The use of surveillance camera system must take in to account its effect on individuals and their privacy, with regular reviews to ensure its use remains justified.
- 3 There must be as much transparency in the use of a surveillance camera system as possible, including a published contact point for access to information and complaints.
- 4 There must be clear responsibility and accountability for all surveillance camera system activities including images and information collected, held and used.
- 5 Clear Rules, policies and procedure must be in place before a surveillance camera system is used, and these must be Communicated to all who need to comply with them
- 6 No more images and information should be stored than that which is strictly required for the stated purpose of a surveillance camera system, and such images and information should be deleted once their purposes have been discharged.
- 7 Access to retained images and information should be restricted and there must be clearly defined rules on who can gain access and for what purpose such access is granted; the disclosure of images and information should only take place when it is necessary for such a purpose or for law enforcement purposes.
- 8 Surveillance camera system operators should consider any approved operational, technical and competency standards relevant to a system and its purpose and work to meet and maintain those standards.
- 9 Surveillance camera system images should be subject to appropriate security measures to safeguard against unauthorised access and use.
- 10 There should be effective review and audit mechanisms to ensure legal requirements, policies and standards are complied with in practise
- 11 When the use of a surveillance camera system is in pursuit of a legitimate aim, and there is a pressing need for its use, it should then be used in the most effective way to support public safety and law enforcement with the aim of processing images and information of evidential value.
- 12 Any information used to support a surveillance camera system which compares against a database for matching purposes should be accurate and kept up to date.

2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To provide a safe and secure environment for the benefit of those who might visit, work or live in the area. The system will not be used to invade the privacy of any individual, except when carried out in accordance with the law.

The scheme will be used for the following purposes:

- to reduce the fear of crime by persons using the town's facilities without fear of intimidation by individuals or groups;
- to reduce the vandalism of property and to prevent, deter and detect crime and disorder;
- to assist the Police, the Town Council and other Law Enforcement Agencies with identification, detection, apprehension and prosecution of offenders by examining and using retrievable evidence relating to crime, public order or contravention of bye-laws;
- to deter potential offenders by publicly displaying the existence of CCTV, having cameras clearly sited that are not hidden and signs on display.
- to assist all "emergency services" to carry out their lawful duties.

3. CHANGES TO THE PURPOSE OR POLICY

A major change that would have a significant impact on either the purpose or this policy of operation of the CCTV scheme will take place only after discussion at Council Committee meeting(s) and resolution at full Council meeting. All agendas are posted on the Town Council notice board at least 3 clear days excluding weekends before Council meetings.

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4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OWNERS OF THE SCHEME

The Town Council retains overall responsibility for the scheme.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE SYSTEM

Day-to-day operational responsibility rests with the Clerk to the Council, who can be consulted by staff out of hours, if and when necessary.

Breaches of this policy by operators will be investigated by the Clerk to the Council and reported to the Town Council.

A CCTV system prevents crime largely by increasing the risk of detection and prosecution of an offender. Any relevant tape or digital evidence must be in an acceptable format for use at Court hearings. This policy must be read and understood by all persons involved in this scheme and individual copies of this policy will therefore be issued for retention. A copy will also be available for reference in the secure recording area(s).

6. CONTROL AND OPERATION OF THE CAMERAS, MONITORS AND SYSTEMS

The following points must be understood and strictly observed by operators:

1. Trained operators must act with due probity and not abuse the equipment or change the pre-set criteria to compromise the privacy of an individual.
2. The position of cameras and monitors have been agreed following consultation with the Police and security consultants in order to comply with the needs of the public.
3. No public access will be allowed to the monitors except for lawful, proper and sufficient reason, with prior approval of the Clerk of the Council or the Chairman of the Town Council. The Police are permitted access to tapes and prints if they have reason to believe that such access is necessary to investigate, detect or prevent crime. The Police are able to visit the Council Office(s) to review and confirm the Town Council's operation of CCTV arrangements. Any visit by the Police to view images on any monitor will be logged by the operator.
4. Operators should regularly check the accuracy of the date/time displayed.
5. Tapes/digital records should be securely stored to comply with data protection and should only be handled by the essentially minimum number of persons. Recordings will be used in strict rotation and retained for a maximum of 28 days and used for a limited number of times before replacement to ensure quality images are captured. Digital images will be erased after a period of 28 days.
6. Images will not normally be supplied to the media, except on the advice of the Police if it is deemed to be in the public interest. The Clerk of the Council would inform the Chairman of the Council of any such emergency.
7. As records may be required as evidence at Court, each person handling a tape/digital record may be required to make a statement to a police officer and sign an exhibit label. Any images that are handed to a police officer should be signed for by the police officer and information logged to identify the recording, and showing the officer's name and police station. The log should also show when such information is returned to the Town Council by the police and the outcome of its use.
8. Any event that requires checking of recorded data should be clearly detailed in the log book of incidents, including Crime Nos. if appropriate, and the Council Office notified at the next available opportunity.
9. Any damage to equipment or malfunction discovered by an operator should be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or contact made with the company responsible for maintenance, and the call logged showing the outcome. When a repair has been made this should also be logged showing the date and time of completion.
10. Any request by an individual member of the public for access to their own recorded image must be made on an 'Access Request Form' (Appendix 2) and is subject to a standard fee. Forms are available from the Council Office and will be submitted to the next meeting of the Town Council for consideration and reply, normally within 40 days.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

Copies of the CCTV Policy are available in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, as will any reports that are submitted to the Town Council providing it does not breach security needs.

The Police will be informed of the installation and provided with a copy of this CCTV Policy.

Any written concerns, complaints or compliments regarding the use of the system will be considered by the Town Council, in line with the existing complaints policy.